



Visiting Student Learning Opportunities (VSLO) Application Guide 2020-2021

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Visiting Student Checklist

Completion of various items described in guide below

Item	Completed?	Date Completed
Items Required by All Schools		
VSLO Application		
Malpractice Insurance (schools outside of Texas will require additional coverage)		
UT Health San Antonio Transcript		
Immunization Form		
Proof of BLS/ACLS		
USMLE Step 1 Score Report		
Items Required by Select Schools		
Mask Fit Test		
Criminal Background Check (may need updated check)		
Panel Drug Screen Test		
Letters of Recommendation		
Letter of Good Standing		

Personal Statement or Writing Samples		
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Application Materials Required by All Schools

Visiting Student Learning Opportunities (VSLO) Application

- In January, each student will receive 20 authorizations to start applications in the VSLO system. Authorizations are automatically replenished when the student has fewer than five remaining. Students requiring additional authorizations can request more by emailing medstudentaffairs@uthscsa.edu.
- Ms. Norma Fox (Office of Student Affairs) will receive a daily email report of pending applications. To ensure timely application processing, the Office of Student Affairs will check VSLO daily. The Office of Student Affairs verifies student application information prior to releasing the student application. Students can contact Ms. Fox (foxn@uthscsa.edu) if no action has been taken on their application within 48 business hours of application submission.

The Office of Student Affairs verifies the following information on VSLO Applications:

- Student is in good academic standing.
 - Student has been instructed in OSHA safety measures/infection control precautions.
 - Student is covered by malpractice insurance and the coverage amounts as required by the State of Texas (UTHSCSA provides \$25,000 per claim and \$75,000 aggregate malpractice insurance coverage on our medical students with no exceptions.)
 - Student successfully completed core clerkships (or will complete them prior to the rotation).
 - Student's expected date of graduation.
 - Student has met all UT Health San Antonio immunization requirements.
 - Student has complied with UT Health San Antonio HIPAA training requirements.
 - Student carries personal health insurance.
 - Student has completed a criminal background check and date of completion.
 - Student has passed USMLE Step 1.
- Please note: After student applications are released, students may still make changes to their application profile and additional documents can be uploaded.
 - Until a student submits an application, the Office of Student Affairs does not have access to the student VSLO profile.

Malpractice Insurance Coverage

- UT Health San Antonio students are covered by malpractice insurance for \$25,000 per claim/\$75,000 aggregate. Students will **not** need additional malpractice insurance in the State of Texas. If a Texas institution requests additional coverage, students should email the Office of Student Affairs at medstudentaffairs@uthscsa.edu.
- For rotations outside of the State of Texas, students need additional malpractice insurance, which can be purchased through Ms. Norma Fox in the Office of Student Affairs. The premium amount will depend on the state in which a student does the elective rotation. The premium payments range from \$45 to \$200.
- To obtain additional malpractice coverage, the premium must be paid in person at the Office of Undergraduate Medical Education. The only accepted forms of payment are cash and check.
- Within 24-48 hours of payment for malpractice coverage, the student will be emailed a Certificate of Coverage. If after 48 hours no certificate has been received, please email medstudentaffairs@uthscsa.edu.
- The Office of Student Affairs suggests purchasing additional malpractice coverage only after an offer for a rotation has been accepted. A Certificate of Coverage is specific to a host institution and elective dates and is not blanket coverage across multiple institutions or dates. The premium payment is non-refundable if not cancelled prior to the elective start date.

UT Health San Antonio Transcripts

- The first time a student submits an application on VSLO, the Office of Student Affairs uploads a copy of the transcript. This transcript is requested from the Office of the Registrar. After this upload, the Office of Student Affairs verifies the application and releases it to the host institution. The average time for this process is approximately 24-48 hours.

Immunization Form

- Each Host Institution requires the completion of its own immunization form or the AAMC Standardized Immunization Form.

- Immunization forms can be completed by the Student Health Center (Nursing School Building, room 1.422, phone 567-9355) or by the students' primary care provider.

BLS/ACLS Card

- Students should have a copy of their BLS & ACLS card as an eCard, received via email.
- Students should contact Lois Strain (StrainL@uthscsa.edu or at 210-567-7823), if they did not receive an eCard after completion of the course.
- Students must email a copy of this card to Ms. Norma Fox (foxn@uthscsa.edu) for the application verification process.

