Master of Physician Assistant Studies

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Introduction

The mission of Rocky Mountain University of Health Professions (RMUoHP) Physician Assistant (PA) Program is to educate students to become competent physician assistants who value and provide comprehensive, evidence-based, patient-centered care and are committed to lifelong-learning, professional growth, and collaborative practice.

The vision of the RMUoHP PA Program is to:

- foster a culture of growth mindedness, unity of purpose, collegiality, and insatiable thirst for learning,
- deliver a richly balanced, application-based curriculum centered on critical principles of health and disease,
- graduate self-reflective professionals with adept clinical reasoning skills and keen sensitivity to unique patient needs, and
- empower graduates to become digitally literate clinicians possessing advanced knowledge of information technology and collaborative networking skills.

Program Overview

The PA Program is a 28-month campus-based program emphasizing an experiential learning curricular design. A variety of pedagogical approaches will be employed beyond standard lecture, including case-based, problem-based, and team-based learning. Beginning early in the didactic phase, students will be challenged to work through simulated clinical experiences with standardized patients (actors trained to portray specific patient presentations). These experiences will include presenting cases orally to faculty members acting as supervising practitioners and developing comprehensive notes with detailed assessments and management plans. Moreover, a full-time clinical rotation will break up the didactic phase of the program, enabling students to approach the remainder of their didactic material with a newly formed clinical perspective prior to concluding the program with nine full-time supervised clinical practice experiences.
Program Outcomes

Knowledge-Related Outcomes

Upon completion of the RMUoHP PA Program, graduates will:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of biomedical sciences and an ability to integrate and apply this knowledge to the care of patients.
2. Differentiate between the normal and the abnormal in anatomic and physiologic findings and diagnostic test data and imaging.
3. Explain the implications of psychological, socioeconomic, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of human health and illness and tailor their approach to evaluating and managing patients to optimize care when contextually appropriate.
4. Identify effective evidence-based interventions for prevention of disease conditions and promotion of healthy living behaviors.

Skill-Related Outcomes

Upon completion of the RMUoHP PA Program, graduates will:

1. Perform a comprehensive health history, accurately eliciting and documenting acquired information. Demonstrate the ability to focus the health history based on the contextual nature of the patient presentation as well as information elicited during the interview process.
2. Perform a comprehensive physical examination and accurately document findings. Demonstrate the ability to focus the physical examination based on the contextual nature of the patient presentation and developed differential diagnosis.
3. Demonstrate effective clinical problem solving, reasoning, and decision-making by developing comprehensive patient-centered assessments and management plans through integrating and applying health history and physical examination information, diagnostic and imaging data, and patient preferences.
4. Identify evidence-based indications and contraindications for, and accurately perform, diagnostic and therapeutic clinical procedures for common primary care and emergent conditions.
5. Apply principles of evidence-based medicine and high proficiency digital literacy skills to quickly access, critically evaluate, and apply high-quality evidence-based information to unique patients at the point-of-care.
6. Effectively collaborate with members of the healthcare team to provide comprehensive patient-centered care across the lifespan.
7. Utilize evidence-based patient-engagement and communication strategies to provide effective patient education for common primary care conditions and health promotion situations.
8. Demonstrate the capacity to learn and engage in patient care reflectively, with a critical awareness of the scope and limits of one’s knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Values and Attitudes-Related Outcomes

Upon completion of the RMUoHP PA Program, graduates will:
1. Commit to high ethical standards and demonstrate sensitivity and responsiveness to the unique needs of individual patients to include consideration of culture, age, gender, and disabilities.
2. Demonstrate respect, compassion, integrity, and accountability to patients, society, and the profession.
3. Create and sustain sound professional relationships with patients and members of the healthcare team.
4. Demonstrate emotional resilience, emotional stability, adaptability, and flexibility. Demonstrate tolerance of ambiguity and anxiety with an awareness of the importance of maintaining one’s own well being.

**Admissions Requirements**

Earned Bachelor’s degree prior to matriculation.

Minimum required cumulative GPA of 3.2 and science GPA of 3.0. Prerequisites must be successfully completed with a grade of “C” or higher. Applicants with a lower GPA in either the cumulative or science category will be considered for interview when there is strong evidence of improved academic performance in more recently completed coursework as evidenced by meeting the following criteria:

- GPA of 3.20 or higher for the most recent 20 semester hours… ALL of which must be prerequisite or upper-level science courses (300 level or higher)

History of 250 hours or more of patient contact experience.

