



HOLISTIC STUDENT SUPPORT

Helping Students Navigate the Critical Junctures of Medical School

Considerations for Holistic Student Support

Introduction

Holistic review admission processes, now widely accepted, have challenged admissions committees to consider the 'whole applicant' to ensure that the next generation of physicians reflects the full spectrum of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives necessary to meet the needs of an increasingly complex and interconnected society. While gaining admission is critical, it is merely the first step for students who may face barriers to inclusion within a "sink-or-swim" culture in medical education.¹ In 2017, members of the Organization of Student Representatives (OSR) from non-traditional backgrounds sought help from the GSA Committee on Student Diversity Affairs (COSDA), highlighting a lack of post-admission support. While their unique perspectives were valued during recruitment and admissions, they felt like they were often left to navigate challenges on their own once they matriculated. Recognizing this gap, COSDA launched the Integrated Holistic Student Affairs initiative in 2019. In 2021, acknowledging that this effort extends beyond student affairs to educational affairs, the initiative was integrated into AAMC's Strategic Action Plan 4 and rebranded as Holistic Student Support, ensuring a broader institutional commitment to supporting all students through their entire medical education journey.

Holistic Student Support (HSS) recognizes the interconnected nature of academic, personal, and professional aspects of a student's life and provides resources and interventions that optimize the health and wellbeing of the whole student to allow them to navigate the shared critical junctures of medical school successfully. It is therefore a comprehensive approach to supporting and promoting the overall wellbeing and success of medical students. Medical student success can be defined as the attainment of academic excellence, demonstrated clinical competence, and personal growth. It encompasses achieving high standards in medical education, developing resilience, and contributing positively to patient care and research endeavors.

This framework document provides definitions of key terms, includes descriptions of HSS core principles, and outlines the critical junctures and developmental pathways model. Developed in collaboration with innovators and leaders in student affairs, educational affairs, and AAMC staff, the document was further enhanced through the use of generative AI, specifically ChatGPT-4². Its purpose is to serve as a launching pad for identifying holistic student support strategies you can implement at your institution. The intended audience for this document is mid-career professionals in student affairs and medical education. If you are new to student affairs and/or medical education, we encourage you to check out these additional resources.

- [GSA Professional Development Initiative](#): The GSA PDI provides access to role-based critical behaviors, tailored career development tools, and learning opportunities specific to student affairs professionals working in medical education.
- [Group on Educational Affairs](#): The Group on Educational Affairs (GEA) is a professional community dedicated to advancing medical education through faculty development, curriculum innovation, educational research, and assessment across the medical education continuum. With a strong network of passionate educators, the GEA fosters collaboration, professional growth, and support for those shaping the future of medical education.



Please note, this is a draft document that we will continue iterating and developing as we learn about and collect additional innovations across student and educational affairs.

How to Use this Document

The HSS strategies in this document are organized around the *critical junctures and developmental pathways* of medical education, which are defined below. When selecting strategies to implement, we encourage you to consider the medical school's mission, goals, and resources, as well as the policy and regulatory landscape nationally and in your state (e.g., legislative climate, gubernatorial priorities and policies, state referenda, etc.).

You can use this document in a variety of ways:

- To identify actions you can take to enhance student success by meeting learners' individualized needs and guide your search for resources and tools to support those actions.
- To focus on and make changes to one critical juncture area.
- As a reference to monitor changes you have already implemented related to the critical junctures.
- As a reference and a place to note opportunities for future change.

Key Terminology

Holistic Student Support

Holistic Student Support recognizes the interconnected nature of academic, personal, and professional aspects of a student's life and provides resources and interventions that optimize the health and wellbeing of the whole student to allow them to navigate the shared critical junctures of medical school successfully. It is therefore a comprehensive approach to supporting and promoting the overall wellbeing and success of medical students. Medical student success can be defined as the attainment of academic excellence, demonstrated clinical competence, and personal growth. It encompasses achieving high standards in medical education, developing resilience, and contributing positively to patient care and research endeavors.

Critical Junctures and Developmental Pathways

A *critical juncture* in medical education is a pivotal point that can alter a student's academic trajectory. It serves as a significant milestone, as determined by the educational institution, to assess and determine a student's progress toward graduation.

A *developmental pathway* in the education of a medical student is a continuous journey of skill development, identity formation, and self-discovery that extends across pivotal phases of medical education. These pathways support students in navigating the interconnected journey of academic achievement, professional growth, and personal reflection over time.

