Maintenance of Clinical Skills for MD/PhD Students During the PhD Years

All MD/PhD students are invited and encouraged to maintain some degree of clinical engagement during the PhD years. Opportunities for such experience range from formal, longitudinal clinical experiences to informal time spent with clinician mentors. Students who maintain clinical exposure during the PhD years routinely report that clinical activity enhances their research and eases their transition back to the wards following PhD work. In addition, the years spent doing research can offer additional opportunity to explore areas of clinical interest for students seeking to identify a clinical specialty. Demonstrating engagement in clinical activity is an integral part of the PhD individual development plan and the NRSA F30 application.

You will meet with Associate Program Director Dr. Tamar Taddei to discuss maintenance of clinical skills after you begin your PhD work. Engaging in clinical activity is encouraged throughout your PhD years, and it is strongly encouraged that you are actively engaged in clinical activity by the beginning of the third year of PhD work. You may discuss opportunities with Dr. Taddei at any time (tamar.taddei@yale.edu).

The following is a list of several of the options for clinical exposure that are available to you. Please note that this list is evolving as the new curriculum takes shape.

**Wednesday Evening Clinic at the Primary Care Center of YNHH**

The Wednesday Evening Clinic (WEC) is a longitudinal primary care clinic for up to 15 Yale Medical Students in Yale's Primary Care Center (a resident clinic during the daytime). Participation in WEC provides an opportunity for MD and MD/PhD students to follow their own patients and complete the Primary Care Clerkship during research or MBA/MPH years. Responsibilities include seeing 1-3 patients/night, discussing the patients with an attending, and writing notes. Students will also present at pre-clinic conferences, which involves presenting a case or disease common to primary care to fellow students. Students take turns bringing dinner. Pre-clinic conference and dinner are @ 5PM promptly, patients are then seen from 5:45 to 8:00PM. Work for the clinic is mostly completed during the evening on Wednesdays but follow-up on studies may occur throughout the week. Providers also may participate in the care of their patients outside of the clinic (i.e. scrub in on their surgeries).

The WEC is a wonderful and unique opportunity to be responsible for your own cohort of patients over the course of many months. Additionally, the attending physician staff is outstanding, engaging and excited about teaching students.

There is a minimum commitment of 1 calendar year (many MD/PhDs stay a few years). Students are required to attend at least 38 of 50 clinic sessions (the Wednesdays before Thanksgiving and between Christmas/New Years is always off). Students may start at any point during the year. Completion of the integrated Medical Approach to the Patient clerkship is required. If you have any questions, or would like to come by the clinic to learn more, please contact Shihan Kahn at Shihan.khan@yale.edu or Lee Ying at Lee.Ying@yale.edu. The WEC website can be found at [www.yalewec.org](http://www.yalewec.org).

**HAVEN Free Clinic**

The HAVEN Free Clinic is a student-run primary care clinic partnered with Fair Haven Community Health Center (FHCHC) and Yale University. Our model is unique in its inclusion of students across the disciplines of medicine, nursing, physician’s associates, and public health.

HAVEN Free Clinic is open on Saturdays from 9am to noon and is located at: Fair Haven Community Health Center, 374 Grand Avenue in New Haven.

Medical students of all classes and tracks are invited to volunteer at the clinic in one of the many different departments (Clinical Team, Phlebotomy, Social Services, Patient Services, etc.). Once they have completed the integrated Medical Approach to the Patient clerkship, MD-PhD students may volunteer as Senior Clinical Team Members (SCTMs), seeing patients and performing histories and physical examinations. To receive credit (elective or required clerkship is still to be determined in the new curriculum), volunteering as an SCTM for 15 Saturdays is required. Please see [www.havenfreeclinig.org](http://www.havenfreeclinig.org) for more information.
If you are interested in volunteering at HAVEN, please contact the Student Recruitment Director at hfcruitment@gmail.com.