USMLE Step 1 Score Report

- The student VSLO application profile will automatically indicate the pass/fail status of the student's USMLE Step 1 Exam but will not indicate the score.
- Students are responsible for uploading their USMLE Transcript/Score Report.

Application Materials Required by Select Schools

Mask Fit Test

- Certain away rotations will require a Mask Fit Test.
- Several options for where to take the Mask Fit Test nearby are:
 - QSSI is located at 5835 Callaghan Rd., Suite 105, 210-736-0997
 - Texas Medical Clinic
 - UT Health San Antonio "Wellness360" (formerly known as the Student Health Clinic)
 - Details: <https://wellness360.uthealthsa.org/services/employee-student-health/n95-fit-testing-for-students/>
 - Students must complete a medical questionnaire prior to scheduling their appointment.
 - \$35 medical clearance/fit testing
- Students must upload the results of their Mask Fit Test to the VSLO Application Service and email a copy to Ms. Norma Fox (foxn@uthscsa.edu).

Updated Criminal Background Check

- A criminal background check is completed for all entering medical students. The date is noted on the student profile.
- Some Host Institutions will require a more current background check. Students applying to these rotations are responsible for getting the check completed and all associated costs.
- The UT Police can run a background check for students at a minimal cost. Contact them via phone at 210-567-0671.

Panel Drug Screen Test

- Some Host Institutions require a Panel Drug Screen Test. UTHSA does not offer drug screen testing on campus. Students are responsible for obtaining the test and the cost.
- In the past, students have gone to urgent care clinics or their primary care provider to obtain this Panel Drug Screen Test. It is up to the student to determine the best location for this test for their budget and schedule.

Letters of Recommendation

- Students can request these from various faculty members. VSLO allows students to upload these letters themselves.

Letter of Good Standing

- If a VSLO school requires a Letter of Good Standing, students should email Ms. Norma Fox (foxn@uthscsa.edu).

Personal Statements or Writing Samples

- Some institutions require personal statements or other writing samples. Be sure to get someone to review these before you submit them

To obtain credit for an away rotation:
Students must complete the Course Approval Form.

Information for Applying to Non-VSLO Institutions

Most LCME-accredited schools require students to apply through VSLO. However, the Office of Student Affairs can assist students in applying for non-LCME programs, special admission programs or private entities, all of which might require a paper application.

Any applications or documents that require completion and approval signatures can be emailed to Ms. Norma Fox (foxn@uthscsa.edu) or brought to the Office of

Undergraduate Medical Education. Students have the option to receive signed documents via email or in person. Turn-around time is normally 24-48 business hours.

If a non-VSLO Host Institution requires a copy of an official transcript, please contact the Office of the Registrar (registrars@uthscsa.edu) to request an updated copy. A small fee may be incurred.

Please direct inquiries not covered in this guide to Ms. Norma Fox (foxn@uthscsa.edu).

Receiving Credit for Away Rotations

- Students must fill out a "Course Approval Form" to receive academic credit. This form requires the attachment of a course description for approval.
 - The form must be completed, including contact information for the student while on the rotation and the period for which the student wishes to receive credit.
 - The specialty department reviews and approves the form first, followed by the Office of Student Affairs approval.
 - After all approvals have been obtained, the form will be sent to the Office of the Registrar for processing.
- A Course Approval Form must be completed prior to the student leaving for an away rotation. Retroactive credit will not be granted.
- Additionally, for a student to receive academic credit, a current Affiliation Agreement must be in place. This agreement serves to keep standards consistent between UT Health San Antonio and the institution you are visiting.
 - To ensure your prospective institution has an up-to-date Affiliation Agreement, please email Ms. Fox (foxn@uthscsa.edu).
 - It is possible that updating an Affiliation Agreement will take up to a month. To avoid delays in your rotations and credit, please contact Ms. Fox as soon as possible after accepting your away rotation.

Helpful Hints from Students to Students

The hints below were created exclusively by MS4 students and do not reflect the opinion of the Office of Undergraduate Medical Education or Veritas faculty and staff.

When researching institutions, it will be helpful to note the requirements for each individual institution, as they may differ.