These junctures and pathways can be universally applicable to medical education across different institutions, such as the pivotal transition from pre-clinical education to clinical education. Alternatively, they can be institution-specific, like fulfilling a research project as a mandatory requirement for graduation. They are not experienced equally by all medical students. We recognize that differing levels



of social/cultural capital, economic privilege, and other factors may make these junctures and pathways more or less difficult to navigate. Students enter medical school with varying levels of familiarity with its structure and expectations. Some may benefit from additional guidance and resources to help them navigate key milestones, while others may have prior exposure that helps them adapt more easily. The quality of the organizational conditions surrounding student support is therefore crucial before, during, and after each of these critical junctures and throughout the developmental pathways, to ensure learners successfully transition and ultimately either graduate from medical school, or transition to a different career if becoming a physician is not the right path for them.

Detours and Off-Ramps

Detours occur when students intentionally decelerate their program for planned or unexpected reasons. These pauses provide essential time to explore specific interests, master content, or address personal needs. Proactive planning and coordination ensure a smooth reintegration when students are ready to resume their medical training.

Off-Ramps refer to students' exploration of a transition to career paths outside of the traditional medical education trajectory. These alternative pathways are designed to support students in pursuing new professional directions that align with their evolving interests, skills, and personal circumstances, with guidance and resources provided to support their transition and success.

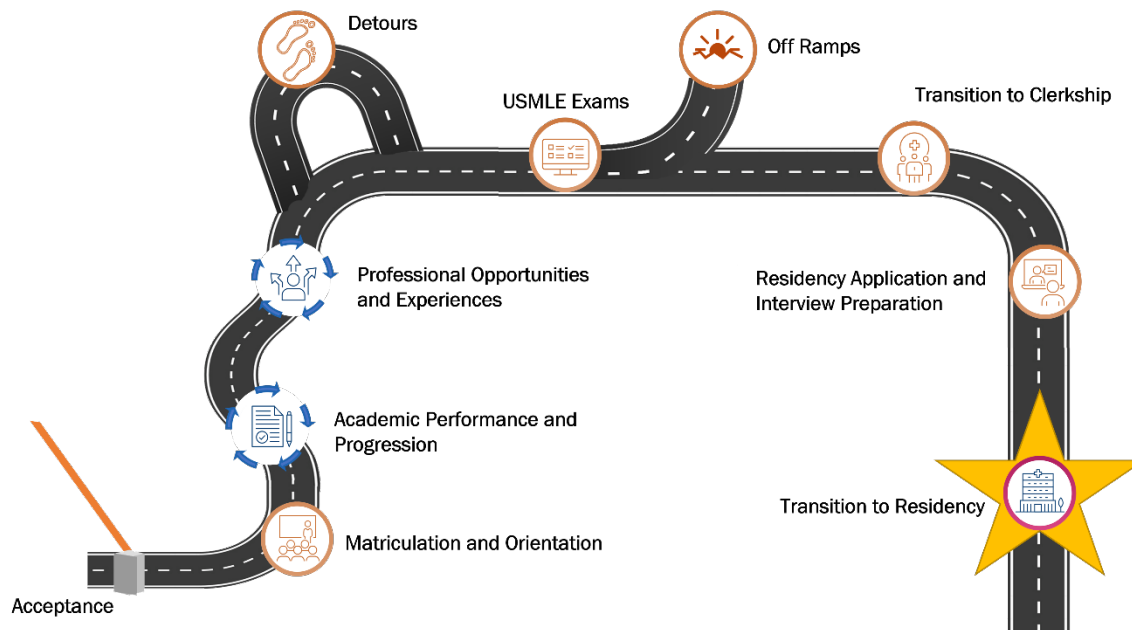
Illustrative Map of the Medical School Journey

Navigation of the medical school journey requires clear coordination, collaboration, and information sharing across departments, academic units, curricular phases, and institutions. This ongoing collaborative approach is necessary to provide targeted support and advice to help students thrive in medical school.

The following graphic illustrates one possible medical school journey, including the critical junctures and developmental pathways that all medical students navigate. It is important to note that the sequence and timing of these junctures and pathways vary by institution and individual. For example, the timing of USMLE Step 1 and Step 2 exams is determined by each institution and may not fall where shown here. Similarly, detours and offramps can occur at any point along the journey even though they are shown in one place here.

