

### **MS4 Clinical International Elective: Information Guide**

Prepared by: The Office of International Medical Student Education (IMSE)

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#### **Are you interested in applying for an International Clinical Elective?**

This document will provide a **general overview**, address frequently asked questions, and provide instructions on the application process. Please also visit our website and review all the materials and links: <https://international.weill.cornell.edu/weill-cornell-students/international-opportunities/fourth-year-international-electives>.

#### **Important General Information:**

- Applicants must be in good academic standing to apply for an international elective.
- International Clinical Electives should be between 6-8 weeks long (a select few are 4 weeks).
- NO prior international experience is required to apply.
- All international electives must be registered in OASIS and with the Registrar's Office.
- All students participating in international research (an AOC project, for example) or clinical electives must go through the IMSE Office, *regardless of funding source*. For MS4 international clinical electives, students must complete a formal application.
- The IMSE application must be approved by the WCM International Electives Committee. There are additional requirements (Final Narrative Statement and Poster Presentation in Spring Global Health Fellows Event) needed to qualify for funding.
- International Clinical Electives are typically funded through endowed funds and scholarships through the IMSE Office, though some are supported through international partner institutions.
- The application can be accessed by [clicking here](#). All supporting documents need to be submitted via the Qualtrics application link. Completed applications must be submitted by **May 1, 2023**. Questions can be emailed to [wcmstudents-imse@med.cornell.edu](mailto:wcmstudents-imse@med.cornell.edu).

## Overview of the MS4 International Fellowship: Clinical or Research Elective Process:

1. During winter of your MS3 year (while scheduling electives for MS4 year) – consider participating in a FUNDED international elective during your MS4 year. Most students choose to travel during January/February/early March of their 4<sup>th</sup> year. However, WCM-Qatar offers electives in the Fall as well as the Spring. **NOTE: You must be back in NYC to attend the required Transition to Residency course which is typically held at the end of March/Early April.**

2. Review the list of possible MS4 international elective experiences and choose your top 3 sites. If you have a clear 1<sup>st</sup> choice, please write about your learning objectives and reasons for wanting to study in the country/site you indicated (follow instructions in application), If you have questions about the electives, partner sites or for general guidance, mail [IMSEdirectors@med.cornell.edu](mailto:IMSEdirectors@med.cornell.edu) to schedule a meeting with either Dr. Radhika Sundararajan and/or Dr. Laura Greisman, Directors of the Office of International Medical Student Education.

3. Complete the **International Clinical Elective Application**. The application and supporting documents should be emailed to [wcmstudents-imse@med.cornell.edu](mailto:wcmstudents-imse@med.cornell.edu). The IMSE Office staff will review the application to ensure it is complete and ready for review. **\*Applications are due by May 1st, 2023.**

4. Submitted applications are reviewed by the WCM International Elective Selection Committee. Applications are reviewed and scored based on a standardized scoring rubric (which is posted on the IMSE website).

- For students applying for the same international elective: in some cases, our partner sites can only accommodate a limited number of WCM students. All applications are reviewed by several members of the International Electives Committee and scored based on the standardized rubric. Application scores will be calculated, and the application with the highest score will be awarded the elective spot. If there are other considerations such as language proficiency, we will consider the need for an ‘in-person’ interview with the committee or members to finalize placements. **As there is limited space at each site**, there is a chance that you will not get your first choice; however, we will do our best to get as many people their first choice as possible – we will place you at one of your top 3 choices.

5. If your application has been approved, you will be notified via email by the IMSE Office. You will be provided with information about how to formally ‘register’ your international elective with the Registrar’s office/Oasis.

6. Once your application has been approved by the International Electives Committee, Dr. Radhika Sundararajan and Dr. Laura Greisman, Directors of the Office of International Medical Student Education, **will send introductory emails to introduce you to our partner site coordinator/directors** so that you can continue your application/placement process with the university/school/clinic at which you will be rotating to receive your final placement information. Each institution has its own additional procedures to officially complete the registration process.

7. Prior to departure, scholarship funds will be allocated to each student, for electives that are not funded by partner institutions. Scholarships are endowed funds that support and subsidize our WCM

student participation in international electives. When applicable, an introductory letter will be sent to the living donor(s) of the scholarship fund from the IMSE Office providing a student profile and overview of the anticipated elective experience their scholarship is funding.

