

# VSLO FAQ's



## What is VSLO?

The AAMC Visiting Student Learning Opportunities™ (VSLO™) is a program that enables medical and public health students to pursue short-term learning opportunities in the United States and globally. The VSLO program supports students through the process of searching for electives, submitting applications, and completing their resulting educational experience(s). The VSLO program includes the following:

- Information about educational opportunities including pre-clinical, community-based global health, research, and clinical.
- An application service called the Visiting Student Application Service (VSAS) allows medical students to search and apply for opportunities.
- A global and U.S. network of participating institutions. [UTRGV SOM IS NOT PARTICIPATING IN THE GLOBAL NETWORK AT THIS TIME]
- The VSLO team, a group of AAMC professionals dedicated to supporting students through the application process.

## When do students get access to VSLO?

Students will get access to VSLO on the second Monday in January. An email with information on how to create an account will be sent directly from VSLO. Although you may have access to VSLO in early January, you may not have the ability to apply to a particular institution then because the catalogs may not be available. However, you can start building your application with the standard required documents.

## Is UTRGV SOM part of the VSLO Global Network?

No, not currently. You will be able to participate in many of the domestic learning opportunities. You may also apply for opportunities outside of VSLO (see last question).

## How much do we pay for application fees?

The VSLO program will charge \$15 per application. Application fees are per elective regardless of requested dates for that elective. We encourage you to investigate any institution-specific fees when deciding to apply for an away rotation.

## When are the catalogs for away opportunities published?

Most schools publish their catalogs between February and May. With a few exceptions, most institutions start their application process in April or May.

## How do I get my transcript uploaded?

Your application to VSLO must be completed first. The School of Medicine Registrar Services (SOMRS) will upload your transcript prior to releasing your application.

## How long does it take for my application to be released to the Host institution?

Once SOMRS receives your submitted application it will verify you and provide the standard documents required by the Host institution: (attestation of liability insurance/CBC/DS/OSHA/HIPAA, transcript, certification of good standing, etc.). If your Away Rotation has been approved by your SOM Career Advisor, SOMRS will work with the Office of Educational Affairs (OEA) to release within five (5) business days. Please allow at least that time before contacting us. If your application has not been released to the Host institution within 5 business days, there may be other factors holding the release. Please send an inquiry e-mail to [SOMRegistrarServices@utrgv.edu](mailto:SOMRegistrarServices@utrgv.edu).

### **Do VSLO schools require Letters of Good Standing (LOGS)?**

Typically, no. Good Standing is verified in VSLO by SOMRS as part of the standard verification information process, which includes malpractice insurance, completion of MS3 requirements, projected graduation date, HIPAA, OSHA, etc. There may be a school that will require a LOGS; we will comply if the school **specifically** requests it.

### **Which courses do I list on the application?**

ONLY list your required core clerkships: FM, IM, OB, Psych, Peds & Surg.

### **How should I name the documents that I will upload?**

Keep the naming of your documents simple, appropriately named, and easy to understand what they are. (e.g., "CV\_LastnameFirstname").

### **What immunizations should I get in preparation for away rotations?**

Most institutions will use the AAMC Standardized Immunization Form (SIF), however, this requirement is institution-driven. Therefore, in rare instances your away rotation Host institution may have their own institutional immunizations form to complete. If you have kept your CastleBranch portfolio up to date, the immunization record it contains should meet institutional requirements. You would then download copies of the information requested and include them as part of your application.

### **What if the rotation requires Letter of Recommendation (LOR)?**

These are not standard requirements. If the Host institution requires a LOR, you must then have the letter-writer e-mail an attachment of the LOR written on your behalf to the SOMRS at [SOMRegistrarServices@utrgv.edu](mailto:SOMRegistrarServices@utrgv.edu), with your name on the subject line. The letter must come from the letter writer with **NO** copy (cc) to you. Once received, SOMRS will upload it onto VSLO. You will then be able to see the document designation on your VSLO portal and will be able to assign to the specific school(s). Please be advised that this document will remain private.