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Helping Students Navigate the Critical Junctures of Medical School



In addition to thinking about critical junctures and developmental pathways, each school should think about the roads our students travel as they progress through the educational program. Activities, curricula, advising, and support should be designed to promote and enable student success. This support should be integrated into the curriculum and advising processes whenever possible, not seen as add-ons or activities that occur at off-hours. Curricula and systems should be proactively built to support success for all students, including:

- Instructional and curricular design, with explicit training in how to thrive within the educational curriculum.
- Instruction and development of metacognitive skills.
- Academic support and faculty collaboration to teach evidence-based learning strategies.
- A structured advising system that enables student self-assessment, staff/faculty identification of areas for improvement and need for support, and referral, monitoring, and enabling of interventions to support students.

Each juncture or pathway below includes suggestions for building the systems, processes and skills needed to underpin support to students at that juncture. These suggestions are shaded in green.

One additional theme runs throughout the medical school journey. An emphasis on student wellbeing is essential to ensure students' success as reflected in our Core Principles below. You can find detailed recommendations for supporting student wellbeing in the UME environment in [this document](#).

Critical Junctures and Pathways of Medical School

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Helping Students Navigate the Critical Junctures of Medical School



- **Matriculation and Orientation Juncture:** Students are recruited, officially enrolled, and transition to the role of medical student. This includes acclimation to the learning (where, how, when they learn and study) and social environments (including the development networks as well as where they live). It includes the establishment of community and a support system.
- **Academic Performance and Progression Pathway:** Students adopt learning strategies that are aligned with the design of the curriculum and successful performance towards achieving competencies. These strategies include a metacognitive approach to learning in the context of the school's learning community (which includes other learners, faculty, staff, etc.).
- **Professional Opportunities and Experiences Pathway:** Students engage in career planning to define their specialty interests and seek professional development experiences to maximize their competitiveness for residency.
- **USMLE Exam Junctures:** Students utilize available resources to develop and execute an exam preparation strategy.
- **Transition to Clerkship Juncture:** Students enter the clinical phase of their training.
- **Residency Application and Interview Preparation Juncture:** Students engage in activities to distinguish themselves as competitive applicants for residency.
- **Transition to Residency Juncture:** Students match to a program and begin their transition to residency.



Core Principles of Holistic Student Support

- **Commit to Lifelong Learning, Personal and Professional Development:** Seek feedback and pursue ongoing training to adopt a growth mindset that enhances an asset-based approach to supporting students and engaging faculty and staff.
- **Recognize and Support the Needs of All Students:** Recognize and support the different experiences and pathways of all students, knowing/understanding that they may require support at different times and in various ways, enriching the educational environment and enhancing patient-care outcomes.
- **Create Supportive Learning Environments:** Develop student-centered curricula and individualized academic support capacity that will allow for advising and support systems that enable all students to succeed and thrive, while prioritizing their overall wellbeing.
- **Implement Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI):** Use a systems approach to continuously identify, address, and evaluate student support challenges and opportunities with the goal of examining the impact of interventions and promoting best practices.
- **Promote Wellbeing for All:** Recognize and support the [seven dimensions of wellness](#) for students, staff, and faculty to create an ecosystem that prioritizes overall wellbeing and supports positive behavior.

You can access resources and support in implementing the strategies and core principles outlined in this document by joining the AAMC's Virtual [Holistic Student Support Community](#), a dynamic space for student affairs and medical education professionals. A free membership is required to join this community, and once you are a member, you can post questions and resources and access a library of nearly 100 (and counting) resources and tools to help you implement the strategies in this document. The community's resource library is organized around the critical junctures and core principles described in more detail below. We provide a link to the current tools and resources in the virtual community for each critical juncture and developmental pathway at the end of each section.

Citations and Footnotes

¹ Grieco CA, Currence P, Teraguchi DH, Monroe A, Palermo AS. Integrated Holistic Student Affairs: A Personalized, Equitable, Student-Centered Approach to Student Affairs. Acad Med. 2022 Oct 1;97(10):1441-1446. doi: 10.1097/ACM.0000000000004757. Epub 2022 Sep 23. PMID: 35612916.

² Throughout 2023-2024, ChatGPT-4 supported the refinement of strategies, organization of content, and streamlining of the core principles helping to ensure clarity, cohesion, and alignment with our overarching goals for holistic student support.



