
Directives for the Elective term

01.01.2021

For reasons of legibility, the simultaneous use of male and female language forms is dispensed with. All personal designations apply expressly to both genders.

The Faculty of Biomedical Sciences of the Università della Svizzera italiana decides the following directives for the Elective term of the Master of Medicine:

1. General considerations

PROFILES - Principal Relevant Objectives and a Framework for Integrative Learning and Education (www.profilesmed.ch) describe competence-based learning objectives without focusing on specific disciplines, but integrating medical disciplines in medical situations. This promotes the intellectual autonomy of the students and at the same time gives them a holistic view of medical practice. PROFILES also focus on the Medical Expert and should serve as an orientation to help students plan and complete their Elective term in a goal-oriented way.

1.1. General training objectives

During the Elective term, the focus is on learning practical medical skills and abilities, including social and communicative aspects. The different competences and roles that a medical activity requires and for which the students take the first steps in the Elective term are listed in the chapter “GOs - General Objectives” in PROFILES. It is worthwhile to draw up a personal interim balance from time to time during the Elective term to make sure that the contents learned match the GOs.

1.2. Specific learning goals

Specific, subject-related learning objectives for the Elective term can be found in the chapters “EPAs – Entrustable Professional Activities” and “SSPs – Situations as Starting Points” in PROFILES. It is not always possible to cover all learning objectives, depending on the variability of the individual stations. Special attention should be given to the learning of practical skills, as the Elective term provides particularly suitable conditions for this.

2. Training as Candidatus Medicinae (CandMed)

2.1. Activities

The training during the Elective term is an all-day practical work as CandMed in hospitals, medical practices, institutes and other health care facilities, under the guidance and supervision of doctors responsible for the training.

2.2. Rights and duties

In all activities, students have the right to thorough instruction and attentive control by their assistant doctor, senior physician and chief physician if necessary, or the doctor in the practice. In return and for the relief of the training physicians, the CandMeds support them in all medical work, as far as it corresponds to the already acquired skills, and also perform night and weekend service. After having proved suitable abilities, the CandMeds look after a small number of patients or carry out other medical tasks independently, depending on the level of training.

2.3. Freedom of choice

The choice of CandMed positions during the Elective term is generally free. The students themselves are responsible for arranging their Elective term in such a way that the learning and training goals are achieved. However, the Dean's Office reserves the right to request changes to the proposed programme if the composition of the programme does not correspond to the learning and training objectives of the Elective term. The approval of the Elective term programme by the Dean's Office is therefore required in all cases. Once approved, the Elective term programme is binding.

2.4. No changes

Changes to the Elective term programme are not permitted. In exceptional cases, which are particularly justified, changes may be asked through a prior written application to the Dean's Office and accepted after approval of the clinic concerned.

3. Documentation and tests

To document the activities and the workplace-based examinations in the Elective term and to support self-assessment, students have to log into the e-platform Checkpoint and fill in all the requested information for all the positions as CandMed during the Elective term and to complete workplace-based practical examinations (Mini-CEX) at least once a month.

4. Formal guidelines for the Elective term

The Elective term must be completed and documented in accordance with the Study regulations of the Master of Medicine. The recognition of the signed-off activities by the Dean's Office is a prerequisite for concluding the Master of Medicine. It is the students' responsibility to fill in all the requested fields on Checkpoint after completion of their Elective term.

Deviations from the Study regulations in the sense of exceptions are possible if they have been applied for, justified and approved in writing beforehand. Applications must be submitted to the Dean's Office.

4.1. Time and duration

The Elective term must be completed during the fall semester of the 3rd year of Master and only after successfully completing the 2nd year of Master. The Elective term lasts at least 6 months and a total of 30 ECTS must be acquired (5 ECTS per month). Additional months are allowed, but not taken into account.

The 6 months of CandMed should be completed between 1 August and 28 February inclusive.

A position as a CandMed must last at least one or more full calendar month (1 to 30/31 of a month). Shorter employment periods or incomplete months will only be recognised in justified and exceptional cases and after prior approval of the Dean's Office.

