2019 Surgery Clerkship Course Description

The aim of the third-year Surgery clerkship is to prepare students to identify disease processes and clinical situations in which surgical intervention is appropriate; to understand what is needed to prepare a patient for surgical intervention; and to care for the patient after surgical intervention. The clerkship is designed as a survey course of “surgery in general” rather than a course in “general surgery”. We strive to deliver an educational experience that fosters self-directed learning in a setting where students feel in a setting which empowers students to explore the discipline of surgery and develop an understanding of how surgery interacts with other disciplines in medicine.

The eight-week clerkship consists of two, four-week blocks. Students will rotate through two services during the clerkship. Each student will be assigned to one service that includes predominantly abdominal procedures (general surgery, colorectal surgery, urologic oncology, pediatric surgery and transplant) and one ‘specialty service’ (orthopedics, general urology, breast, plastic surgery and thoracic). In addition to rotations at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, students may rotate at Lurie Children’s Hospital and The Jessie Brown VA Medical Center. The ratio of inpatient to outpatient time will vary depending on the rotation. Students will have the opportunity to evaluate patients and formulate care plans in both settings with graduated independence. The clerkship is structured so that the majority of time is spent in the clinical setting.

Additional learning activities include hands-on simulation based learning activities, didactic lectures and small group, problem-based learning seminars.

Students will be assessed at the completion of the clerkship through a composite evaluation comprised of clinical performance feedback from faculty and residents, small group participation, professionalism assessment, an end-of rotation OSCE exam and the Surgery NBME exam.

Students are expected to actively maintain their online clerkship log which includes assessment and evaluation of patients with a variety of common surgical diagnoses and specific clinical/procedural skills). Students will achieve the majority of these objectives through actual patient encounters, and will have access to alternate learning experiences if needed. Additionally students are required to track and log the time spent in clinical activities in order to assure compliance with duty hour requirements.

Goals

**Excite** - Under the guidance of a surgeon-preceptor, we provide exposure to the breadth and depth of the surgical sciences by enabling students to function as a contributing member of the surgical team in ambulatory and inpatient settings.

**Explain** - We introduce the principles of surgery and the rationale behind surgical intervention through self-directed learning activities.

**Expand** - We provide students with the opportunity to expand their clinical knowledge and develop skills necessary to provide patient care. Particular emphasis is placed on
teaching skills needed to diagnose surgical diseases and to determine criteria for surgical referral while fostering the development of lifelong learning skills.

**Interact** - We foster student growth in the areas of communication skills, practice-based learning, medical ethics and moral reasoning, professionalism and social and community context of health care.

**Objectives:**

At the completion of the surgical clerkship students will be expected to:

1. **Perform a directed history and physical exam and document findings clearly and timely in the medical record. (EPA 1, 5)**

   **Curriculum**
   Students will obtain a history and perform components of a physical exam in one or more of the outpatient, emergency room and inpatient settings. Additionally, students will have hands-on mentored practice sessions for elements of the orthopedic and urologic physical examinations.

   **Benchmark**
   Students will complete a total of 5 abdominal exams and document in the clerk log.

   **Assessment**
   Students must obtain a minimum of four EPA assessments from faculty over eight weeks. Two of these assessments must include either a history or a physical exam.
   Faculty and residents will read and review student notes on an ongoing basis during the clerkship. History and physical exam skills will be assessed in the end-of-rotation OSCE.

2. **Provide an oral presentation of a clinical encounter (EPA 6)**

   **Curriculum**
   Students will evaluate patients and will orally present their findings and recommended diagnostic and treatment plans for patients in one or more of the outpatient, emergency room and inpatient settings.

   **Benchmark**
   Students will perform a total of 10 oral presentations and document in the clerk log.

   **Assessment**
   Students must obtain a minimum of four EPA assessments from faculty over eight weeks, one or more may be an assessment of an oral presentation.
   Faculty and residents will assess students’ oral presentations on an ongoing basis during the clerkship.
3. **Form clinical questions and retrieve evidence to advance patient care (EPA 7)**

**Curriculum**
Several knowledge topics are covered in didactic lectures and in small group seminars. Students are expected to independently study each of the knowledge objectives. This list of required objectives is on Canvas ([https://canvas.northwestern.edu/](https://canvas.northwestern.edu/)). Students are expected to independently review topics related to patients they encounter in the clinical setting.

**Benchmark**

1. Students will actively participate in the evaluation and care of patients presenting with surgical diseases.
2. Students will participate in scheduled conferences, including problem-based small group seminars, didactic sessions, and other interactive formats.
3. Students will participate in surgical procedures.

**Assessment**

Students will demonstrate their acquisition of knowledge by successful completion and passage of the NBME Subject Examination in Surgery (minimum score in the 10th percentile nationally).

Students will review the literature and address clinical questions in preparation for the small group seminars. Faculty and residents will assess each student's ability to search and analyze the literature on an ongoing basis during the clerkship.

4. **Collaborate as a member of an interprofessional team. (EPA 9)**

**Curriculum**
Faculty and residents will model appropriate behavior. Students will:

- Establish rapport with patients.
- Work cooperatively with others.
- Establish sufficient visibility and rapport with residents, fellows and attendings to be fairly evaluated.
- Communicate in a way patients understand by avoiding medical jargon and checking back for understanding.
- Contribute information effectively to the team in a clear and timely manner.
- Demonstrate knowledge of and identify social barriers to care.
Assessment
Faculty and residents will assess each student’s ability to establish rapport with patients and team members and communicate effectively.

5. Demonstrate competency level performance in basic technical skills (EPA12)

Curriculum
The following skills will be covered in hands-on mentored skills sessions:

- Basic suturing
- Foley catheter insertion
- Nasogastric intubation
- Removal of closed suction drains
- Intravenous catheter insertion
- Ankle-brachial index calculation
- Arterial puncture
- Aseptic dressing change

Benchmark
Students are required to perform and document required skills in the clerkship log.

Assessment
Students must pass a verification of proficiency for urinary catheter insertion. Select skills will also be assessed in the end-of-rotation OSCE exam.