Holistic Student Support Strategies

 Matriculation and Orientation		
✓	THEMES	STRATEGIES
☐	Pre-Matriculation Programming	Create a pre-matriculation checklist. Begin intake meetings with incoming students to review the checklist and measure the trends that arise. Confirm the institution has the resources to support the trends.
☐	Pre-Matriculation Programming	Virtual courses that share pre-matriculation material and introduce learning platforms.
☐	Pre-Matriculation Programming	Material support to help students arrive on campus earlier.
☐	Introducing the Medical School Curriculum, Culture, and Community Partners	Provide peer mentorship and ‘intergenerational networks’ especially for first-generation medical students to help make the “hidden curriculum” visible.
☐	Introducing the Medical School Curriculum, Culture, and Community Partners	Right-size the length of time planned for orientation programming. Introduce students to critical resources and information during orientation and build follow-up opportunities on key topics, such as learning skills and strategies throughout the program.
☐	Introducing the Medical School Curriculum, Culture, and Community Partners	Work with local businesses to expose students to the city or community. Create service-learning and service-oriented activities that build connections among students and the community.
☐	Establishing Expectations for Professionalism, Inclusion, and Trust Among Students, Faculty, and Student Affairs	Define expectations and model civility and professionalism.



Matriculation and Orientation

✓	THEMES	STRATEGIES
☐	Establishing Expectations for Professionalism, Inclusion, and Trust Among Students, Faculty, and Student Affairs	Foster a culture where all individuals feel valued, respected, and supported.
☐	Establishing Expectations for Professionalism, Inclusion, and Trust Among Students, Faculty, and Student Affairs	Ensure all feel respected and represented by doing things such as honoring name pronunciation, allowing student introductions, offering flexible seating options, providing accessibility accommodations, addressing financial barriers, and involving students in planning key elements.
☐	Establishing Expectations for Professionalism, Inclusion, and Trust Among Students, Faculty, and Student Affairs	Involve faculty in orientation and community-building activities.
☐	Establishing Expectations for Professionalism, Inclusion, and Trust Among Students, Faculty, and Student Affairs	Review curriculum to ensure broad applicability, accessibility and alignment with educational needs for all students.
☐	Establishing Expectations for Professionalism, Inclusion, and Trust Among Students, Faculty, and Student Affairs	Promote transparency in student interactions, including a clear understanding of how students can offer feedback and how it is received and addressed, and ensuring their concerns are heard and explored.
☐	Establishing Expectations for Professionalism, Inclusion, and Trust Among Students, Faculty, and Student Affairs	Standardize orientation to decrease stigmatization.



Matriculation and Orientation

✓	THEMES	STRATEGIES
☐	Establishing Expectations for Professionalism, Inclusion, and Trust Among Students, Faculty, and Student Affairs	Admissions and SA collaboration to form meaningful learning groups or communities. Combine 'learning how to learn' activities with community-building.
☐	Enhancing Information Sharing and Collaboration with Admissions, Student Affairs, and Educational/Academic Affairs	Facilitate seamless transitions from Admissions to Student Affairs through collaborative handoffs, including spring transition meetings and pre-matriculation advising for students with significant life challenges, informed by admissions data, student self-disclosures, and early outreach surveys.
☐	Proactively Matching Students' Life Circumstances, Obligations, Responsibilities, and Backgrounds with Supportive Resources	Host pre-arrival learning support meetings.
☐	Proactively Matching Students' Life Circumstances, Obligations, Responsibilities, and Backgrounds with Supportive Resources	Provide intentional financial education programs and tools based on assessment of individual student's comfort with financial literacy offered by the FA office and third parties.
☐	Proactively Matching Students' Life Circumstances, Obligations, Responsibilities, and Backgrounds with Supportive Resources	Train student volunteers to help support and answer questions of matriculating students.



Matriculation and Orientation

✓	THEMES	STRATEGIES
☐	Proactively Matching Students' Life Circumstances, Obligations, Responsibilities, and Backgrounds with Supportive Resources	Support students to form meaningful peer-learning groups and communities.
☐	Proactively Matching Students' Life Circumstances, Obligations, Responsibilities, and Backgrounds with Supportive Resources	Create and share a clear, interactive process for requesting accommodations beginning with pre-matriculation communication. Communicate regularly about this process throughout a student's medical journey and make information about it easily accessible on institutional website.
☐	Wellness and Emotional Support	Link matriculating students via online community ties and platforms. Host virtual meetings to introduce matriculating students to Student Affairs teams.
☐	Wellness and Emotional Support	Support affinity (e.g., student caregiver) groups and the organization of social events (e.g., ice cream socials, group outings to sporting events).
	Building Systems, Processes, and Skills to Support Matriculation and Orientation	
☐	Ensure protected time for all leadership, including deans, course directors, units/offices, and staff to meet and interact with students.	