Aggregate Verbal and Quantitative GRE score of 298 or higher and Analytical Writing score of 3.5 or higher.

**Prerequisites courses include:** Human Anatomy w lab; Human Physiology w lab; General Biology w lab; Microbiology with lab; General Chemistry I and II w labs; Statistics; College Algebra or higher mathematics; Introductory or Abnormal Psychology; Medical Terminology. Genetics or Cellular Biology and Organic Chemistry or Biochemistry is highly recommended but not required.
## Curriculum

### Summer 2020 Semester - Year One

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<td>PAS 505</td>
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**Summer 2022 Semester - Year Three**

**Program Total 114**
Course Descriptions

Summer 2020 Semester - Year One

PAS 511 Professional Development I

This course is the first in a series designed to integrate the principles of professionalism, ethics, profession-specific issues, and the business of medicine, with the practice of medicine. Students are instructed in academic and intellectual honesty and professional conduct in relation to academics and clinical practice. Specific focus areas include history of the physician assistant profession, professionalism, medical ethics, and working as part of a healthcare delivery team.

PAS 690 Evidence-Based Practice 1

Serving as a prelude to the Applied Clinical Reasoning courses, this course focuses on concepts of evidence-based practice. Specifically, the course covers the foundational principles of research design, epidemiology, biostatistics, and searching the medical literature.

PAS 501 Applied Human Anatomy

This course emphasizes the clinical application of human anatomy. Students learn to recognize normal anatomic structures and become familiar with common anatomic variations. This course covers topographical, radiological, and gross anatomy content pertinent to everyday primary care clinical practice. The cadaver laboratory offers hands-on-learning, facilitating abstraction of anatomical relationships and spatial orientation. Recognition of abnormal and pathologic findings is consistently stressed throughout the course, providing an applicable foundation for effective diagnostic evaluation and therapeutic intervention.

PAS 502 Biomedical Science

This course is an overview of physiologic and pathophysiologic processes influencing the human body. Part of the course emphasizes genetic, molecular, and cellular level mechanisms while other content focuses on disease manifestation at the organ and systems levels. Basic principles of cell biology, histology, embryology, immunology, and molecular genetics are covered. Included also is an introduction to general pathology, infectious processes, nutrition, and environmental effects on the human organism. Case studies assist students in applying relative principles in clinical situations, and initiate the process of understanding dysfunction and pathology in clinical settings. Recognition of alterations of normal function is highlighted throughout.

PAS 503 History and Physical Exam

This course challenges students to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to competently elicit a comprehensive, as well as problem-specific, medical history. Students are taught principles of physical examination and develop foundational skills including inspection, auscultation, percussion, and palpation. A focus on normal exam findings is emphasized to provide students a solid foundation for recognition of abnormal findings in later courses and eventual practice. Recording and documentation of medical records is introduced and
practiced. This course focuses on adult exam and documentation. Specific material for pediatric and geriatric examination is addressed in their respective courses.

**PAS 504 Primary Care Fundamentals**

This course provides students with a strong foundation for practicing primary care clinical medicine. Providing holistic, relationship-centered patient care is emphasized. Clinical medicine topics covered include pervasive diseases encountered, diagnosed, and managed in the primary care setting, such as diabetes mellitus, hypertension, and lipid disorders. Common diagnostic and health maintenance laboratory studies are also explored, including but not limited to, complete blood count, basic metabolic panel, kidney function tests, liver function tests, lipid panels, and thyroid testing. Tailoring care to individual patients is discussed, particularly principles related to treating patients with chronic disease states, enabling students to subsequently consider disease processes of organ-systems in the context of patients with common underlying comorbidities.

**PAS 505 Digital Literacy & Reflective Practice**

In this course, students will develop skills to acquire quality, evidence-based information, and utilize this information to produce scholarly materials and communicate effectively with others in the healthcare field. An emphasis is placed on utilizing digital technology resources to acquire, communicate, and create scholarly works effectively in order to facilitate the students’ ability to become lifelong learners. Topics covered include citation management systems, cloud-based information management, proper medical writing styles, and online forum discussions.