A month of military service at the paramedic troops is accounted for the purposes of the elective semester, if it is in the period from 1 August to 28 February inclusive. The Swiss Armed Forces medical officer school is recognised as 2 months for the elective semester, if it takes place in the period from 1 August to 28 February inclusive. Students doing the 2 months Swiss Armed Forces medical officer school are generally not allowed to combine it with spending 2 months at scientific institutes (see 4.2. Scientific Institutes).

4.2. Approved training institutions

It is recommended to complete the Elective term in hospitals listed by the Faculty (list available on the website of the Faculty: www.biomed.usi.ch/en/study/study-medicine/master-of-medicine/elective-term). In addition, it is recommended to spend at least 1 month in the field of General Internal Medicine (out-patient or in-patient).

The following clinics are also suitable for the CandMed training:

Clinics in Switzerland

Clinics in Switzerland, which are listed as educational facilities at FMH (<https://www.siwf-register.ch>) and are managed by a full-time chief physician who assumes the responsibility for the training in accordance with the directives for the Elective term.

Clinics abroad

Up to 2 months of the Elective term can be spent at clinics abroad, provided they are affiliated to universities as teaching hospitals. Internships abroad lasting longer than 2 months can be approved upon request. Internships abroad should only be planned after obtaining sufficient clinical experience in Switzerland. Applications for foreign, non-university training centres must be submitted to the Dean's Office for approval, together with the necessary information on the quality of the training (e.g. number of beds, departments, name of the chief physician responsible for training).

Doctors in independent practice

Up to 2 months of the Elective term can be spent in a medical practice, provided it is managed by a medical student trainer ("Lehrarzt" according to FMH requirements). A list of the practicing doctors in Ticino who are willing to train students during the Elective term is available at the Dean's Office upon request. Other doctors are also admitted if they have a federal diploma and practice in Switzerland, or if they work in Switzerland as established doctors.

Other health institutions in Switzerland

Up to 2 months of the Elective term can be spent in other health institutions in Switzerland (health authorities, etc.), provided that they are under the direction of a full-time chief

physician who assumes the responsibility for the training in accordance with the study regulations for the Elective term, and provided that a medical activity is carried out. In any case, the application must be submitted to the Dean's office for approval.

Scientific Institutes

Upon request, research work can be carried out in scientific institutes for up to 2 months of the Elective term. The work must be carried out in a university or an institution equivalent to a university.

4.3. Planning

The "Personal form CandMed-Programme" is issued by the Dean's Office at the beginning of the 1st year of Master and is available on the website.

In the 1st and 2nd years of Master, students apply to the accredited training centres for employment as CandMeds. If the application is successful, the time of commencement and duration of the individual employment must be certified by the chief physician (confirmation letter or email) and sent to the Dean's Office, together with the CandMed programme. In case of an internship abroad, other forms of written confirmation of employment can also be accepted.

The entire Elective term programme of at least 6 months must be submitted electronically to the Dean's Office for approval by 30 May of the year in which the elective term begins. The approved programme is handed over to the student, a copy remains in the Dean's Office.

After approval of the complete Elective term programme by the Dean's Office and after passing all planned exams until and including the 2nd year of Master, the student is entitled to begin the Elective term.

At the end of the Elective term, it is the students' responsibility to hand in at the Dean's Office the completed set of signed attestations and evaluations together with the signed CandMed programme (by latest 30 March).

4.4. Evaluation

Confirmation of jobs completed

After the student has finished a job as a CandMed, the chief physician will sign the Elective term programme and certify that the training has been completed in accordance with the agreement.

Deadline for submission and evaluation

After completing the entire Elective term, students must hand-in all the signed attestations (including received evaluation sheets and certificates), as well as their signed CandMed programme to the Dean's Office, latest by 30 March of the year in which the Elective term ends. However, there is no assessment of the documented learning content.

After checking the attestations and the completeness of the evaluation, the final certificate is issued by the Dean's Office and the ECTS are credited.