School *of* Medicine

AI COURSE DIRECTORS' HANDBOOK

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IMMERSION PHASE CONTACT INFORMATION

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QUICK GUIDE TO THE AI:

The Acting Internship (AI) is an intensive, inpatient experience designed to provide the student with increased responsibilities for the assessment and management of patients. Students are integrated into the health care team and call schedule. Students will assume ownership for the overall care of their assigned patients for the entire continuum of admission to discharge including transitions of care.

The AI season runs February to October.

Expectations of the AI:

1. Students will write daily notes, perform H&Ps, discharge summaries where appropriate.
2. Students will discuss and enter patient orders, under the oversight of residents where appropriate.
3. Students will learn how to triage cross-cover concerns where appropriate.
4. Students will perform handovers under the supervision of a resident where appropriate.
5. Students will assume ownership of a level of patient census closer to that of an intern. We recommend the student start the 4-week rotation with approx. 2-3 patients and end

the rotation with approx. 6-8. The AI should perform an independent assessment and formulate a workup and treatment plan for each patient.

6. Students will respond to calls (such as through paging) for patient care needs under the supervision of a physician.

AI versus ACE?

The AI is an inpatient rotation with the intent to replicate the roles/responsibilities of an intern in a closely supervised setting. The ACE is an advanced clinical experience which may include inpatient and outpatient settings. The ACE student participates in clinical duties, but not to the same level of responsibility as the AI. During an ACE, students also have other longitudinal courses (on Monday and Tuesday afternoons). AI students are prevented from having outside curricular conflicts to allow them to be truly embedded within the team.

Attendance for the AI

The intent of the AI course is to allow the student to take responsibility for patient care "like an intern," which includes daily activities that would be required for the intern. Therefore, all course activities will be mandatory for this rotation. In addition, to be fully immersed into the team schedule, solitary holidays as designated by the School of Medicine such as Labor Day, MLK Jr Day, Memorial Day will not be considered excused from students' clinical duties. Students are expected to take call (weekends, holidays, and nights) as part of the team schedule for an intern. Students will not be enrolled nor excused for FHD or Learning Communities activities.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE COURSE DIRECTOR:

- Alert immersion.phase@vanderbilt.edu as soon as possible if you are going on leave (or will have an extended absence for any reason), so we can discuss coverage for your course in your absence.
- Include a description and clear and measurable learning objectives for all course activities and disseminate all learning objectives to course participants and assessors (students, faculty, fellows, etc.).
- Deposit all course materials in VSTAR Learn.
- Deliver timely mid-course feedback to all students in the course (LCME requirement)
- Provide clear and transparent grading rubrics for all assessed activities to students.
- Submit student final grades within 4 weeks of the course section's last day

Syllabus

The most recent version of the course syllabus will be uploaded to VSTAR Learn. Review your course in VSTAR Learn, and notify the program coordinator if you need to make changes. If

your course is new, the program coordinator can provide a template to start your course syllabus.

Please included the following in your syllabus:

1. Course-Specific Learning Objectives
2. Day 1 location information
3. Additional Educational Activities (optional)

Set student expectations

- At beginning of the course:
    - Determine the number of H&Ps that student should be doing
    - Direct the student to request assessments from these clinical observations

Work Hours

VUSM requires four-week courses to have a minimum of 32 hours of work per week, which includes time for any course-related work such as clinical shifts, readings, and project preparation. Longitudinal ACEs or AEs must have 128 hours across the duration of the course. This time requirement is separate from any other courses (such as Learning Communities, Foundations of Health Care Delivery, and/or Research PLAN) in which a student also might be enrolled during the course. Please also refer to the MD Student Duty Hours Policy.

Student Transportation

VUSM policy states that “students should be prepared to travel up to 35 miles from the [VUSM] campus to reach assigned clinical sites (maximum of 70 miles round trip per day). Students are responsible for their own transportation to and from all clinical sites for educational experiences, including all costs associated with that travel."

If a student needs transportation accommodations for your course, they must go to Dean Fleming for consideration. You as a course director should not be involved.

