

Electives

~Rural perspectives~

Presentation by Claire Schiller, Jasmine Waslowski, and Patricia Wescott

Special thanks to our contributors!

Brooke Edwards - current 4th year student at Western, future Family Medicine Resident at McMaster in Owen Sound

Alex Pearce - current 3rd year student at McMaster, future Family Medicine Resident at McMaster in Collingwood

Emmett Harrison - current 4th year student at UofS, future Family Medicine Resident at UofS in Swift Current

Christine Patterson - current 3rd year student at UofA, future Anaesthesia Resident at USask in Saskatoon

Claire Schiller - current PGY1 in Family Medicine at McMaster in Owen Sound, former UBC student

Disclaimer

This session is based on the *personal experience of contributors*, not CaRMS statistics or other data.



PART 1: FAQs

And don't forget to ask us yours!



How do I find electives of interest?

Reasons for doing electives...

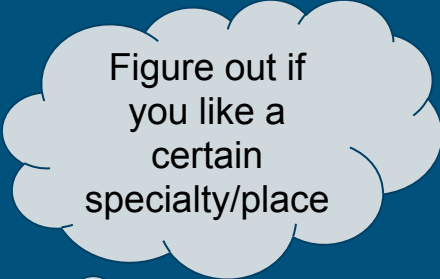





Figure out if
you like a
certain
specialty/place



Strengthen
your
application for
residency



Develop your
skills/knowledge
in a certain area



Try
something
new

How do I find electives of interest?

Tips:

- Ask like-minded senior students (e.g. SRPC friends!)
- Go to recruitment booths at events like R&R or FMF (e.g. Northern Medical Services Saskatchewan)
- Browse AFMC!
 - Look for interesting or obscure electives, then email administration to get more information (e.g. Clinical Ultrasound at UofS)

Claire's approach

Brainstorm a list of things you:

A. did in clerkship and really enjoyed

- a. Like lots of specialities? Do electives in these early; helps with the decisions, can give letters or both, reaffirms your chosen speciality

B. didn't do in clerkship and want to learn

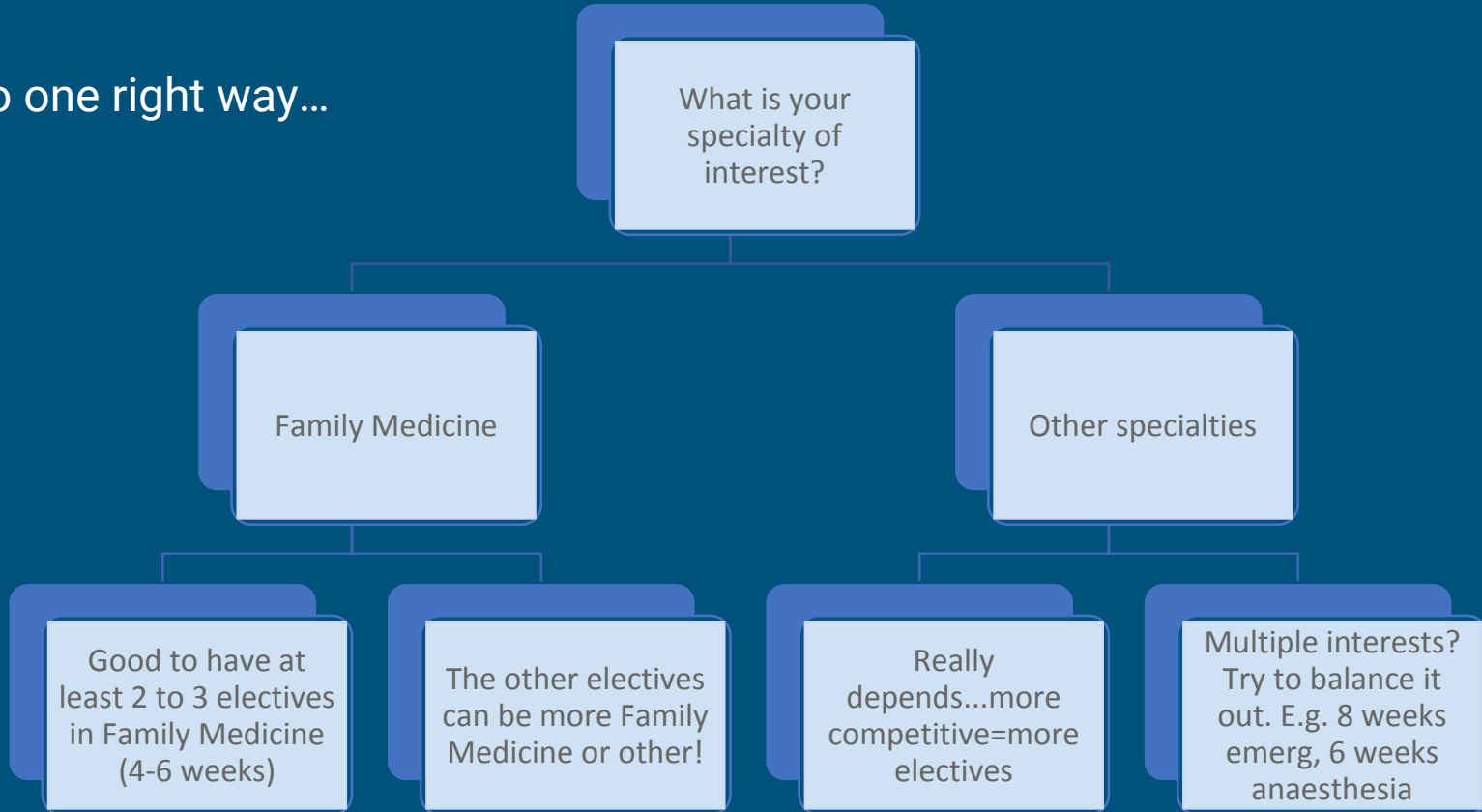
- a. Peds emerg and CCU were not part of my clerkship experience, but I thought both would be valuable learning for future practice