**Fall 2020 Semester - Year One**

**PAS 512 Professional Development II**

This course is the second in a series designed to integrate the principles of professionalism, ethics, profession-specific issues, and the business of medicine, with the practice of medicine. Emphasis of this course is on the role healthcare providers play in the areas of public health, preventive medicine, and health maintenance.

**PAS 692 Applied Clinical Reasoning 1**

This course is the first in a series designed to challenge students to develop clinical reasoning skills, think critically, enhance interpersonal and communication skills, apply evidence-based resources, and problem-solve as clinicians and as members of an interdisciplinary healthcare team. Students are challenged with simulated cases where they develop clinical skills evaluating standardized patients. Cases encompass acute and/or longitudinal care, and the emphasis is placed on the following: developing differential diagnoses, developing assessments and plans, the medical chart, medical documentation, and informed consent. Students give oral case presentations and integrate aspects of preventive care and public health in the context of acute care.

**PAS 506 Clinical Pharmacology Core**

This course serves as a primer for future courses geared toward specific disease states, challenging students to learn core pharmacologic concepts foundational for subsequent
utilization of pharmacotherapeutics in patient-centered practice. Principles of pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics are presented. Other topics include drug nomenclature, drug classification schemas, drug interactions, adverse drug reactions, autonomic nervous system pharmacology, analgesics and pain management principles, and individualized approaches to pharmacologic management of disease. Content related to prescriptive powers and prescriptive writing requirements is also provided.

PAS 601 Behavioral Dynamics

This foundational course explores the psychosocial aspects of medicine. Students develop interpersonal and communication skills necessary to effectively communicate with patients and other healthcare professionals. Treatments are discussed from a biopsychosocial perspective with reference to psychotherapies, psychopharmacology, and environmental intervention. Recognition and management of common psychiatric and psychosocial problems encountered in primary care are highlighted. Indications for referral and hospitalization are discussed. Topics covered include but not be limited to: anxiety disorders, mood disorders, psychosis, substance use disorders, personality disorders, eating disorders, and psychiatric emergencies and crises. Case-based learning and role-play is employed to provide enhanced understanding of applying evidence-based practices to individual patient needs and circumstances.

PAS 602 Hematology/Oncology

This course is a clinical medicine (CM) modular course using an organ-systems approach to facilitate student learning in the study of hematology and oncology. Focus includes commonly encountered medical issues affecting hematopoiesis, hemostasis, and the lymphoid organs. Topics emphasized include clinical presentation, epidemiology, pathophysiology, patient assessment, diagnosis, pathology, therapeutic interventions, disease management, and clinical course of common disorders. This course also includes introductory oncology content, with a focus on the global clinical aspects of cancer screening, diagnosis, staging, and therapeutic intervention. Organ-specific cancers are primarily discussed in corresponding CM modular courses.

PAS 603 Endocrinology

This course is a clinical medicine (CM) modular course using an organ-systems approach to facilitate student learning in the study of endocrinology. Commonly encountered medical problems primarily affecting metabolism and organs of the endocrine system are examined. Topics emphasized include clinical presentation, epidemiology, pathophysiology, patient assessment, diagnosis, pathology, therapeutic interventions, management, and clinical course of common diseases.

PAS 604 Infectious Disease

This course is a clinical medicine (CM) modular course emphasizing global considerations related to approaching infectious disease. Content includes mechanisms of transmission and pathogenicity, methods of diagnosis, antimicrobial pharmacotherapy, common and systemic clinical presentations, and methods for infection control and prevention. Common bacterial, viral, fungal, and parasitic pathogens are explored. Organ-specific and demographic predominant infectious diseases are primarily discussed in corresponding CM modular courses.
PAS 605 Eyes, Ears, Nose, Throat (EENT)

This course is a clinical medicine (CM) modular course using an organ-systems approach to facilitate student learning in the study of diseases and disorders of the eyes, ears, nose, and throat (EENT). Topics emphasized include clinical presentation, epidemiology, pathophysiology, patient assessment, diagnosis, pathology, therapeutic interventions, management, and clinical course of common diseases.

