

Psychiatric Neuroscience Leadership (aka *How to be a Neuroscience Ninja*)

M4 Elective Program sponsored by the National Neuroscience Curriculum Initiative (NNCI)

The M4 year is a crucial developmental stage. After completing their core clerkships, students begin to differentiate through clinical and research electives – customized experiences that can be foundational for identity formation. A common approach for academically-minded individuals is to seek a research project. However, the modern practice of science rarely aligns with such a narrow temporal window (methods are too complex, Institutional Review Boards are too slow, and clinically relevant studies are often conducted over years, not weeks to months). At the same time, the M4 schedule poses its own challenge, as students are deep in the residency application process, traveling the country and blocking full days for interviews.

The NNCI M4 Elective Program is designed to capitalize on this window of opportunity, offering a unique educational program for students who are interested in psychiatry. Learners will have the opportunity to engage in an experiential, part-time, flexibly scheduled, program that includes:

- Participation in a hybrid, online learning experience including: self-study of cutting edge educational resources on modern neuroscience developed by the NNCI (4-6 hours/week) with tailored assessment questions designed to highlight the applicability to real world clinical scenarios
- Engagement with the broader NNCI community of learners via an asynchronous discussion board and synchronous small group learning activities (2 hours/week)
- Effective Scientific Communication workshop (2-4 hours/week) in which learners will practice using narrative tools to make scientific concepts accessible for a broad audience, including for medical education, clinical communication with patients and families, and public outreach

Time commitment:

- We expect that the core NNCI experiences will require approximately 10 hours / week. This allows the experience to be completed in conjunction with another clinical or research elective (to be arranged individually), if desired.
- Interested students can use the Effective Scientific Communication workshop as a launching pad for developing a [Clinical Commentary](#) or [This 'Stuff' Is Really Cool](#) talk.

Can I get course credit?

- Students can submit this as a self-design elective. This process is unique at each medical school but typically involves identifying a local faculty mentor. For reference, here is UIC's [process](#) and [form](#). (The NNCI cannot guarantee that this will be approved for credit).
- This course will cover the same material as the [Neuroscience Perspectives in Psychiatry \(NPiP\)](#), an approved online, full-time two week elective at UIC (open to visiting students on VSAS). The **Psychiatric Neuroscience Leadership** elective includes additional material and experiences, and we estimate that it is the equivalent of 4 weeks full time credit (10 hours per week x 12 weeks).

How do I sign up?

- Registration for participation costs \$50. This includes access to the asynchronous discussion board platform, review of assessment submissions, feedback on the development of effective scientific communication piece, and certificate of completion. Email cooperj@uic.edu to learn more and sign up.
- Alternatively, all content materials can be accessed for free at nncionline.org.