C. unique medical opportunities (or places)

- a. Organ transplant? Public Health in Whitehorse? Deliver a baby?

How many should I do in the specialty I want?

No one right way...



How important is it to do electives across Canada vs. staying in my home province?

- No formal requirement to do an elective at a school to be considered for residency
- Most schools know it's difficult to get an elective everywhere (e.g UBC)
- Probably helpful to do at least one out of province to show interest and keep options open
- If applying to a more competitive program, important to broaden your elective locations
- Can also be helpful to have been there when ranking residency sites

Do I need to do an elective at the school I want to attend for residency?

Most people still got interviews at schools they did not do an elective with.

Can also go the other way.

If you know you want to go to a particular school, doesn't hurt to have an elective there if you can make it happen.

How long should electives be?

2 weeks

Mostly. Some also are 1 or 3 or 4 weeks. Depends on the elective requirements and your personal preference.

When should I do different electives? Pre vs post-CaRMS

<i>Pre CaRMS</i>	<i>Around CaRMS deadline</i>	<i>Post CaRMS</i>
<p>1. Specialty of interest</p> <p><i>Get reference letters, show commitment</i></p>	<p>1. Something less busy/stressful</p> <p><i>More time to finish CaRMS</i> <i>Protip: Public Health!</i></p> <p>2. Not in your specialty of interest</p> <p><i>Especially if you aren't applying to that school</i></p>	<p>1. Unique opportunities - cool places, different clinical areas</p> <p>2. Something at home</p> <p><i>Sleep in your own bed</i></p>



PART 2: Application Systems



The dreaded AFMC



AFMC

- Main electives portal
- Costs \$200 to make an account
- Each school has a page with description for their main electives requirements
 - May include immunization documents, Criminal Record Check, photo, CV, health insurance
- Section for browsing elective options at different schools - useful!
- Electives wishlist to help you keep track