**8. Prior to Departure** students *must* complete the following **Additional Requirements**:

- Sign and Return Waiver/Release, Code of Conduct, and Pre-Travel information forms
- Register your travel with Risk Management / Travel Insurance Program (International SOS)
- Complete online ethics course trainings
- Attend the IMSE Pre-Departure Workshop
- Obtain the appropriate visa, if necessary
- Schedule a Travel Clinic Appointment to discuss vaccines and prophylaxis (if necessary)

**9. Upon Return** students *must* complete the following **Additional Requirements**:

- Submit of a final narrative summary within 1 month of return
- Submit the mentor's completed Student Elective Evaluation Form (required by the Registrar's office)
- Send a letter of thanks to the living donor(s) funding your scholarship (if applicable).
- Complete an Expense sheet and submit any remaining reimbursable items to Ms. Margaret Gubbins ([mms2001@med.cornell.edu](mailto:mms2001@med.cornell.edu)) to secure the remainder of your funding via direct deposit.
- Present a poster describing your work during the Spring International Fellows Reception (May 2024)

**What are the options for MS4 International Electives?**

**WCM-Qatar**

*\*See attached PDF emailed to your class for full descriptions of electives and travel arrangements*

- 4-week duration
- Offered Fall & Spring Semesters MS4
- Airfare/Travel/housing costs are covered & coordinated
- Does *not* require the full IMSE Application. Reach out directly to [IMSEDirectors@med.cornell.edu](mailto:IMSEDirectors@med.cornell.edu) if you are interested.
- Clinical Elective Options:
  - **1) Clinical Infectious Disease Elective**
  - **2) Sports Medicine in Primary Care**
  - **3) Pediatric Nephrology**
  - **4) Pediatric Neurology**

If you are interested in participating in a WCM-Qatar Elective, please email [IMSEdirectors@med.cornell.edu](mailto:IMSEdirectors@med.cornell.edu) by Friday, January 20th with:

1) Name & email

2) Preferred elective choice (& alternates you would be happy with if your top choice is unavailable)

3) Preferred Dates/date range of elective (do not have exact dates) and alternate dates if you have any

**Please Note:** Emailing with interest is not a guarantee of a spot, nor is it a firm commitment of participation. After we collect emails from interested students, we will share them with the WCM-Q coordinator to work with students on availability/scheduling to see what is possible. While we will try to accommodate as many students as possible, if this rotation choice does not work out - do not fret! There are many other international elective opportunities that you will still have a chance to apply through at one of our partner sites (see below). If you are selected for a WCM-Qatar international rotation, then that counts as your international rotation for MS4 year.

#### International Partner Sites:

- Please see our website for links to Partner Programs at a glance PDF & other listings of partner programs by geographical location.  
[https://international.weill.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/imse\\_partner\\_programs\\_at\\_a\\_glance.pdf](https://international.weill.cornell.edu/sites/default/files/imse_partner_programs_at_a_glance.pdf)
- <https://international.weill.cornell.edu/fourth-year-wcm-student-stories-field>

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#### Guidelines to Receiving Financial Support

- Global Health donors have generously provided Fellowships to help defray the costs of taking an international clinical elective. We are delighted to announce that students will be reimbursed up to \$3000 for four-week electives, and up to \$3500 for six-to-eight-week electives. Reimbursable expenses include airfare (we strongly recommend you purchase refundable tickets), pre-travel health costs (travel clinic, vaccines, malaria prophylaxis), visas and housing. Up to half of the total reimbursement can be provided prior to travel, and the remaining after completion of the required deliverables (narrative reflection, poster at the Spring IMSE Fellows reception in May). Details and instructions can be found in the attached student travel handbook.

\*Please Note: this is a unique elective opportunity and while our office wishes to provide as much support as possible to allow access for ALL students to have the opportunity to experience an international elective - this is an OPTIONAL experience and there will still be *some* anticipated out-of-pocket cost to participation. The generous endowed funds and scholarships have been established to minimize this out-of-pocket cost and to support the next generation of physicians to help attain a global perspective and understanding of the delivery of health care.

\*\*Please Also Note: Exceptions to this funding policy are the four-week electives where funding is provided by our partner institutions (i.e., Max Kade Elective in Austria, WCM-Qatar, American Hospital

Paris). If you are participating in one of these rotations, you should receive instructions from your elective site on how to proceed with your travel expenses. If provided 'stipends' from the partner institution – IMSE office will still provide funding by reimbursement UP TO the amounts outlined above (minus the stipend provided by the partner). EX: If you receive \$500 stipend from the American Hospital in Paris for a 4-week rotation, the IMSE office will provide you reimbursements up to \$2500 (which is the \$3k reimbursable max for 4-week rotation minus the \$500 stipend from AHP). This policy ensures equitable travel funds for participants.

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### **Confirmation and Cancellation Policies**

#### **COVID Contingency Plans**

Students who are notified of an approved international elective will then have 30 days from the date of approval notification to confirm or cancel the international elective. This must be done in writing to the Directors of the Office of International Medical Student Education. If the student does not respond after 30 days he or she will be deemed to have declined the opportunity to take the elective and the elective will be made available to another student.