### **What if the away rotation that I applied for requires a Criminal Background Check (CBC) report?**

The standard verification question regarding CBC will be updated by SOMRS to "yes" in VSLO. If the Host institution requires an actual report, then you may download your CBC report received at the time you started your 3<sup>rd</sup> year. The CBC conducted when you first entered medical school CANNOT be used. Additionally, some schools may have their own CBC requirements. If the Host institution requires a CBC less than six (6) months old, please comply with their directions.

### **What if the away rotation that I applied for requires a Drug Screening (DS) report?**

The standard verification question regarding DS will be updated by SOMRS to "yes" in VSLO. If the Host institution requires the actual report, you may download your DS report received when you started your 3<sup>rd</sup> year. The DS conducted when you first entered medical school CANNOT be used. Additionally, some schools may have their own DS requirements. If the Host institution requires a DS less than six (6) months old, please comply with their directions.

### **What if the away rotation that I applied for requires OSHA Certification within one year of scheduled rotation?**

The initial verification will be certified by SOMRS in VSLO. If they require an actual certificate, you may download the one from your CastleBranch portal and upload it to your "Documents" in VSLO. It is the student's responsibility to upload this certificate in VSLO upon request from the Host institution.

### **What if the away rotation that I applied for requires a copy of my HIPAA Certificate?**

The initial verification will be certified by SOMRS in VSLO. If they require an actual certificate, you may download the one from your CastleBranch portal and upload it to your "Documents" in VSLO. It is the student's responsibility to upload this certificate in VSLO upon request from the Host institution.

### **What if the away rotation that I applied for requires more liability insurance than what is currently provided to us?**

The UT System protects medical students at a coverage of \$25K/\$75K per incident and aggregate respectively. If the specific rotation requires higher coverage (ex. \$1M/\$3M), the student is solely responsible for the cost of the difference. As a service to you, SOMRS has developed a process with The UT System to provide medical students with the adequate insurance needed for their away rotation. The cost of additional coverage is usually modest, so do not be deterred from applying to a program because of the requirement for additional coverage. Instead, send an email to SOMRS letting us know that you will need a quote for additional liability insurance. Write on the **Subject: Liability Insurance for Away Rotation Needed** and send to [SOMRegistrarServices@utrgv.edu](mailto:SOMRegistrarServices@utrgv.edu). SOMRS will follow up with specific instructions. This process may take a couple of weeks, so the sooner you contact SOMRS, the better we can help you.

### **What if the away rotation that I applied for requires a copy of my BLS card?**

The student is responsible for uploading a copy of the BLS card, which is kept in your CastleBranch portal, upon request from the Host institution.

### **What if the away rotation that I applied for requires a copy of my Mask Fit Certificate?**

SOMRS will initially certify Mask Fit in VSLO as part of the standard verification process. However, if an actual certificate is requested by the host institution, it is the responsibility of the student to upload from your CastleBranch portal into your "Documents" in VSLO.

### **Is my picture appropriate for the VSLO application?**

You should always use a professional-looking headshot photo on your application. The photo should not have you wearing hats, sleeveless shirts, t-shirts with explicit messages, or anything that may not be considered professional. A suggestion is that you wear a professional top, suit jacket or white coat in the picture. Have this picture on an electronic file ready to be uploaded.

### **What if the institution that I want to do my rotation with does not have an Affiliation Agreement with UTRGV?**

This is important and should be taken into consideration by the student when applying for an away rotation that requires a new Affiliation Agreement. Although we do not want students to be deterred from applying, the student must understand that implementation of an affiliation agreement may take time to be put into place, sometimes 2-3 months. If a student finds out that an Affiliation Agreement is needed, they must communicate with SOMRS to get the process started.

### **May I apply for rotations outside of VSLO?**

Yes. If you find an opportunity outside of VSLO, the first step is to make an appointment with the Associate Dean for Students, to go over your plan and create a realistic timeline for feasibility and completion of requirements.