Matriculation and Orientation

✓	THEMES	STRATEGIES
☐	Improve bidirectional information sharing between Admissions, Student Affairs, and Educational Affairs. Create an organizational culture that emphasizes cross-departmental teamwork, collaboration, and communication that supports a holistic approach to supporting student needs.	
☐	Provide the Student Affairs Office and Office of Curricular Affairs with comprehensive matriculation data and training on what the data means.	
☐	Implement a proactive feed-forward approach to support longitudinal student development by sharing relevant learner data focused on future growth, not past performance. Provide training about the appropriate use of feed-forward data and engage students in the process of determining what information is collected/how it is used. Provide benchmarking of peer institutions as a comparison of best practices—demonstrating the credibility of the feed-forward model.	
☐	Establish processes to collect information on students’ life circumstances, obligations, responsibilities, and backgrounds to match them with supportive resources proactively. Ensure the institutional culture is one that destigmatizes support in the largest sense of the word.	

Members of the HSS Virtual Community can find tools, resources, and support to implement these strategies by following this link:
[Matriculation and Orientation Resource Library](#)



 Academic Performance & Progression		
✓	THEMES	STRATEGIES
☐	Coordinated Communication and Collaboration	Provide optional pre-matriculation programming to introduce ALL students to the community, including sessions on how to study, how to connect with classmates, and how to focus on wellness and self-care. Introduce self-reflection skills.
☐	Coordinated Communication and Collaboration	Provide regularly scheduled check-ins with the Office of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs to decrease stigma and give space to ask questions. Could be formal meetings or informal drop-in sessions. Example of an informal session: have lunch in a highly visible student area—invite organic conversations with students.
☐	Coordinated Communication and Collaboration	Ensure students understand the roles and means of contact with key support-providing offices, e.g., the Office of Student Affairs, Curriculum, Student Wellness, and Disability Services, among others. Facilitate introductions of students to key contacts in these offices.
☐	Coordinated Communication and Collaboration	Emphasize the importance of seeking help as a standard and expected practice in medical education. Ensure students understand that asking for help or advice is a core part of their professional development and will be necessary throughout their careers. Facilitate conversations about how familiarity with specific assessment methods can increase student success and normalize proactive help-seeking behaviors.
☐	Coordinated Communication and Collaboration	Build on orientation programming to help students understand the institutional culture, expectations, and role of coaches and mentors.
☐	Coordinated Communication and Collaboration	Ensure early identification of students with academic challenges and link them to support.
☐	Coordinated Communication and Collaboration	Offer opt-out counseling early in the medical school journey, such as during academic advising or career exploration sessions, to help students make informed decisions. Discuss the short- and long-term impacts of alternate career paths, highlighting how students can achieve success and recognition in other fields within or beyond medicine.



Academic Performance & Progression

✓	THEMES	STRATEGIES
☐	Building Students' Metacognitive Skills and Demystifying the Learning and Evaluation Processes	Develop curriculum/courses designed with low-stakes formative evaluations leading to summative evaluations.
☐	Building Students' Metacognitive Skills and Demystifying the Learning and Evaluation Processes	Facilitate access to learning skills and strategies assessment tools and universal strategies for effective study skills for all students. Utilize institutional models that have proven successful in the context of the learning environment.
☐	Building Students' Metacognitive Skills and Demystifying the Learning and Evaluation Processes	Provide an early overview of the USMLE process, including what the exams are, when they will be taken, how scores are used, and how course content relates to preparing for them.
☐	Building Students' Metacognitive Skills and Demystifying the Learning and Evaluation Processes	In collaboration with the Office of Disability Services, introduce students to the process, requirements, and timeline for requesting accommodations on the USMLE exams early in their training to facilitate their decision making, collection of materials, and timely submission.
☐	Building Students' Metacognitive Skills and Demystifying the Learning and Evaluation Processes	Facilitate opportunities to access practice questions for USMLE exams, ideally related to course content.
☐	Building Students' Metacognitive Skills and Demystifying the Learning and Evaluation Processes	Utilize an integrated and centralized database to track student progression with restricted and appropriate access on a need-to-know basis.



Academic Performance & Progression

✓	THEMES	STRATEGIES
	Building Systems, Processes, and Skills to Support Academic Performance & Progression	
☐	Collaborative meetings and structures for follow-up (RACI) to track and support student progress.	
☐	Support for students to acquire learning strategies should be facilitated by appropriate instructional design and teaching approaches. Advising and academic support should collaborate with educational staff and faculty to synergize and promote the development of metacognitive lifelong learning skills.	