Student Personal Learning Goals and Plan

- All AIs require students to complete the “Personal Learning Goals and Plan” form, in which students generate 2-5 learning goals for the course, save and print the form, and take it with them to their clinical rotation to discuss with the team.
- Please encourage the student to utilize the form to set personal learning goals for your course, and ideally, discuss in-person with you or the clinical team, although they could be discussed through email if needed

Assessment

All courses must employ multiple methods of assessment that include performance in five separate, but equally, important competency domains:

1. Medical Knowledge (MK)
2. Patient Care (PC)
3. Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS)
4. Practice-Based Learning and Improvement (PBLI)
5. Systems-Based Practice (SBP)

Mid-course Feedback

- Mid-course feedback is a requirement by the accrediting body (LCME) for all medical schools and is a VUSM policy.

End-of-Course Grade

- Course directors will synthesize input from others and make one final assessment for each competency in online grading. Please see the section on Assessment and Grading for general instructions on how to do this, and in particular, the specific section on Assigning a Final Grade.

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HOW TO…

Find your syllabus

The IP Coordinator can find the most recent version of your syllabus in VSTAR Learn. Contact immersion.phase@vanderbilt.edu for a copy or template. The program coordinator will also send you a link to your course materials in VSTAR Learn each time your course runs.

Find the list of milestones

https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/md-gateway/competencies-assessed-in-ais/

Modify your course-specific learning objectives

If you need to modify your course learning objectives, you must do so in the Learning Network by clicking here. A Help article can be found here.

Find the attendance policy

Please refer to the VUSM Catalog for the full absence policy and procedures related to the form. Students must ask permission at least four weeks in advance of the start of the course. Students should fill out the REDCap form, found in the MD Student Gateway.

Use Workplace-based Assessments (WBAs)

WBAs in VSTAR Next are what students send for their milestone assessments, EPA assessments, and feedback. The student can send a direct link to an assessor at Vanderbilt or invite people from outside Vanderbilt to participate in an assessment.

If you are requested to complete an assessment on a student, the request shows up in your email with an embedded link, which will take you to the assessment. Assessors should report what they observed and provide written feedback. The information you report will be compiled with other assessments to determine the student's grade. If you did not observe a student in a particular situation, then select "not applicable" for that milestone.

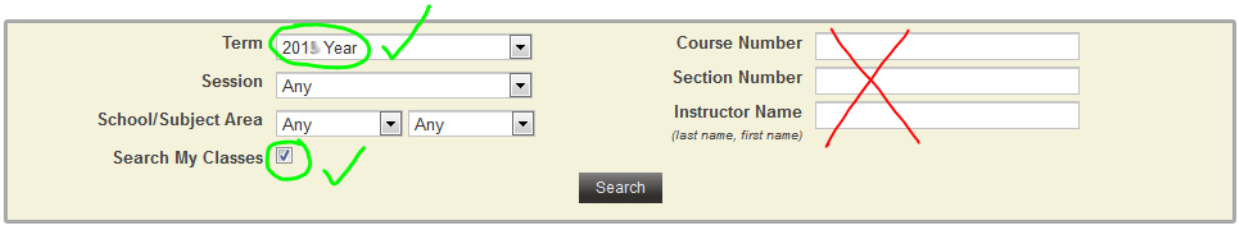
Check Enrollment

Roster Deadline – Registration Deadline is 42 days before the section begins

How to find your class roster

1. Login through the following URL: https://online-grading.app.vanderbilt.edu/online-grading
2. Alter the term to the correct academic year (July 2026-June 2027 = **2026 Year**)
3. Check the '**Search My Classes**' box, and click the 'Search' button.

4. Click the '**Class Roll**' link for the section you would like to view.



Section numbers, and the dates associated with them, are found on the 'Academic Calendars' portion of the Student Records website:
https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/md-gateway/academic-calendars/

Add VU Email account to Outlook:

We require that faculty check their VU email addresses. VU policy is that all VU business is sent to VU email addresses, so our automated reminders from the VSTAR systems cannot be set up to send to VUMC email addresses. Here are instructions for adding a VU account to your Outlook App. Additional instructions for adding to your laptop or desktop can be found on the VUIT site here (instructions vary for Mac and Windows).