Items of Note:

- Immunization form – Does the institution use the standardized immunization form? If not, look at what information they need. Some require only vaccination dates while others may require titers instead of vaccination dates. Make a note of the titers you need so you can get them completed. After you have decided where to apply, it will help if you print out all of the different immunization forms you will need, so you only have to make one trip to get them all filled out.
- If you need to get a new vaccine or need to be re-vaccinated, make sure and save the original documentation provided for you at the clinic. Some programs may require the original documentation rather than the medical school's immunization sheet.
- Take a look at the institutions' websites and find any extra requirements they may have. Some institutions have requirements that are not posted on VSLO, such as letters of recommendation or letters of interest. For certain specialties, many programs are starting to require "Letters of Interest". I found it helpful to write a few paragraphs covering "why I am applying to {insert specialty}" and then tailor the end of the letter to the specific program. This way, you can reuse the same first half of the letter for multiple programs.
- If it helps you stay organized, make an excel sheet with all the requirements and check them off as you complete them. Some programs may require proof of particular certifications, such as BBP (Bloodborne Pathogens) training. Many of these certifications are on the "Knowledge Center" website (<https://kc.uthscsa.edu>).
- If applying to a specialty in which spots for away rotations are competitive, make note of any programs which do not use VSLO. You can consider applying to these. Although this requires a little extra work, these programs typically receive fewer applications.
- Step 1 Score, minimum requirements: certain institutions advertise minimum Step 1 scores for away applicants. Do not let this deter you from applying to a specific program even if you do not meet the minimum requirements, and especially not if it is a program where you have ties/strong interest in attending (i.e. in hometown/significant other's hometown, close to family, known for a specific area of research/practice interest). I do recommend you apply early AND write a letter of interest (detailing your connection to the program) even if it is optional. If that institution offers multiple electives in your specialty of choice, apply for ALL of them during the months you would be interested in attending to show commitment/interest to the program.
- It is inevitable that all of your desired rotations will not chronologically fall into place in perfect four-week blocks. If you want to do an away rotation at X

institution, then you will likely apply to multiple available blocks for that institution. However, for institution Y, these dates will likely not be in sync with institution X. For example, if institution X has an available block August 3 – August 29, then institution Y may have an available block Aug 17 – Sep 14. You might lose a week or two here and there. These weeks add up when you're trying to get LORs from away rotations before Sept 15 (opening of ERAS residency application). It would be wise to prioritize your most desired rotation and schedule around that. On some institutions' websites, they will state whether or not they will work with your schedule to deviate from their blocks. Keep in mind that you will have 2 weeks after your last rotation ends before the first block of 4th year starts. If you need to complete your home sub-I and are having difficulty scheduling, it might be worth an email to the program coordinator to see if you can start one or two weeks early or late in order to better line up your away rotations in order. Plan your rotations accordingly and don't forget that you will likely need to take Step 2 in the midst of this process.

- Doing an away rotation at an institution can open up an entire region of the country that may be of interest to you. For example, if you have a strong idea that you would like to do residency in the Northeast, then you should do an away in New York, Boston, etc. If you want to land in the Midwest, then you should do an away rotation in that region. This tells programs that you have genuine interest in that part of the country.
- No matter how you look at it, this process can be very intimidating and uncertain. Although you may not create the most perfect away rotation schedule, it will all work out in the end. Do your best to plan well and go from there.

Factors to consider when applying to rotations:

Cost

- How expensive will it be to live in this city?
- Can you drive to the city your rotation is in? Or will you need to rent a car for the month?

Location

- If you want to leave Texas for residency, doing an away rotation in your region of interest is strongly encouraged.
- If you don't have a specific region of interest but are planning to apply broadly, doing an away rotation may make you stand out to programs outside of Texas and increase your interview invites in other regions. TL;dr - if you want to leave Texas, rotate somewhere else (and preferably outside the South, unless you only want to be in Texas or the South).

Letter of Recommendation (LOR) Requirements

- If you are hoping to get a letter from the rotation, the latest you should consider rotating there is September. Although a LOR/S is a given for most away rotations, it is best to talk to the program coordinator to clarify the requirements and process of obtaining a letter.

Interview Invite

- If you are auditioning for a program in hopes of getting an interview, it is preferable to rotate by October and certainly no later than November. Many programs send out all their interview invites at once, so if you haven't rotated by the time they send them, you may be out of luck.
- Possibility of getting an interview from the program. Many programs do not guarantee that you will get an invitation to interview there, even if you rotate with their program. However, there are things you can do to increase your chances:
 1. Come early, stay late, and be as helpful to residents as possible. Forming friendships with residents can go a long way toward their advocating for you to faculty, since they are the ones who will be working with the next year's interns (i.e., you!).
 2. At the end of your first week, schedule a one-on-one meeting with the program director during the third week of your rotation for you to get feedback. If you haven't been offered an interview by then, it would be fair game to use the feedback session to advocate for yourself, why you think they should interview you, and why you think you would be a good fit.
 3. For most specialties, some sort of inpatient rotation will be best for securing an interview, as it will allow exposure to several residents and faculty. Your goal is to become someone that they will miss having around the department at the end of your elective.

