A Guide to the AY2018/2019 Elective Lottery

This document provides a brief overview and in-depth explanations of the upcoming Lottery. Click on each heading in the list below to quickly navigate to that section.

**Deadlines/To-do Items**

- **The lottery will open on 2/19 and will close on 2/23 at 8:59pm.**
- **Check your current schedule in MedHub ASAP.**
- **Changes to electives can be made up to 8 weeks prior to the start of the rotation.**

**What to Expect**

- **What courses are available?**
- **Does this work the same way as the Lottery for Core Clinical Experiences?**
- **How does the Lottery optimize my schedule?**
- **Am I able to change my preferences once I’ve submitted them?**

**Tips for a Successful Lottery Experience**

- **How do I know what courses are available and what they’re about?**
- **Can I fill out the lottery after it closes?**
- **Should I pick courses that I don’t necessarily want?**
- **What is the best strategy for getting the courses I want?**
- **Assess the level of risk**
- **Will the Lottery make the most ideal form of my schedule?**
- **What if something goes wrong? Who do I contact?**

**When is the MED20 Lottery for AY1819?**

The lottery will **open on 2/19 and will close on 2/23 at 8:59 pm.** You’ll see a link to the lottery in the Urgent Tasks box of your MedHub homepage at that time. You can enter and make changes anytime up until 8:59pm on 2/23.

There is no advantage to finishing the lottery first, so don’t rush – all response received by the end of the lottery are equally considered. There is an advantage to checking out the lottery early only so that you can seek help should you need it, so try to log on and at least click through it a bit as soon as it opens.

**Review Your Schedule**

**As soon as you can,** log in to MedHub and click on the ‘Review Records’ link on your homepage (under the Tasks list, right below Change Password). Then scroll down to the ‘Enrollment’ section and make sure that everything on your schedule is what you expect.

- Are there holds you placed last year that you don’t need? Email Kaitlin Seymore before the lottery opens.
• Is there a course you thought you dropped but MedHub still shows it? Do you need to add a testing intersession, required, intersession, or scholarly project? Email Kaitlin Seymore.

• If anything looks at all weird, let us know and we’ll sleuth it out. Anything listed on that enrollment page will impact the choices available to you in the lottery.

**Schedule Holds**

The elective lottery, unlike the others, will *not* place you in a date you haven’t preferenced. It makes the lottery selection process easier for you if you place a hold as it will automatically remove unavailable dates from your options.

**Changes Post-Lottery**

The lottery creates a giant ‘optimized’ schedule, but that doesn’t mean everyone’s schedule will be ideal. We’ll do what we can post-lottery to help you if you need changes to your lottery schedule. We need some time to enter your schedules into Banner before we can process change requests. Marcia and Kaitlin handle schedule changes straight in Banner (which will then update MedHub overnight) so you’ll contact them with change requests at that time. **Elective schedules can be changed up until 8 weeks prior to the block they start in once schedules are finished.**

**What to Expect**

**What courses are available?**

This lottery will schedule for elective courses between June 25th 2018 and the end of June 21st 2019. Most electives offered will be available for registration through the lottery but some will not. The AY 18/19 Clinical Phase Course Catalog indicates this for each course listing. If it’s not available, there will be specific information about how to register in the ‘Special Notes’ section of that course’s page in the catalog. Feel free to email Cameron Budd if you have questions about the directions listed there.

**Does this work the same way as the Lottery for Core Clinical Experiences?**

This lottery will look different from your core lottery, but it’s pretty similar. You’ll first see some instructions, then in step two you’ll see a large laundry list of all the courses offered through the lottery. You’ll select those courses you’re interested in, then for each course you’ll indicate which dates would be most preferable. (some strategy/tips on that below). One big difference in this lottery is that if you don’t select a course or don’t enter a certain date period as a preference, it’s not going to schedule you for those. It won’t force scheduling because electives aren’t required – you can take any, or none (beware of your financial aid and graduation requirements if opting for that last option, though).

**How does the Lottery optimize my schedule?**

In **brief**, the Lottery will use your input and ours to create an ‘optimized’ schedule. We input things like credits, course duration, offering and availability. You’ll enter which courses you want
and when. The Lottery will work through an algorithm to step through all of your choices and make your schedule.

For those of you interested in the **specific detail** of how the Lottery works, it first groups your courses by those that fulfill prerequisite requirements for other courses you selected, and all the other courses. Within those two groups it orders your courses first by duration, longest courses first, then alphabetically by course number. It then orders all of you randomly, places the first student in the first alphabetically longest course that fulfills prerequisites it can during the first date preference you selected that it can. Then it moves to the next student in line and does the same.

When it gets to the end of the line, it shuffles your order, and for each student again, moves to the next alphabetically longest course that fulfills prerequisites and tries to place those. If it finds it cannot place you in any of your date preferences for a course, it skips that course and moves to the next one. If it can’t place you in any of the courses you selected for a date period, it will leave a schedule hole that you’ll have to fill with something after the lottery closes (or take time off, but be aware this may impact your financial aid). It will not place you in any course you didn’t select, nor any time period you didn’t select. It moves through as many courses as it can until it reaches the end of your selection set.