Other Useful Links:

YES (Your Enrollment Services)
To find your course catalog listing:
https://acad.app.vanderbilt.edu/more/SearchClasses!input.action

Academic Calendars
https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/md-gateway/academic-calendars/

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DELIVERING THE COURSE

VSTAR Learn

VSTAR Learn is a Learning Management System that provides a way for faculty to deliver content to students. It provides easy ways to create dynamic online activities that support your course's objectives, including assignments, forums, downloadable files, quizzes, and other features. The AI coordinator can assist you with any activities that you want to have in VSTAR Learn.

- Please click on the link below to be directed to the VSTAR Platform home page: https://vstar.app.vanderbilt.edu/
- Click on the "Log In" button in the upper right hand corner.
- Click on the "Learn" button in the bar at the top.

VSTAR Next Assessments

VSTAR Next has an activity-based assessment system that facilitates learner self-reflection, student assessment, peer assessment, and personal learning goals. VSTAR Next helps manage student, advisor, and coach relationships, and enables real-time and asynchronous collaboration around many types of learning encounters.

- Please click on the link to be directed to the VSTAR Platform homepage: https://vstar.app.vanderbilt.edu/App/
- Click on the "Log In" button in the upper right hand corner.
- Click on the "Next" button in the bar at the top.

ASSESSMENT & GRADING

All assessment policies can be found online in the VUSM Catalog:

https://www.vanderbilt.edu/catalogs/kuali/som-26-27.php#/content/6606d6835022a2001ce8b6ae

Competency domains

The final grade in the Immersion Phase Courses is assigned as honors/high pass/pass/fail (H/HP/P/F). Immersion Phase grades address performance in five separate, but equally important competency domains:

1. Medical Knowledge (MK)
2. Patient Care (PC)
3. Interpersonal and Communication Skills (ICS)
4. Practice-Based Learning and Improvement (PBLI)
5. Systems-Based Practice (SBP)

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Assessment and grading guidelines for all Immersion Phase courses

1. All courses must employ multiple methods of assessment.
2. Competency Milestones
    a. All School of Medicine courses must use standardized competency milestones to describe performance.
    b. AIs will assess a specified group of milestones (8) aligned with the course goals.
    c. Performance levels expected of learners in the Immersion Phase are described by milestones of **"threshold," "target" and "reach."** Threshold, target and reach levels for the Immersion Phase can be found online at https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/md-gateway/competencies-assessed-in-ais/.
3. Effective Jan. 1, 2024, all courses must have milestone assessments in VSTAR Next only. Courses can no longer have any student assessment of milestones outside of VSTAR Next, to remain in compliance with regulatory needs.

Mid-course feedback

1. All course directors must deliver and document mid-course assessment feedback to every student. Mid-course feedback is a requirement by the accrediting body (LCME) for all medical schools and is a VUSM policy. In addition, any student in danger of failing a course must be made aware of performance issues and have the opportunity to improve. This feedback is also valuable to students performing as expected in order to provide opportunity to further their development. Review of the student's H&Ps and notes is usually helpful in formulating formative feedback.
    a. Provide via VSTAR
        i. Ideally, a structured mid-course face-to-face meeting should occur to provide the student with feedback and guidance, followed by the completion of the mid-course feedback form in VSTAR. All Course Directors receive a link to this form on the 2nd Wednesday of the 4-week block. The student's response to this feedback can be assessed in the domain of Practice-based Learning and Improvement (PBLI). In the rare instance when a face-to-face meeting cannot be held, the form must still be completed.

Gathering Assessment

- Students are required to gather assessments via WBA. Please see the Workplace-based Assessment Requirement in the VUSM Catalog.

EPAs

EPAs or Entrustable Professional Activities are observable tasks that integrate multiple competencies. The goal is to help all students develop towards the ability to perform each EPA without direct supervision on day 1 of residency. There are 4 EPA's that will be assessed during the AI:

- **EPA 4**: Enter and discuss orders and prescriptions
- **EPA 5**: Document a clinical encounter in the patient record
- **EPA 8**: Give or receive a patient handover to transition care responsibility
- **EPA 10**: Recognize a patient requiring urgent or emergent care and initiate evaluation and management

For more information on EPAs, please visit https://www.aamc.org/initiatives/coreepas/publicationsandpresentations/.

Final grade assignment

To obtain honors, a student should demonstrate excellent performance in *all* aspects of the course. Student grades must be input into VSTAR Next (online) within six weeks after the course ends at vstar-next.app.vanderbilt.edu. All course directors can log in, view student performance, assign grades and put in comments, but only the Primary Course Director can click "submit."