Members of the HSS Virtual Community can find tools, resources, and support to implement these strategies by following this link:
[Academic Performance & Progression Resource Library](#)



 Professional Opportunities & Experiences		
✓	THEMES	STRATEGIES
☐	Career Exploration and Planning	Provide information about how to arrange professional opportunities.
☐	Career Exploration and Planning	Develop a module or how-to guidance about making connections and seeking opportunities inside and outside the institution.
☐	Career Exploration and Planning	Create a framework students can use to develop a career development plan for years one through four and beyond that could include elements, such as a timeline for exploration of specialty expectations/requirements, specific summer opportunities (research and/or clinical shadowing), mentorship by a specific specialist, planning for the order of clinical clerkships based on interests, understanding the expectations for post-clerkship AIs, electives, etc.
☐	Career Exploration and Planning	Provide early differentiation opportunities, such as Career Opportunity Redefinition Exploration (CORE), which supports students in assessing their skills and interests, exploring career options, setting realistic goals, and taking strategic action to navigate their career path effectively.
☐	Career Exploration and Planning	Create a pathway for scholarship and for additional research years.
☐	Career Exploration and Planning	Build in time for professional development experiences early in education.
☐	Specialty Exploration	Establish a strong specialty advisor network. Assign advisors to help students make connections in their areas/specialties. Ensure that all students have equal opportunity to thrive.
☐	Specialty Exploration	Build student preparation to be competitive for their desired specialty - sample schedules, sample checklists, and connection with alumni or other mentors.



Professional Opportunities & Experiences

✓	THEMES	STRATEGIES
☐	Specialty Exploration	Share examples of paths for different specialties.
☐	Specialty Exploration	Assist students in identifying programs and experiential opportunities for their first summer that align with their intended specialties, enhance their competitiveness, or help them evaluate potential pathways.
☐	Specialty Exploration	Provide early access to mentors and advisors.
☐	Longitudinal Assessment	Align student and program specialty needs. Use inventory self-assessments, such as those offered in Careers in Medicine, as part of a longitudinal model for career pathway development.
☐	Longitudinal Assessment	Engage students in frequent discussions on their professional identity formation.
☐	Professional Skills Development	Create sessions about how to approach faculty for research, email skills, etc.
Building Systems, Processes, and Skills to Support Professional Opportunities & Experiences		
☐	Advisor training to ensure they are knowledgeable about professional identity formation and humble inquiry.	
☐	Build networks and databases for students to access opportunities, both locally and nationally.	
☐	Provide training to students and faculty about how to be a good mentee and mentor.	

Members of the HSS Virtual Community can find tools, resources, and support to implement these strategies by following this link:
[Professional Opportunities & Experiences Resource Library](#)

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USMLE Exams

✓	THEMES	STRATEGIES
☐	Exam Preparation Strategies and Study Support	Provide timelines for study preparation and milestones.
☐	Exam Preparation Strategies and Study Support	Reinforce the need for students to identify how to most effectively learn material, e.g., interleaving, early use of question banks to assess knowledge and application of knowledge, concept mapping, study groups, etc.
☐	Exam Preparation Strategies and Study Support	Starting in year 1, facilitate access for all students to test preparation resources. Engage Medical Education Learning Specialists (MELS) to help vet and recommend available resources, including commercial options, library resources, etc.
☐	Exam Preparation Strategies and Study Support	Facilitate opportunities for peer tutoring and study groups for each exam.
☐	Wellness and Emotional Support	Provide students with the tools they need to communicate their challenges and needs to their families and support systems. Consider providing resources for members of a student's support network that address these challenges through various formats, such as virtual meetings, information sessions, and podcasts.
Building Systems, Processes, and Skills to Support USMLE Exam Preparation		
☐	Create a strong learning specialist community to coordinate and collaborate with medical educators, curriculum leadership, and administrative and educational affairs staff.	
☐	Communicate about and finance programs that offer Step 1 and Step 2 preparation resources to all students.	
☐	Consider the use of need-based scholarships or vouchers to allow individualized access to the most needed resources.	

Members of the HSS Virtual Community can find tools, resources, and support to implement these strategies by following this link:



[USMLE Exams Resource Library](#)