**Primary Care Experience at the VA**

MD/PhD students have had the opportunity to engage in a longitudinal rotation in the Center of Excellence in Primary Care Education at the VA for a one-year period. **Interested students should contact the Clerkship Coordinator, 203-688-4545. This option is subject to preceptor availability at the VA.**

**Longitudinal Electives for MD/PhD Students**

The following are suggestions for possible clinical exposure; this list is not exhaustive. You are encouraged to explore other opportunities. Depending upon the degree of patient care responsibility you have and the number of times you engage in your chosen activity, you may be able to receive formal elective credit. Any student with a “floating clerkship” from the prior curriculum is strongly encouraged to complete these during their PhD years.

**Wednesday Evening Clinic (WEC)** fulfills both clerkships formerly known as ambulatory medicine and PCC. Arrangements may be made for longitudinal completion of the clerkships formerly referred to as psychiatry, pediatrics, and OB/GYN. Please note that the psychiatry, pediatric, and OB/GYN longitudinal clerkships are only available as an exception for those who have a “floating” clerkship.

**Longitudinal electives:** Currently offered medical school electives may be developed into longitudinal electives. This is done collaboratively with Dr. Taddei, Dr. Illuzzi, and the particular elective director with the needs of the specific student in mind. Students should proactively seek clinical mentors in disciplines in which they would like to pursue a longitudinal elective.

**Individual mentored experiences:** Students often make individual arrangements with Yale faculty physicians as well as clinicians in the community for both longitudinal and occasional clinical experiences. You are encouraged to inquire about and even propose such experiences to faculty and community physicians you encounter during your initial clerkships. Ideally, you should receive elective credit for such arrangements that have specified learning objectives and offer the opportunity for formal feedback. Dr. Taddei would be happy to explore your clinical interests to identify a clinical mentor(s).

**Emergency Medicine:** Students may spend time in the Emergency Department on a casual basis.

**Re-entry to the Wards for MD/PhD Students**

**Rationale:** It is essential that students who have been away from clinical study return to clerkships with adequate clinical skills. The Educational Policy Committee, in conjunction with the MD/PhD Program, has determined that after any period of longer than one year in which a student has not engaged in meaningful clinical activity, students must engage in a clinical “re-entry elective” prior to entering clerkships. The objectives of this elective may be found on the elective site at: [https://medicine.yale.edu/education/curriculum/advancedtraining/clinicalelectives/electivecataloglisting/](https://medicine.yale.edu/education/curriculum/advancedtraining/clinicalelectives/electivecataloglisting/)

Students who have maintained clinical skills during research time by participating in a longitudinal experience generally do well when re-entering the clinical setting. It is vital that MD/PhD students have choices to accommodate their clinical interests, complicated schedules, and research commitments. MD/PhD students are required to meet with Dr. Tamar Taddei, the Associate Director for Clinical Affairs to discuss their re-entry.

- **It is required that MD-PhD students defend their dissertations before returning to fulfill the remaining Medical School requirements. Students should meet with Dr. Taddei at least 9 months prior to anticipated thesis defense and again at 4 months prior to scheduled thesis defense in order to plan re-entry.**
To assure flexibility, the following tracks have been created:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience/Action</th>
<th>TRACK A</th>
<th>TRACK B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clinical experience prior to entering research or other non-clinical pursuit</td>
<td>6 month clinical experience prior to research</td>
<td>6 months clinical experience prior to research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical experience during research</td>
<td>At least one year of longitudinal experience, <em>e.g.</em>, Wednesday Evening Clinic (WEC) <em>or other appropriate regularly occurring</em> clinical experience</td>
<td>None or less than one year of longitudinal clinical experience</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Actions required at least 9 months prior to re-entry    | 1. Mandatory meeting with the Director of Re-Entry  
2. Mandatory meeting with Registrar to confirm clerkship schedule  
3. Meeting with academic advisor | 1. Mandatory meeting with the Director of Re-Entry  
2. Mandatory meeting with Registrar to confirm clerkship schedule |
| Actions required prior to re-entry                      | 1. Participation in WEEKLY WEC or longitudinal equivalent within 1 year prior to re-entry. If students are away from clinical pursuits for greater than approximately 1 year, they may need to follow track B after consultation with the Director of Re-Entry  
2. Meeting with Academic Advisor | 1. Re-entry elective, usually two weeks in duration, as determined by the Director of Re-Entry  
2. Faculty-observed clinical encounter (at the warm-up site or with standardized patient)  
3. Meeting with Academic Advisor |