Canadian

Title	Specialty	Subspecialty	Location	Blackouts	Year Offered	Language
Anaesthesia [Amherst, NS]	Anesthesiology	General [Amherst, NS]	Cumberland Regional Health Care Centre [Amherst, NS] (19428 Highway 2 RR 6 Amherst NS B4H 1N6)		Any Year	EN
Anaesthesia [Annapolis Valley, NS]	Anesthesiology	General [Annapolis Valley, NS]	Valley Regional Hospital [Annapolis Valley (Kentville), NS] (150 Exhibition Street Kentville NS B4N 5E3)		Any Year	EN
Anaesthesia [Cape Breton, NS]	Anesthesiology	General [Cape Breton, NS]	Cape Breton Regional Hospital [Cape Breton (Sydney), NS] (1482 George Street Sydney NS B1P 1P3)		Any Year	EN
Anaesthesia [Charlottetown, PE]	Anesthesiology	General [Charlottetown, PE]	Queen Elizabeth Hospital [Charlottetown, PE] (60 Riverside Drive PO Box 6600 Charlottetown PE C1A 8T5)		Any Year	EN
Anaesthesia [Halifax, NS]	Anesthesiology	General [Halifax, NS] (min/max 2 weeks)	QEII - Victoria General Site [Halifax, NS] (1276 South Park Street Halifax NS B3H 2Y9)		Any Year	EN
Anaesthesia [Miramichi, NB]	Anesthesiology	General [Miramichi, NB]	Location to be determined		Any Year	EN FR
Anaesthesia [Moncton, NB]	Anesthesiology	General [Moncton, NB]	The Moncton Hospital [Moncton, NB] (135 MacBeath Avenue Moncton NB E1C 6Z8)		Any Year	EN
Anaesthesia [New Glasgow, NS]	Anesthesiology	General [New Glasgow, NS] (min/max 2 weeks)	Aberdeen Regional Hospital [New Glasgow, NS] (835 East River Road New Glasgow NS B2H 3S6)		Any Year	EN
Anaesthesia [Saint John, NB]	Anesthesiology	General [Saint John, NB]	Saint John Regional Hospital [Saint John, NB] (400 University Street Saint John NB A1B 4X6)		Any Year	EN

AFMC

Most people, at some point in the electives process, become frustrated with AFMC.

- Costs \$\$ to apply for each elective - often non-refundable
- Tedious to collect required documents for each school
- Schools can take a long time to respond once you've made a request
- Requests are rejected

Home school electives



Photo by [Luke Stackpoole](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Most schools have a separate system to apply for electives if you go there.

Usually easier and free.

Can help find something local if rejected from an AFMC application with little time before the elective date.

University of Calgary is different

Most schools really hate if you email them in advance to applying on AFMC. They hate it even more if you email individual preceptors.

University of Calgary is the opposite. Figure out the elective with them, then register it on AFMC (still don't contact preceptors first).



Photo by [Noah Näf](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Rural Elective Programs

1. **ROMP (Rural Ontario Medical Program):** <https://romponline.com/>
2. **ERMEP (Eastern Regional Medical Education Program):**
<https://www.ermep.com/>

Above organizations have their own application system for electives in affiliated communities. No fees! And funding available for 4-week electives.

Hot tip: be persistent and follow up if you are really interested in an elective!

Rural Elective Programs

Alberta has a similar organization - can help find rural preceptors and funding.

RhPAP (Rural Health Professions Action Plan): <https://rhpap.ca/>



How many electives to apply for per slot?

Tricky question!

Most people say 1-2...can be expensive to apply for more than 2 at a time.

If you don't get it, your home school can help fill the gap.

Some people apply for a home school elective at the same time, then cancel it if they receive confirmation for the AFMC elective.



PART 4: Going on Elective

ROAD TRIP!!!!!!!



Housing

Facebook groups

Friends/family

Small towns
providing learner
housing

AFMC/School
websites

Airbnb

Transitions



- Navigating new hospitals and cities can be exhausting
- Give yourself extra time
- Remind your preceptor you're coming
 - Ask where and when to meet
 - Confirm work duties and any training dates
 - Let them know if you are going elsewhere for the next elective - may let you go early
- Be prepared for technology not to work (log-in info, etc)
- Do things for yourself to balance the stress (e.g. running!)



PART 4: Case Examples

Different applicant approaches



1. The undifferentiated applicant

Meet Christine!



- UofA student
- Loved many things and changed her mind many times!
- Did a longitudinal 3rd year to get rural family exposure (10 months)
- Did clerkship electives in anaesthesia (4 weeks), emerg (8 weeks), ICU (3 weeks), urban family (1 week)
- CaRMS apps for emerg, anaesthesia, family medicine
- Ultimately ranked rural family below the others because partner needs to live in city for work
- Matched to anaesthesia UofS

2. The rural medicine gunner

Meet Alex



- McMaster student
- Knew she wanted rural family from the beginning
- Electives in family medicine (5 weeks - 3 hospitalist, 2 full scope rural), geri psych (3 weeks), shelter health (2 weeks), public health (2 weeks)
 - After CaRMS: research (2 weeks), rural family (2 weeks), OBS/GYN (2 weeks)
 - Managed to do electives at all but one school of interest
- Applied to family medicine, matched in Collingwood (McMaster)

questions?

To connect with any of the contributors of this presentation,
email chairstudents@srpc.ca