Scheduling clinical clerkships

After your 2nd year of medical school, you will spend the remaining 2 years doing clinical clerkships, also called rotations, in multiple medical specialties. The procedure for scheduling clinical clerkships will differ between medical schools, with some schools offering greater flexibility than others.

Unlike the 1st half of medical school training, which consists of nearly 100% objective examinations, the 2nd half is a combination of objective and subjective examinations. Your grades during your 3rd year of medical school will be an important part of your residency application, so doing well in your 3rd-year clerkships is important. Also, be mindful that the people you interact with during clerkships may eventually be those who will write letters of recommendation for you or be advisors in your 4th year.

Tips for scheduling clinical clerkships and rotations

- Consider scheduling a rotation early in your 3rd year in a specialty that interests you. This will provide you an opportunity to have hands-on experience in that field and enable you to make a more educated decision on whether to choose that specialty.
- Gaining general clinical experience prior to starting specialized rotations may be necessary to equip you with the knowledge, skills and abilities to succeed in more specialized rotations.
- If you have identified particular programs of interest, doing elective rotations at those institutions can provide you with an opportunity to work directly with attending and resident physicians in those programs.
- For those participating in early matches and the military selection board, schedule rotations earlier to accommodate their timelines.
- For those participating in the SF Match, schedule rotations before interview season, which runs from October to January.
- Health Professions Scholarship students can optimize their applications to the residency programs they are interested in by doing 1 rotation early in their 4th year and the other just before the selection board meets in November.
- If you are undecided about which specialty to choose, doing rotations that include both surgical and nonsurgical disciplines can provide you with a wide variety of experiences to assist your decision-making process.

URL: https://www.ama-assn.org/residents-students/career-planning-resource/scheduling-clinical-clerkships
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