PAS 695 Evidence-Based Practice 2

Service as a companion to the Applied Clinical Reasoning courses, this course focuses on concepts of evidence-based practice. Specifically, the course covers principles of biostatistics, critical evaluation of the literature, and synthesis of EBP principles into realistic practice settings.

Winter 2021 Semester – Year One

PAS 513 Professional Development III

This course is the third in a series designed to integrate the principles of professionalism, ethics, profession-specific issues, and the business of medicine, with the practice of medicine. This course examines many of the legal and practice-based issues of healthcare including: electronic data management, coding, billing, reimbursement, rules and regulations, confidentiality, certification and licensure, and safety.

PAS 693 Applied Clinical Reasoning 2

This course is the second in a series designed to challenge students to develop clinical reasoning skills, think critically, enhance interpersonal and communication skills, apply evidence-based resources, and problem-solve as clinicians and as members of an interdisciplinary healthcare team. Building upon patient care skills developed in the first course, this course challenges students to evaluate and manage standardized patients in the context of acute and longitudinal care. Key content areas include: establishing patients in the primary care setting, admission orders, inpatient management, progress notes, discharge summaries, rehabilitative care, and utilization of an electronic healthcare record.

PAS 606 Cardiovascular/EKG

This course is a clinical medicine (CM) modular course using an organ-systems approach to facilitate student learning in the study of cardiovascular medicine. Commonly encountered medical problems primarily affecting the cardiovascular system are examined. The clinical presentation, epidemiology, pathophysiology, patient assessment, diagnosis, pathology, therapeutic interventions, management, and clinical course of these conditions are explored. During this course students learn fundamentals of interpreting electrocardiograms (EKG), including recognition of common abnormal EKG patterns and differentiation from normal and normal variant EKG tracings.

PAS 607 Pulmonology

This course is a clinical medicine (CM) modular course using an organ-systems approach to facilitate student learning in the study of pulmonology. Commonly encountered medical
problems primarily affecting the pulmonary system are examined. The clinical presentation, epidemiology, pathophysiology, patient assessment, diagnosis, pathology, therapeutic interventions, management, and clinical course of these conditions are explored.

PAS 608 Genitourinary

This course is a clinical medicine (CM) modular course using an organ-systems approach to facilitate student learning in the study of the genitourinary system. Focus for this course includes examination of commonly encountered genitourinary issues. Topics emphasized include clinical presentation, epidemiology, pathophysiology, patient assessment, diagnosis, pathology, therapeutic interventions, disease management, and clinical course of common diseases.

PAS 609 Gastroenterology

This course is a clinical medicine (CM) modular course using an organ-systems approach to facilitate student learning in the study of gastroenterology. Commonly encountered medical problems primarily affecting the gastrointestinal system are examined. The clinical presentation, epidemiology, pathophysiology, patient assessment, diagnosis, pathology, therapeutic interventions, management, and clinical course of these conditions are explored.

PAS 610 Pediatrics

This course examines important aspects of primary care pediatrics including assessment of the child patient, preventive health, and pediatric diseases and conditions. Specific issues of the newborn and older child are presented in such areas as perinatal care, child development & behavior, congenital & genetic disorders, pediatric infectious disease, pediatric respiratory issues, pediatric emergencies, injuries, and parenting. Pediatric pharmacotherapy are explored with emphasis on indications, contraindications, and medication dosing in relation to disease process type and patient demographics. The student also learns assessment techniques specific to the pediatric population.

PAS 613 Surgery

This course focuses on basic surgical concepts related to primary care as well as surgical specialties. The intent is to familiarize students with surgical concepts, topics and technique. Students learn to recognize signs and symptoms that may require surgical intervention. This course also emphasizes risk management for preoperative patients, pre- and postoperative care, wound assessment, and wound management.

Summer 2021 Semester - Year Two

PAS 514 Professional Development IV

This course is the fourth in a series designed to integrate the principles of professionalism, ethics, profession-specific issues, and the business of medicine, with the practice of medicine. This particular course evaluates health care disparities and provider sensitivity to cultural diversity, socioeconomic differences, and their impact on health and wellness. Complementary and alternative medical practice methods are also examined with particular attention given to integrative and preventive approaches.
PAS 694 Applied Clinical Reasoning 3

This is the final applied clinical reasoning course in the series designed to challenge students to develop clinical reasoning skills, think critically, enhance interpersonal and communication skills, apply evidence-based resources, and problem-solve as clinicians while recognizing the contributions of members of the interprofessional health care team. Simulated patient scenarios are designed to facilitate a team approach to the care of acute and longitudinal cases. Emphasis is also placed on further developing interpersonal and communication skills.

