



## **OBJECTIVE**

This policy details how the Melbourne Medical School in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences (MDHS) administers requests to Opt-Out of the Extended Rural Cohort (ERC).

## **POLICY**

Applications to Opt-Out of the ERC will be assessed under the following circumstances:

- Capacity issues
- Exceptional and unforeseen circumstances

### **Capacity Issues**

When there is a need to reduce the number of students in the ERC due to capacity issues, students will be invited to submit an application to Opt-Out of the ERC stream.

### **Exceptional and unforeseen circumstances**

Students facing exceptional and unforeseen circumstances preventing the student from completing the Community Based Year can apply to Opt-Out of the ERC.

### **Guidelines for approving applications due to exceptional and unforeseen circumstances**

Acceptable reasons for consideration of exceptional and unforeseen circumstances may include:

1. That circumstances (illness, family circumstances, as described in 2 & 3 below) have changed (developed) since their acceptance of a place in the ERC program in the Medical School and that these circumstances were unforeseen, unavoidable and outside the control of the student
2. The development of a medical condition (in the student) that requires frequent medical attention over an extended period of time that is not available in the region. The need should be supported by a letter from the student's medical practitioner.
3. The development of family circumstances that would substantially benefit from the student being placed in Ballarat, Shepparton or Wangaratta (location of family, including better access to transport to get to family).

## **PROCEDURES**

The Rural Clinical School will administer the Opt-Out process as follows:

- A student wishing to Opt-Out will submit a written application to the Rural Clinical School Manager outlining their reasons for opting out of the program.
- Applications should be addressed to:
  - » Rural Clinical School Manager  
PO Box 6500, Shepparton VIC 3632  
e: Melissa Seymour: [mjdobson@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:mjdobson@unimelb.edu.au)
- The Director, ERC will perform an initial review of each application and submit a recommendation to the ERC Panel.
- The ERC Panel will review all applications and determine the outcome. The ERC Panel will comprise of:
  - » Rural Clinical School Director of Medical Student Education
  - » Deputy Director of Medical Student Education – Shepparton
  - » Rural Clinical School Manager
- Students will be notified of the outcome of their request within fifteen working days of receipt of the application

## APPEAL PROCESS

- Students may appeal against a decision made under the ERC Opt-Out Policy in writing within ten working days of the outcome notification
- Appeals should be addressed and submitted to:
  - » ERC Appeals Committee
  - e: [md-enquiries@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:md-enquiries@unimelb.edu.au)
- The ERC Appeals Committee comprises:
  - » Director, MEU (Chair)
  - » Director, Medical Student Education (Metro)
  - » Academic Programs Manager
- An acknowledgment of receipt of the appeal will be sent to the student within three (3) working days of its receipt.
- The student will be notified in writing of the outcome of the appeal within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of the appeal.
- Appeals should comprise a one page cover letter outlining the reason for the appeal, with supporting documentation attached. Verbal or emailed appeals will not be considered.
- If a student does not believe that the appeal has been adequately considered, they may follow the formal grievance procedures outlined in the Melbourne Medical School Student Grievance Procedures located at <http://medicine.unimelb.edu.au/students/policies>