 Transition to Clerkship		
✓	THEMES	STRATEGIES
☐	Transition to Clinical Settings	Provide early, longitudinal exposure to the clinical learning environment throughout pre-clinical phases.
☐	Transition to Clinical Settings	Provide guidance to students about what to expect in the clinical environment, including the variety of possible clinical settings (county hospital, academic medicine, private clinic), patient population, acuity of clinical issues, presence or absence of residents, different types of learners, etc., and what information they need to be prepared to meet expectations for their clerkships.
☐	Transition to Clinical Settings	Prepare learners for the shift from a highly controlled course-based learning environment with test-based assessments, to a self-directed, fast-paced, environment with ongoing evaluation of performance and need for skills in self-reflection, as well as soliciting and providing feedback.
☐	Transition to Clinical Settings	Help students understand the hierarchy and who to approach with a problem or interpersonal issue (e.g., don't email the dean or department chair for an issue with a resident). Ensure students are aware of the school's policies and procedures for addressing such issues. Additionally, encourage students to utilize their network of advisors, mentors, and other support resources to navigate and resolve their concerns.
☐	Transition to Clinical Settings	Help students distinguish between a bad outcome and a medical error--the difference between being sad and feeling guilty or responsible for the result, and who to go to when they feel overwhelmed or upset by the decisions or comments made by residents or attendings. Provide opportunities to experience, debrief, and learn to process challenging clinical situations.
☐	Transition to Clinical Settings	Provide alternative clinical training and courses for off-cycle students. Provide similar training to dual-degree students, specifically MD/PhD students. Consider flexible curricula that do not adhere to the traditional four-year framework.



Transition to Clerkship

✓	THEMES	STRATEGIES
☐	Transition to Clinical Settings	Recognize and address the training and communication needs of interprofessional teams, including other health providers, technicians in clinical settings, nurses, and more. Ensure that all interactions are conducted with respect and appreciation for the vital roles these professionals play in patient care.
	Building Systems, Processes and Skills to Support Transition to Clerkship	
☐		Provide training and orientation for clerkship directors, faculty, and residents on reducing and intercepting bias. Include these topics in the onboarding of all new hires in these roles.
☐		Provide training to members of grading and promotion committees on potential sources of bias in standardized assessments and methods to minimize bias in feedback (e.g., bias language checkers.)
☐		Provide training/communication/engagement opportunities with residents, such as a 'big buddy' type program matching students with residents of similar backgrounds – so that residents can provide guidance on career pathways.
☐		Discuss the hidden curriculum in the clinical phase. Provide training/continued research on how this curriculum evolves. Provide training on how to address bias in the clinical environment.
☐		Offer Step 1 preparation and readiness resources to all students with flexible models and timelines that accommodate dual-degree students, LOA students, etc.

Members of the HSS Virtual Community can find tools, resources, and support to implement these strategies by following this link:

[Transition to Clerkship Resource Library](#)



 Residency Application and Interview Preparation		
✓	THEMES	STRATEGIES
☐	Specialty Decision Planning	Refer students to online resources to inform specialty decisions, such as the Careers in Medicine portal.
☐	Specialty Decision Planning	Communicate important distinguishing factors of different specialties such as average cost to apply or time to completion. Discuss important selection factors like research, volunteer experience, or advanced degrees.
☐	Specialty Decision Planning	Encourage students to consult with career advisors to discuss possible specialty choices and support them in realistically assessing the alignment of their personality, interests, and skills with their preferred specialty and its application criteria.
☐	Specialty Decision Planning	Organize strategic discussions for students who are undecided on their specialty.
☐	Preparation and Support for Away Rotations	Provide recommended resources and strategies to search for away rotation programs by specialty. Include information on specialties/programs that may offer rotations outside of VSLO.
☐	Preparation and Support for Away Rotations	Provide students with information on programs that have scholarships to support away rotations.
☐	Preparation and Support for Away Rotations	Provide clear information on VSLO process at the start of Year 3, with follow up in the fall and in January right before VSLO opens. Supplement timely information sharing (e.g., workshops) with other resources such as online FAQs.
☐	Preparation and Support for Away Rotations	Provide workshops about preparing for the away rotation season hosted by the registrar and VSLO experts and including institution-specific requirements and processes.
☐	Preparation and Support for Away Rotations	Ensure that students understand the need to ensure affiliation agreements are in place with the host Institution and the possibility that their school and a host institution won't be able to come to agreement, meaning the away rotation will not be possible.

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Residency Application and Interview Preparation