PAS 700 Clinical Rotation Preparatory Seminar

This course provides students with an orientation to help them begin clinical rotations. This course will provide hands-on instruction for some procedures and skills that are important to clinical practice, including basic suturing and injections. A certification course for Pediatric Advanced Life Support is also offered. There will be units designed with the intention of providing students with various clinical pearls that will enhance their clinical rotation experience. Students will practice logging of clinical rotation activities and oral presentation of patient encounters. Students will also be encouraged to start thinking more about their Applied Scholarly Project and making plans accordingly. Additionally, this course evaluates students' readiness to proceed into the final three semesters of supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPEs). Students are expected to have a strong depth and breadth of knowledge and skills in the basic medical and clinical sciences, and must demonstrate essential cognitive and technical abilities learned in previous courses in order to proceed to SCPEs.

PAS 611 Neurology

This course is a clinical medicine (CM) modular course using an organ-systems approach to facilitate student learning in the study of neurology. Focus for this course includes examination of commonly encountered neurologic issues. Topics emphasized in this course include clinical presentation, epidemiology, pathophysiology, patient assessment, diagnosis, pathology, therapeutic interventions, disease management, and clinical course of common diseases.

PAS 614 Geriatrics

This course provides a foundation for addressing medical problems commonly seen in the aging and elderly population. Additional instruction on preventive medicine, health maintenance, mobility limitations and access to healthcare, therapeutic interventions, medication awareness, and quality of life issues are emphasized. Instruction related to death and dying is also provided.

PAS 615 Women’s Health

This course addresses important aspects of women’s health with an emphasis on obstetrical, gynecologic, and preventive care. Content includes a thorough exploration of physiology, pathophysiology, disease states, management options, and screening guidelines for women’s health issues. Obstetrics focuses on the principles of prenatal, perinatal, and post-natal care. Complications arising in pregnancy and management of the more common emergent problems that occur in pregnancy are discussed.
PAS 616 Emergency Medicine

This course provides fundamental instruction on the recognition and management of life-threatening patient presentations. Problem-based case studies and team-based activities are utilized extensively in this course. Team work, collaboration, cooperation, and valuing interdisciplinary contributions to managing patients is emphasized. BLS and ACLS certification is included as part of this course.

PAS 617 Dermatology

This course is a clinical medicine (CM) modular course using an organ-systems approach to facilitate student learning in the study of dermatology. Focus revolves around commonly encountered dermatologic disorders. Topics emphasized in this course include clinical presentation, epidemiology, pathophysiology, patient assessment, diagnosis, pathology, therapeutic interventions, disease management, and clinical course of common diseases.

PAS 618 Orthopedics

This course is a clinical medicine modular course using an organ-systems approach to facilitate learning in the study of orthopedic conditions, injuries, and disease processes. Focus for this course includes examination of commonly encountered musculoskeletal issues. Emphasis on proper examination and special exam tests for common orthopedic issues are discussed. Topics emphasized include clinical presentation, epidemiology, pathophysiology, patient assessment, diagnosis, pathology, therapeutic interventions, disease management, and clinical course of common diseases. Fundamental aspects of interpreting imaging studies such as x-rays, MRI, and CT scans are developed. Identification of common fractures, subluxations, and dislocations common in primary care are discussed.

PAS 619 Rheumatology

This course is a clinical medicine modular course using an organ-systems approach to facilitate learning in the study of rheumatologic conditions and disease processes. Focus for this course includes examination of commonly encountered rheumatologic issues. Topics emphasized include clinical presentation, epidemiology, pathophysiology, patient assessment, diagnosis, pathology, therapeutic interventions, disease management, and clinical course of rheumatologic diseases. Fundamental aspects of interpreting imaging studies such as x-rays, MRI, and CT scans are developed.

