USMLE STEP 2

When should I take Step 2 CK (Written)?
Usually students that have a Step 1 score they are not happy with, take Step 2 early - sometime in August or September - so that it can potentially counter-balance their Step 1 performance. Generally students who receive a 210 on Step 1 or below take their Step 2 exam by August 15th. There is also a benefit to taking it close to the MS3 shelf exams. Many students who end with Medicine in July take USMLE Step 2CK in August.

Do most students take a month off to study for Step 2?
Since all of the clerkship shelf exams throughout third year essentially comprise the Step 2 exam, students do not usually spend as much studying intensively as they did on Step 1. Some students take 2 weeks off and take a “light” 2 week elective. Some students take a month off to study, especially when they wish to do significantly better on Step 2.

When should I take Step 2 CS (Clinical Skills)?
You will be taking a Downstate Clinical Skills Assessment test in June 2010 that is remarkably similar to the Step 2 CS. Your performance results come in by mid-July. You should not schedule your USMLE Step 2CS prior to August 1 to be certain to have your local results first in case there are specific areas you need to work on. The exam is Pass/Fail – no numeric score. Most students schedule the exam in a month following either a Subinternship or Emergency Medicine rotation when they get lots of experience doing Histories and Physicals.

RESIDENCY APPLICATION PROCESS

What is the target date for submitting residency program applications?
The target date to submit your ERAS (Electronic Residency Application Service) application is between September 1 and September 15. However, some students are still undecided on career choice and submit applications for more than one specialty. Letters of recommendation supporting your application are usually not due prior to November 1.

When should I take electives in support of my residency application?
Students usually take electives in the specialty or specialties they are considering between July and November of the senior year.

How will I know which electives I should take to best support my residency application?
Clinical departments will be holding advisement sessions during April 2010 to assist you with elective selection as well as guidance on the residency application process for their field. Senior students will also hold a residency forum after they have matched to give peer-to-peer advice on the residency process.

AWAY (EXTRAMURAL) ELECTIVES

When should I begin to research away electives?
You can start any time you feel you have time over the next few months. Most institutions do not start accepting applications until March of the third year. An exception to that may be the specialty hospitals such as New York Eye and Ear or Hospital for Joint Diseases – they may begin the process earlier.

If I decide to do an away elective(s), what month(s) would be best?
Away electives can be done any time between August and November of the fall semester. We usually do not recommend doing an away elective in July because the hospitals tend to be quite chaotic with the start of the new interns and if you're in a new place that you're not familiar with, you may get lost in the shuffle. Some programs grant interviews to those students who do visiting electives with their department.
SENIOR COURSEWORK

When will I be putting my senior schedule together?
   Primary Care 2 – January 2010 (assigned)
   Core Remaining Clerkships – February 2010
   Electives/Subinternship – April/May 2010

Where will my Primary Care 2 course be put into my schedule?
   General Guidelines:
     - If you began the third year with the Medicine/Surgery combination – your Primary Care 2 course will be scheduled sometime between July and November.
     - If you end the third year with Medicine – your Primary Care 2 course will be scheduled either February, April or May of the spring semester.
     - If you have clerkship shelf exams to take over the summer or have other required coursework that are required to be taken in the fall, your Primary Care 2 course will be scheduled as late as possible in the senior year, space permitting.

Am I required to take 2 weeks off to study for a clerkship shelf examination I need to retake?
   Yes. The school wants to give you the best opportunity to pass the shelf and requires the study period.