✓	THEMES	STRATEGIES
☐	Preparation and Optimization of Residency Applications	Provide guidance on common residency application challenges, such as selecting experiences, handling interruptions within the personal statement, and how to approach geographic preferences and program signals.
☐	Interview Preparation and GME Collaboration	Facilitate opportunities for students to prepare for and practice interviews. This may include access to virtual interview equipment and/or space for in-person interviews, facilitation of mock interviews, and provision of written guidance/materials.
☐	Interview Preparation and GME Collaboration	Prepare students for the financial implications of the interview process, such as the potential need to travel for in-person interviews. Facilitate opportunities for students to revise budget requests or anticipated needs statements to cover them.
☐	Career Planning and Match Week Preparation	Provide robust career planning programming for medical students. This programming could include comprehensive resources and guidance on specialty selection, residency application processes, and career development. Offer workshops, seminars, and one-on-one advising sessions to help students navigate their career paths. Incorporate mentorship opportunities with experienced professionals and alumni to provide real-world insights and networking opportunities. Additionally, ensure that the programming addresses the unique needs and challenges faced by medical students, such as work-life balance, financial planning, and professional growth.
☐	Career Planning and Match Week Preparation	Create webinars and provide transparency around preparing for SOAP. Include detailed information on the process for students who don't match, and outline the resources and support plans available to them during SOAP. These resources might include career advising, emotional and mental health support, one-on-one counseling, and mentorship from faculty and alumni. Additionally, offer workshops on application strategies, mock interviews, and daily check-ins to ensure students feel supported throughout the process.
☐	Career Planning and Match Week Preparation	Explain post-Match process for requesting residency-specific onboarding documentation processing (future degree certificates, preliminary licensure paperwork, verification of graduation date, etc.)



Residency Application and Interview Preparation

✓	THEMES	STRATEGIES
	Building Systems, Processes, and Skills to Support Residency Application and Interview Preparation	
☐	Provide resources/training to GME leaders about culturally responsive interviewing, anti-bias techniques, and avoiding microaggressions.	
☐	Create a collaborative peer-advising model that strategically involves specialty faculty.	
☐	Provide historical data on residency applications – such as match statistics, signaling data and board scores--to advisors and students, using key resources such as Residency Explorer.	
☐	Ensure faculty and staff are aware of timetables, institutional rules, electives scheduling, and other factors that may inhibit students having the time needed for the application process.	

Members of the HSS Virtual Community can find tools, resources, and support to implement these strategies by following this link:
[Residency Application and Interview Preparation Resource Library](#)

HOLISTIC STUDENT SUPPORT

Helping Students Navigate the Critical Junctures of Medical School



Transition to Residency

✓	THEMES	STRATEGIES
☐	Residency Program Overview	Provide a residency overview course or “boot camp” that provides students an overall understanding of what to expect, including time to completion.
☐	Residency Program Overview	Access existing, or create new, specialty-specific welcome-to-residency toolkits, add specialty-specific ‘carveouts’ to Transition to Residency Courses or create specialty boot camps.
☐	Residency Program Overview	Consult GME programs, program director surveys, resident readiness surveys, and other resources to identify critical information that should be provided in UME residency preparation offerings.
☐	Residency Program Overview	Partner with GME colleagues (e.g., PDs, residents, program coordinators) to create and participate in post-match programming to orient fourth-year medical students on the residency process.
☐	Facilitating Institutional Transition	Following Match Day, provide students clear guidance and timelines for administrative requirements, including outgoing medical school requirements, such as GQ and surveys, as well as incoming requirements from residency host institutions, such as onboarding paperwork and modules.
☐	Facilitating Institutional Transition	Ensure students communicate regularly with key Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) departments, such as the Office of Student Affairs, Office of Academic Affairs, Clerkship Directors, Residency Program Coordinators, Financial Aid Office, and Career Services.
☐	Facilitating Institutional Transition	Provide clear guidance on appropriate communication practices as they transition to their residency host institutions. This includes advising students on how to effectively interact with program directors, coordinators, and other administrative staff. Offer resources such as templates for professional emails, tips for maintaining regular updates, and strategies for addressing any concerns or questions that may arise during the transition. Additionally, emphasize the importance of timely and respectful communication to foster positive relationships and ensure a smooth transition into their residency programs.



 Transition to Residency		
✓	THEMES	STRATEGIES
☐	Financial Preparation for Residency	Provide all students with the opportunity to schedule one-on-one sessions with the Financial Aid Office to discuss financial planning for going into residency (e.g., cost of living and earnings). Discuss Public Service Loan Forgiveness loan repayment strategies, and next steps regarding loans with students who have taken them.
☐	Financial Preparation for Residency	Ensure that students are aware of potential gaps in financial aid/income and health insurance between the end of UME and their first residency paycheck, and share resources available to address them, such as physician relocation loans.
☐	Financial Preparation for Residency	Curate and share information on support and resources available to address gaps.
☐	Peer Learning	Create opportunities for graduating students to share advice with third-year students, e.g., alumni and Q&A sessions by specialty and matched student panels for pre-clerkship students.
☐	Peer Learning	Collaborate with student specialty interest groups to host matched-student sessions.

Members of the HSS Virtual Community can find tools, resources, and support to implement these strategies by following this link:
 [Transition to Residency Resource Library](#)