VSTAR Next displays student performance data from any VSTAR Next activities and VSTAR Learn assignments. Additionally, the Competency Report tab provides the grader with formatted data from activities.

Performance levels expected of learners in the Immersion Phase are described by milestones of "**threshold**," "**target**" and "**reach**." Threshold, target and reach levels for the Immersion Phase can be found online at https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/md-gateway/competencies-assessed-in-ais/.

Students' final grades should be developed in light of performance on competency domains:

Grade	Domain Ratings
Honors	≥3 domains at Reach All other domains at Target
High Pass	≥2 domains at Reach All other domains at Target

Pass	≤3 domains at Threshold All other domains at Target or Reach
Fail	≥1 domain(s) at Below Threshold **OR** ≥4 domains at Threshold

Rubric Standardization Tool
Next will notify you if your selected final grade doesn't align with the rubric. A pop-up will appear, alerting you and giving a suggestion to match the final grade with the rubric based on your domain ratings. If you select Yes, the grade will change to match the rubric. If you select No, you'll be asked to submit your reasoning. A breakdown of this process can be found in this handout.

Vital Experiences
VUSM procedure requires that students in an AI log at least twenty Vital Experiences by the end of the course. Failure to do so can be reflected in a threshold score in the practice-based learning and improvement domain.

End-of-course feedback

Helpful hints on providing formative and summative feedback can be found in this brief handout. Please note that providing formative feedback is required.

Temporary grades

Details about Marginal Pass (P*) and Incomplete (I) can be found in the VUSM catalog under Grading Policy.

Student grievance concerning grades

Details about Student Grade Grievances can be found in the VUSM catalog under Grading Policy.

COURSE REVIEW PROCESS

The course evaluation policy is published in the VUSM Catalog.

Students receive and are required to complete a survey at the end of each VUSM course. The surveys are managed by the Office of Undergraduate Medical Education Evaluation and Assessment Team. After four students have completed the course evaluation survey, the Evaluation and Assessment Team will send a report with the survey results to the course

director. Courses with less than four responses are not released to protect student anonymity unless students have provided permission to release the data.

The Course Evaluation Process is in place to ensure that student and faculty feedback is considered when the course director plans for the next iteration or round of a given class. For ACEs, CDs should be reviewing their course feedback when they receive the report and at the end of the academic year. Immersion Phase leadership will also review overall ACE data in each specialty with the Director or Vice Chair of Education overseeing that specialty one time each year, after all data is collected and a report is made. This meeting usually takes place in the fall of the year after the data is collected.

Additionally, Immersion Phase leadership holds a meeting with all AI Course Directors after the AI season to review previous year's data and discuss areas for improvement. This typically occurs in November.

Procedures for Course Director-Developed Course Evaluations:
https://vanderbilt.box.com/s/t6ykfq85hprwsjppkg85inl9md5ta5dk

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RESOURCES

- **Academic Calendars:** https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/md-gateway/academic-calendars/
- **Faculty documents:** https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/md-gateway/immersion-faculty-information/
- **Find your class roster:** https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/vusm-gateway/how-to-find-your-class-roster/
- **Milestones:** https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/md-gateway/competencies-assessed-in-ais/
- **Student Directory:** https://wag.app.vanderbilt.edu/StudentDirectory
- **Submit midcourse:** https://vstar-help.app.vanderbilt.edu/knowledge-base/entering-midcourse-feedback-course-director/
- **Submit final grades:** https://vstar-help.app.vanderbilt.edu/knowledge-base/grading-final-grading/
- **VA Rotation Information:** https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/md-gateway/va-rotations/
- **VSTAR Next (Assessments, Midcourse, and Grades):** https://vstar-next.app.vanderbilt.edu
- **VSTAR Learn (Course Materials):** https://vstar-learn.app.vanderbilt.edu/my/
- **YES (Your Enrollment Services):** https://acad.app.vanderbilt.edu/more/SearchClasses!input.action
- **Immersion Phase Google Catalog 2026-27:** https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1eWoxg2DxTq6GxIb0pmqBLAxGwruBzHqCyftj9_Tu3Os/edit?usp=sharing