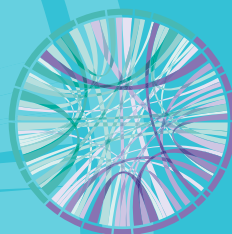




Best practice for elective programmes

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Ethical electives:

It's important to help students understand the ethics involved with an elective (host burden, carbon footprint, cultural differences, rules on photography etc.).

However this also relates to *Point 3* – it is the shared responsibility of both students and staff to adequately prepare. Medical schools should offer, ideally mandatory, ethical electives training and invite students to consider ethics in advance of the elective.

Always consider a back up plan:

It is not uncommon for initial elective plans to fall through. Students should always consider alternative arrangements as a back plan should circumstances change.

What should schools do to enhance student experience?

1. All parties must approach planning with an open mind and a willingness to be flexible.
2. Be aided by robust elective framework and policies, and a detailed risk assessment.
3. Balance of responsibility – the medical school is responsible for its students, but medical students are adults and are expected to share this responsibility.
4. Administrative oversight is key. A good admin framework is essential to keep both students and the public safe.

Scenario - Kimi

Kimi's elective in Germany has fallen through as the host supervisor is now on long term leave. She is offered a placement at a local GP practice to complete an asthma audit instead.

Kimi finds a last-minute opportunity to work on an island specialising in lava burns through a friend on social media and now wishes to change projects.

Should the change be approved?

On what basis would an extension be applied when she has a GP placement already?

Workshop thoughts:

- The deadline may need to be extended to relieve the pressure of admin – this will allow more time to investigate.
- Students are encouraged to plan their own electives and the new elective may provide the opportunity to do so, compared with the pre-organised GP placement.
- The student may find this experience more interesting and should be given time to find out if the

experience is genuine.

- Has the student agreed to the GP placement because she was worried about missing the deadline. Is there enough time before the elective to research further?
- The elective lead needs to step in and discuss with the student how the new project relates to their learning objectives.

Best practice:

“All parties must approach planning with an open mind and a willingness to be flexible.”

Changes can happen very last minute so a degree of flexibility, where appropriate, is good practice.

Things to consider:

It is not always possible to change projects just because a student found a better offer. It's important to also consider how the student and university will be perceived by hosts.

In Kimi's situation, a decision would depend on the terms of her GP elective - was it offered to help the student as their original elective fell through or did the student commit to completing a placement? Is the GP aware they are a Plan B option?

Scenario - Kimi

The extension is considered but Kimi will need to discuss the project with the Elective Lead. The Elective Lead is currently on leave.

How urgent is this?

Should the co-ordinator call the Elective Lead and would they expect to be disturbed?

Workshop thoughts:

Best practice:

“Balance of responsibility – the medical school is responsible for its students”

- Does the elective lead need to be there or is there a level of responsibility to respond to the student?
- It is dependent on framework and context
- Requires clear communication between the team
- Flexible deadlines will relieve part of this burden

Best practice:

“Administrative oversight is key. A good admin framework is essential to keeping students and public safe.”

“Be aided by robust elective framework and policies, and a detailed risk assessment.”

Best practice:

“Balance of responsibility – the medical school is responsible for its students, but medical students are adults and are expected to share this responsibility.”

- Elective approval form will need to be signed off by personal tutor so a discussion with the student is required.
- More information about the placement and the supervisor is needed
- What is the educational benefit?

The student is responsible for answering these queries but should also have access to staff to discuss further and help guide them.

What would you want to see on a risk assessment?

- More details on location - where will the student work, which wards, where will they stay etc.
- Who is the clinical supervisor?
- Is a medical supervisor needed?

What about funding?

- The student will need to go to the insurance teams to confirm details of cover and if the placement is allowed - how dangerous is the island?

What degree is the medical school responsible for accommodation?

- This would be considered in the risk assessment - the student would need to consider where to live, buy food, safety, who they will be staying with etc.

What is best practice in Kimi's situation?

Workshop thoughts:

- Offer realistic level of support but student must still follow the same framework as other students.
- Check with GP if practice considers itself the firm offer
- The elective lead needs to know and discuss with student

- A sensible extension should be offered to reduce admin burden and allow the student and co-ordinator more time to investigate
- Proposal needs to be sensible and student should consider how it relates to the objectives set in initial German elective.
- The student needs to complete a proposal and risk assessment which is checked and discussed with elective co-ordinators.
- The student may want to consider exploring what options are available on the original German elective - could a replacement be found for the staff member now on leave? Students should be encouraged to scrutinise options.
- Consider unconscious bias when making decision (would a decision be affected by how well we know the student?)

Scenario - Kimi

The island elective is eventually approved and the project is endorsed. However there is another supervisor at Kimi's elective who she has described to you as overbearing. Kimi has told you she finds the supervisor "creepy" due to certain comments he has made and is feeling uncomfortable. She is staying with another female medical student.

Best practice:

"Balance of responsibility – the medical school is responsible for its students"

Best practice:

"Administrative oversight is key. A good admin framework is essential to keeping students and public safe."

What do you do?

Is this your business?

- The medical school has a duty to take care of the student and it is always the medical schools business.

What should the university do?

- Discuss the matter with the student - has she talked to the supervisor, students are adults but there may be pros and cons from the student's perspective to speak directly with the supervisor.

Best practice:

“Administrative oversight is key. A good admin framework is essential to keeping students and public safe.”

“Be aided by robust elective framework and policies, and a detailed risk assessment.”

- Manage the situation the same way as you would in the UK - you cannot second guess the situation.
- Advise the student to ask the other female student for support as well.
- If she thinks the situation is out of hand, find the resources to bring the medical student home.

The best practice is, of course, student safety is most important. If the student needs to come home, then the medical should work to arrange this. If it is serious enough, potentially the university insurance may be able to assist with costs.

A robust quality assurance framework is needed but there must also be an element of compassion for students. A supportive framework is best practice and personal difficulties can become learning points.

This should not be decided on a case by case basis on your own, but by looking at policies in discussion with the wider team.

Questions to consider

- Who is best placed to manage these enquiries?
- What systems do we need in place - pre/during/post elective?
- How do we recognise and manage enquiries that are unusual and could they be answered by any member of the team?
- What do we need to do to best prepare academic and support teams for best practice?
- What are the potential advantages of working across schools?