Elective Options

- Review the different electives offered at the institution in your field of interest. You pay per institution, not elective, so it may be beneficial to apply to multiple electives and multiple time blocks per program.
- Some programs will not review your application until two months before the start of your elective.
- When you research programs before applying, be sure to note certain dates:
 - Application submission
 - Application review
 - Decision of acceptance

Note: *Some programs have a considerable amount of time between the time you submit your application and the time they offer a rotation.*

Where to Live

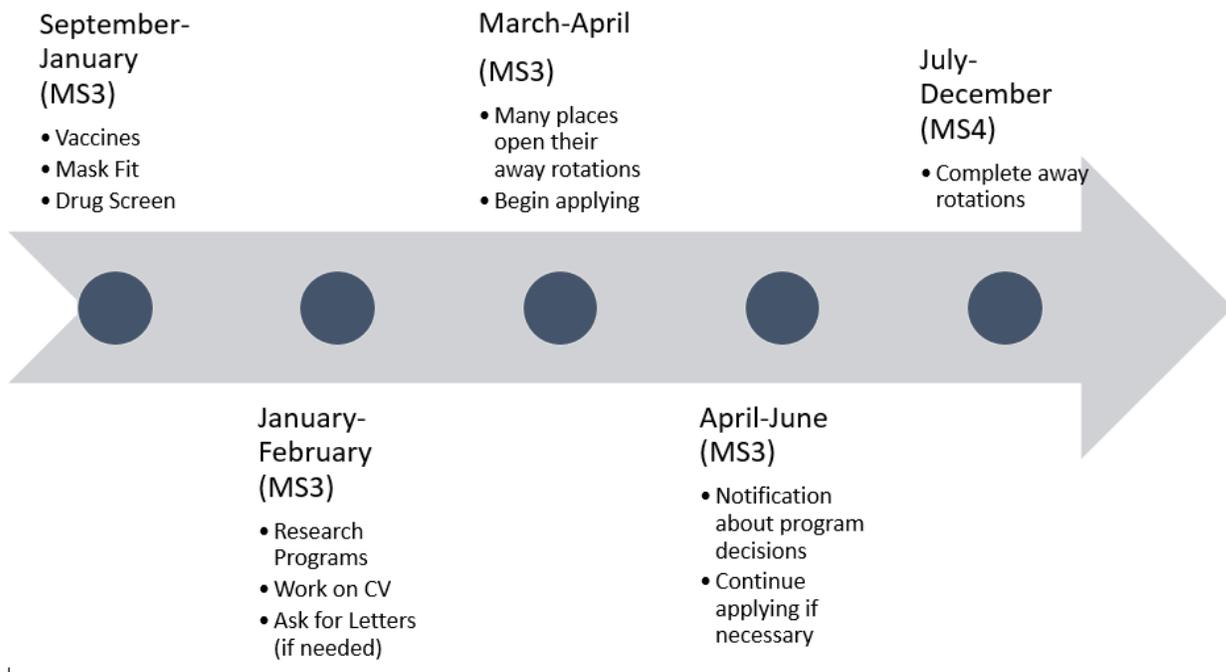
- Rotatingroom.com
- Airbnb
- Extended stay hotels
- Some programs offer housing: Consider asking the program coordinator for suggestions or if any residents have offered rooming for rotators.
- Family or friends in the area
- Don't be afraid to reach out to current MS4s or UTHSA residents in your specialty.

Note: *If away rotations are required by your specialty, it would be beneficial to apply more widely, because it will be more competitive than if you are doing an away rotation by choice.*

Once you have been offered away rotation spot:

- You will have 1-2 weeks to accept or deny the offer.
- If you are turning down an invitation to do an away rotation, be aware that depending on the specialty and program, you may not get an invitation to interview.
- As soon as your away schedule is set, withdraw all remaining programs immediately so that you will not have to deny any offers.
- Programs run on different schedules than UTHSA:
 - Some are flexible on dates and will let you fit the rotation to your schedule.
 - Some will not be flexible, so plan for this.
 - Step 2 CK and CS have to be scheduled during the first half of fourth year, so plan your away rotations accordingly.

Timeline of Events



Long School of Medicine

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