Fall 2021 Semester - Year Two

PAS 515 Professional Development V

This course is the fifth in a series designed to integrate the principles of professionalism, ethics, profession-specific issues, and the business of medicine, with the practice of medicine. This particular course occurs during the final didactic semester just prior to students engaging in the final two full-time supervised clinical practice experiences (SCPEs) semesters. The focus during this course is developing skills needed to become a lifelong learner through practice-based learning/self-improvement and developing awareness of health policy and current
trends/issues. There is a continued emphasis on professionalism as it applies to clinical practice.

**PAS 701 Clinical Rotation**

Please refer to listing of supervised clinical practice experience types below

**PAS 702 Clinical Rotation**

Please refer to listing of supervised clinical practice experience types below

**PAS 703 Clinical Rotation**

Please refer to listing of supervised clinical practice experience types below

**Winter 2022 Semester - Year Two**

**PAS 516 Professional Development VI**

This course is the sixth in a series designed to integrate the principles of professionalism, ethics, profession-specific issues, and the business of medicine, with the practice of medicine. This particular course covers the organizational and economic elements of systems-based practice. This course also focuses on cost-effective and efficient health care, case management, risk management, error prevention, patient safety, and quality improvement.

**PAS 704 Clinical Rotation**

Please refer to listing of supervised clinical practice experience types below

**PAS 705 Clinical Rotation**

Please refer to listing of supervised clinical practice experience types below

**PAS 706 Clinical Rotation**

Please refer to listing of supervised clinical practice experience types below

**Summer 2022 Semester - Year Three**

**PAS 517 Professional Development VII**

This course is the seventh in a series designed to integrate the principles of professionalism, ethics, profession-specific issues, and the business of medicine, with the practice of medicine. The focus of this final course in the series is on the professional expectations and responsibilities facing new physician assistant graduates. Students continue to cultivate the skills necessary for future career development and growth. Topics include curriculum vitae/resume development, job searching, interviewing, employment contracts, credentialing, privileging, mentoring, leadership development, and sustaining the PA profession.

**PAS 707 Clinical Rotation**
Please refer to listing of supervised clinical practice experience types below

**PAS 708 Clinical Rotation**

Please refer to listing of supervised clinical practice experience types below

**PAS 799 Summative Seminar**

The purpose of this pass/fail seminar is twofold: 1) for students to demonstrate knowledge, patient care skills, and professional competency sufficient to function as an entry-level physician assistant and 2) to prepare graduation candidates for the Physician Assistant National Certifying Examination (PANCE).

**Supervised Clinical Practice Experiences**

The final nine clinical practice experiences (SCPEs) serve as the culminating learning activities for students in the physician assistant program. During each rotation students work with certified practicing clinicians (referred to as preceptors) and actively participate in the delivery of patient-centered care as part of the health care team.

Each four-week core clinical practice rotation provides an opportunity to learn, understand, and gain supervised experience in practicing principles associated with rotation specific experiences.

Brief descriptions of each SCPE type is included below (*please note: students have already completed a Family Medicine or Primary Care rotation*)

- **Family Medicine Rotation:** The focus of this rotation is holistic, outpatient-based, relationship-centered care of patients of all ages. Emphases include management of commonly encountered primary care conditions, evidence-based preventive practices, and patient education.
- **Primary Care Rotation (Behavioral and Mental Health Care emphasis):** Focus areas include diagnosis and treatment of mental health disorders (pharmacotherapeutic and psychotherapeutic), health promotion and wellness, and appreciating the dynamic bidirectional influences between the psychosocial and all aspects of health and disease.
- **Internal Medicine Rotation:** The focus of this preceptorship is providing longitudinal health care for patients with chronic health problems.
- **Pediatrics Rotation:** The focus of this preceptorship is acute and preventive health care for pediatric patients.
- **Women’s Health Rotation:** Focus for this preceptorship includes obstetrical, gynecologic, and women’s preventive care.
- **Emergency Medicine Rotation:** Emphasis of this preceptorship is evaluation and management of emergent medical conditions in the emergency department setting.
- **General Surgery Rotation:** This rotation provides exposure to the operating room setting and function. The focus of this preceptorship is on evaluation and care of patients with commonly encountered conditions requiring surgical management.
- **Open Elective Rotation:** This mandatory elective rotation provides students the opportunity to gain experience in a specific area of interest and may include a medical or surgical (sub)specialty, academic medicine, or medical research.