

UTCVM Policy for Pre-Clinical and Clinical Elective Course Offerings

Last revised by the UTCVM Curriculum Committee, spring 2017

Background

The American Veterinary Medical Association's Council on Education (COE) accreditation requirements contain the following information about electives with regard to curricular planning:

Revisions to provide for elective programs [. . .] within the professional curriculum should be designed to maintain a core of performance criteria to assure that the graduate veterinarian will be able to serve society in the several generally accepted areas of veterinary medical responsibility.

https://www.avma.org/ProfessionalDevelopment/Education/Accreditation/Colleges/Documents/coe_pp.pdf (accessed Nov 14, 2016; the quoted language is from the "Curriculum" section of 21.8 Appendix H)

The existing UTCVM curriculum, as approved by the UT Graduate Council, states that students must take a minimum of 5 credits of pre-clinical electives and sufficient clinical elective courses to attain 50 total credit hours in the 4th year in order to fulfill the requirements of graduation.

The UTCVM Curriculum Committee, as guided by the faculty, recognizes the importance of offering our students sufficient and consistent elective opportunities to achieve the 5-credit pre-clinical and 19-credit clinical minimum, as well as to complement required coursework, specialty focus areas, and clinical rotations with optional training in specific areas. It is the responsibility of department heads to coordinate with the committee and ensure that the faculty provides these opportunities consistently.

Elective Categories

For the purpose of this document, "elective" means either an elective pre-clinical course offered before the beginning of clinical training, or a clinical rotation offered during clinical training.

Primary—Enables development of skills that many students will seek and be likely to apply frequently as entry-level veterinarians

Secondary—More highly specialized than a primary elective and less likely to enable development of skills that many new graduates will apply. Courses outside of the College of Veterinary Medicine will also be considered secondary electives.

The Curriculum Committee will (1) consult with faculty elective coordinators to classify existing and proposed electives as primary or secondary, and (2) work with individual faculty members and department heads to maintain a robust portfolio of primary electives, both pre-clinical electives and elective clinical rotation, representing a cross-section of disciplines.

Policy for Discontinuing Existing Primary Electives

An elective coordinator of an existing primary elective must inform the Curriculum Committee in advance (see below) before the elective can be discontinued. The committee will work with the coordinator and the appropriate department chair to determine whether the primary elective can be maintained.

The elective coordinator wishing to discontinue a primary elective must submit a “[Request to Discontinue a Primary Elective](https://tiny.utk.edu/cvmelectivestop)” form (<https://tiny.utk.edu/cvmelectivestop>) to the chair of the Curriculum Committee, the department head, and the academic dean at least 6 months prior to the beginning of the semester in which it is taught (April 1 for fall courses, June 1 for spring courses, and Dec 1 for summer rotations).

Policy for Discontinuing Existing Secondary Electives

The elective coordinator of an existing secondary elective may discontinue the elective, but must notify the chair of the Curriculum Committee, the department head, and the academic dean in writing or by email at least 6 months prior to the beginning of the semester in which it is taught (April 1 for fall courses, June 1 for spring courses, and Dec 1 for summer rotations).

Policy for offering new electives

A faculty member wishing to offer a new pre-clinical elective course or a new elective clinical rotation must obtain approval from the Curriculum Committee before the new elective is offered for the first time, by submitting a “[Request to Offer New Elective](https://tiny.utk.edu/cvmelectivestart)” form (<https://tiny.utk.edu/cvmelectivestart>) to the chair of the Curriculum Committee, the department head, and the academic dean at least 6 months prior to the beginning of the semester in which it is taught (April 1 for fall courses, June 1 for spring courses, and Dec 1 for summer rotations).

Curriculum Committee review will help:

- Clarify learning objectives and appropriate methods of student assessment
- Determine relevance and value of proposed elective relative to the curriculum as a whole
- Classification of elective as primary or secondary
- Determine appropriate number of credit hours and grading standard
- Determine appropriate placement of preclinical elective courses within the curriculum
- Facilitate scheduling

Information about contact hours:

Coordinators of pre-clinical courses should aim for 14 contact hours (700 minutes) per credit, exclusive of the final exam.

Electives are typically 1 to 2 credit hours. Any of the following are equivalent to 1 contact hour/week:

- 1 hour (50 minutes) of lecture
- 1 lab (up to 3 hours)
- 1 exam (up to 3 hours); an exam offered at the end of the course (final exam) is not included when calculating contact hours
- 1 week of clinical rotation (40 hours per week)