Then it starts all over from the top and runs this algorithm as many times as the MedHub servers can take. It finally spits out a solution that uses as many of the first choices all of you made as possible. We’ll use what we know about this algorithm to come up with a few tips to increase your lottery success. **Read those below.**

Elective schedules can be changed up until 8 weeks prior to the block they start in. We need some time to enter your schedules into Banner before we can process change requests. We’ll have more info about when you can make those changes soon. Once the lottery is over, Marcia and Kaitlin handle schedule changes straight in Banner (which will then update MedHub overnight) so you’ll contact them with change requests at that time.

**Am I able to change my preferences once I’ve submitted them?**

The lottery will be open for one week. You can fill it out and make changes to it as many times as you want during that time. Once the lottery closes, you won’t be able to make changes.

**Tips for the Elective Lottery**

**How do I know when/what courses are available and what they’re about?**

Look at our course catalog for all the courses you may be interested in. Use the table of contents as links to individual listings. Use ctrl/cmnd + f to search for specific terms or courses.

Use the calendar on page 11 to clarify the dates of each block (note the new naming convention. Blocks are now named for the term they occur in, i.e. W2 is the second block of the winter term, U3 is the third block of Summer term. This is to reduce confusion since your Block 23 is someone else’s Block 12 and yet another’s Block 1).

Remember that the catalog is a living document. Changes to availability happen frequently in our departments and we produce an updated printed catalog monthly, but always have the most
up-to-date numbers in our database. We’ll do our best to point out major changes like new or retiring courses if they happen.

Can I fill out the lottery after it closes?

Simply put, no. Fill out the lottery before the deadline. Log in early to make sure everything looks like you’re expecting and so you can schedule a time to meet with us, your coach, or anyone else you may seek help from before the lottery closes. The lottery will be open for one week. Don’t wait till the last day to check it out.

Should I pick courses that I don’t necessarily want?

Because the lottery will not place you in courses you have not selected and will try it’s hardest to place you in to as many selections as it can, it is not a good idea to select courses you don’t really want. Similarly, it’s not a good idea to select only those courses that make up your ideal schedule. Give the lottery some backups to work with incase it can’t place you. If it can’t place you in a selection or date, it will leave a schedule hole and your choices for filling that may be more limited.

The lottery knows which dates are your first, second, third, etc. choices but it doesn’t know which courses are your favorites and which are your backups. This makes the algorithm work, but we appreciate it’s not the easiest to plan for.

What is the best strategy for getting the courses I want?

This is the best strategy we’ve found for the elective lottery: Select all the courses you’d like to take and none you don’t. We recommend working with your coach to find a variety of courses that would work and when. Are there multiple Sub-I’s that will work and/or many dates that would be good to take one? Are there multiple elective subspecialties that may equally serve you? Select as many courses that sounds interested, help your career, and work in your schedule as possible and you’ll be in good shape.

That said, you can try to utilize the algorithm to your advantage in your date selections for each course. We’ve found it helps to find groups of courses to take during chunks of time, instead of individual courses in individual blocks.

A brief example follows:

You may have two blocks open in Winter term, two in Summer, three in Fall. Perhaps you’d like to take a PEDI elective and/or a CARD elective in Winter, a continuity elective in summer, and as many SURG electives in Fall as you can. You’ll select all the courses that fit into those categories that you’re interested, and you won’t select the courses you’re not interested in.

For each PEDI course you like, you’ll preference the first winter block as your first choice, the second winter block as your second choice, and since it will ask for three options, and if you’d be okay with it if it were to happen, you might select the first block of Fall.

For each CARD course, you’ll preference the second winter block as your first choice, the first winter block as your second choice, the first Fall in your third. This may still result in you getting two PEDI courses or two CARD courses in Winter, but it will give the lottery options to work with to avoid getting nothing.
For all the continuity courses you like, you'll enter Summer term dates as your early preferences, and if it forces you to select other preferences, you'll select a date in Fall. For all SURG electives, you'll enter the three Fall blocks in whatever preference for dates you have. Ideally you’d like to take SURG 709A, SURG 709D, then SURG 709RE in that order, but would be happy if you got a different order or even, SURG 709A, SURG 709G, SURG 709RE. In this case, SURG 709D and 709G should have the same dates ordered in the same way.

If you select a bunch of courses in the same specialty, you may get more than one. That may or may not be what you want, so we let the lottery do it. If it’s not what you want, you can change it after the schedules are entered into Banner.

Assess the Level of Risk

Is it more important to you to get any CARD course at all and okay with you if you have to come in and drop one if you get more than you wanted? Pick CARD courses robustly. Is it too much of a risk to fill your schedule with potentially more than one CARD course and have to drop them and switch in to something? Be a little more selective in picking CARD courses. Worst case in either scenario, you can come in and change your schedule to whatever is still open.

Will the Lottery make the most ideal form of my schedule?

Remember the lottery is just a first pass and that ‘optimized’ doesn’t mean ‘ideal’. We’ll do what we can post-lottery to help you if you’re unhappy with your lottery schedule. You can make changes as you need to in order to feel comfortable. We are limited by the space available in each course, but with over 200 courses in our catalog, we always have spots somewhere, and sometimes courses that were closed can reopen, so be prepared to be patient and potentially make more than one change. We also encourage create-your-own courses by either taking a special elective, research elective, or away elective. Work with Marcia and Kaitlin if you’re interested in these.

What if I do something wrong? Who do I contact?

This full explanation may make the lottery sound really difficult, but it’s easy to use, and the only wrong way to do it is to not fill it out.

Feel free to email me Cameron Budd: budd@ohsu.edu with any questions!