Once a student has confirmed their intent to accept the opportunity for an approved international elective, they are expected to keep that commitment. If a student believes that they need to cancel an international elective, they must provide a written request with justification to the Directors of the Office of International Medical Student Education. Compelling reasons for cancellation of a prior commitment to an international elective would include, but are not limited to, a personal illness or a major illness in a close family member (child, sibling, spouse, partner, or parent). Students who cancel the elective and are deemed to not have provided a compelling reason for their cancellation will be required to pay \$100 to cover the administrative costs incurred in preparing for that elective.

The Medical College and International Electives Committee has the right to cancel all WCM student related international travel should travel be deemed unsafe due to unforeseen events (ex: political instability, natural disaster or pandemic). Funding will still be provided in full if the student completes the outlined 'staying local' research contingency plan outlined in their application.

If unforeseen events or program-specific issues arise that make it impossible for you to complete your initially approved/assigned elective at your specific site, but international travel is still allowed by WCM and Senior Dean's Office, we will work with students on a case-by-case basis to see if there is an alternative international elective/site that is safe and feasible for placement during your specified dates. However, if ALL international rotations are canceled due to pandemic or an unforeseen event or there is insufficient time to make alternative arrangements, then students will be notified as soon as possible and required to select alternative domestic electives from the elective catalogue.

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### **Commonly Asked Questions**

#### **Q: When can I participate in an international clinical elective?**

A: As you start to plan your MS4 schedules - please remember that most students complete Sub-Internships during the summer/fall MS4, interview season for residency is typically mid-October-early January (depending on the specialty you're applying in) and there are required courses that cannot be missed/deferred - including Transition to Residency (TTR) which is typically at the end of March/early April. Thus - MOST student choose to participate in an international elective between late January-Mid-

March; though some may have flexibility to include a 4-week elective at WCMC-Qatar in the Fall prior to interviews (September/October).

**Q: I have gone through all the resources above and I still am unsure what elective to choose. Is there someone I can talk to?**

A: YES! Please email [IMSEdirectors@med.cornell.edu](mailto:IMSEdirectors@med.cornell.edu) to schedule a meeting with either Dr. Radhika Sundararajan and Dr. Laura Greisman, Directors of the Office of International Medical Student Education.

**Q: Can I propose my own elective with my own faculty contacts outside of WCM?**

A: After discussion with the medical school leadership the decision was made to only allow for international clinical elective rotations within our designated (fairly expansive!) network of partners. We understand that students may have prior affiliations or personal connections with mentors or countries outside of our listed partners, however, to ensure student safety and clinical supervision standards we will only permit clinical rotations within our partner network.

**Q: I have a few elective options in mind. What do I do now?**

A: You are welcome to arrange a meeting with the IMSE Co-directors, otherwise go ahead and prepare your application and send the application and all supporting materials to: [wcmstudents-imse@med.cornell.edu](mailto:wcmstudents-imse@med.cornell.edu). Even if you have already applied through the Center for Global Health, **ALL students are still required to submit the IMSE Application** and receive approval and meet all outlined requirements to qualify for **funding**.

**Q: What if I later decide that I want to do an international elective?**

A: Many places require significant planning ahead of time to arrange placements for students. However, given the challenges with COVID19 and the unpredictability, we are still open to accept applications through the summer on a case-by-case basis but first require a meeting with a Co-Director to discuss site/placement to ensure feasibility.

**Q: If I participate in an elective at WCM-Qatar in the Fall, can I still apply for another international clinical elective in the spring semester?**

A: If you are selected for a WCM-Qatar international rotation, that counts as your international rotation for MS4 year. To ensure equitable access to international rotations for all WCM students, at present time we are limiting MS4 international clinical rotations to 1 per student.

**Q: What happens if I have been accepted for a rotation and then the rotation gets canceled due to pandemic or international event?**

A: This unfortunately happened for Spring 2022. Students are notified of cancellations as soon as possible and they are required to select alternative electives from the elective catalogue to replace the international elective.

**Q: Who do I contact for questions about my application and application materials?**

A: If questions come up, please feel free to contact the IMSE Office Staff at [wcmstudents-imse@med.cornell.edu](mailto:wcmstudents-imse@med.cornell.edu).

**Q: Who books my flights and arranges my housing?**

A: Once the IMSE Office has accepted your application and introduced you to the partner coordinator, it is the students' responsibility to complete any secondary paperwork or requirements needed by the partner institution. It is the students' responsibility to book their own travel and accommodation for the elective rotation. Often times the partner coordinator can offer resources or make recommendations to help the student get started. A few partner sites do offer set accommodation for students – please check with your partner coordinator to confirm!