

Statement of Risk

University of Maryland School of Medicine (June 23, 2020)

The novel coronavirus, COVID-19, has been declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization. COVID-19 is extremely contagious and is believed to spread mainly from person-to-person contact. As a result, federal, state, and local governments and federal and state health agencies recommend social distancing and have, in many locations, prohibited or limited the congregation of groups of people.

The University of Maryland, Baltimore (“UMB”) and the University of Maryland School of Medicine (“UMSOM”) provide clinical placement and experiential opportunities for students in its health professions and other academic programs. For many UMB programs, clinical and experiential placements are an essential part of the curriculum and a mandatory prerequisite for completing a course of study and obtaining a degree.

Despite having put in place preventive measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19, UMSOM cannot guarantee that a student will not become infected with COVID-19 when on the UMB campus or participating in a clinical or experiential rotation at an off-campus location. UMSOM does not maintain authority or control over, and cannot assume responsibility for, the safety practices and procedures of some facilities where UMSOM students participate in clinical and experiential rotations. Furthermore, attending a clinical placement or experiential rotation could increase a student’s risk of contracting COVID-19.

UMB programs will begin controlled re-opening of clinical placements and experiential activities in accordance with campus guidelines as approved by the UMB President, acting in consultation with Deans, health and safety experts and academic advisors. Re-opening decisions may be made on a program by program basis and opportunities may be limited. When necessary, clinical and experiential placements will be authorized on a student-by-student basis, considering the extent of opportunities available and those students most in need of a clinical or experiential engagement in order to complete a course of study without undue delay. Decisions will take into account the measures needed to limit risk to students as well as risks to patients, clients, faculty and staff and the public.

Before engaging in a clinical or experiential activity, students should inform themselves fully of the risks. Students should consider the contagious nature of COVID-19 and the risk that they may be exposed to or infected by COVID-19 by attending a clinical or experiential activity and that such exposure or infection may result in personal injury, illness, permanent disability, and death. The risk of becoming exposed to or infected by COVID-19 at a clinical rotation or experiential activity may result from the actions, omissions, or negligence of the student and others, including, but not limited to, clinical staff, volunteers, and patients and their families. Even absent such negligence and if all parties involved in a clinical rotation exercise reasonable care to mitigate the risk of exposure to COVID-19, a student may be exposed to COVID-19 and become infected.

A student who wishes to receive more information or who wants to defer participation in clinical or experiential placement due to COVID-19 risks should promptly contact their program director or school Office of Student Affairs to discuss options and possible ways to minimize delay in academic progression and completion of the curriculum, while still meeting the school’s accreditation standards.