Going Abroad?
Below is a step by step plan to get you started. While reading through the list below, please note the suggested dates for completing each step and that many organizations (even those at UNC) will have earlier deadlines.

September - October
(Step 1) Get a clear understanding of what your options are for electives
You can do global health electives during the summer between MS1 and MS2 for 4-6 weeks, during MS3 if you postpone a clinical rotation, during MS4 for two months, or you can take a leave from medical school to complete an MPH or a specific global health fellowship program.
(Step 2) Think about what you want to get out of the experience, and where you want to go
There are many important reasons to do a global health elective but what you get out of it will at least partially be determined by what ideas you went into it with. There are established programs in many countries, and you can always create your own project as well. You can start by looking at our list of programs and past student experiences and other organizations.

November - December
(Step 3) Find a UNC faculty preceptor and an international preceptor/mentor
In order to register for global health elective or selective and receive credit, you MUST have a UNC faculty advisor who registers you for a specific elective course in their department. Any UNC medical school faculty CAN be your faculty advisor if they are able to sign off on your elective request, approve registration for you in an elective course in their department, and take responsibility for working with you to plan an appropriate learning experience, completing your evaluation and grade submission.

January - February
(Step 4) Make a schedule of deadlines
It may be helpful to set deadlines for a project proposal (if needed), scholarship/grant applications and applications to overseas placements, applications, letters of recommendation, and getting ready to go (immunizations, travel insurance, visa, etc).
(Step 5) Find and apply for funding
Funding generally comes from one of three sources: yourself, loans, or scholarships and grants. If you are getting credit for your project abroad, you are eligible to receive financial aid. In order to receive financial aid before your trip, you need to apply for it at least 6 weeks prior to departure (and your elective request/credit application MUST be submitted before you apply).

March – April
(Step 6) Get ready to travel safely and be prepared for emergencies
Travel insurance including evacuation is required for all UNC students and faculty traveling outside of the US as part of school or work experience. You MUST obtain insurance and complete two online modules: “Travel Health and Safety” and “Cross-cultural Issues, Ethics and Professionalism for global health electives.” UNC Student Health Services has an International Travel Clinic which can help to get all your immunizations and meds up to par for travel. Call for an appointment 3-6 months prior to travel. UNC SOM students and faculty must abide by UNC travel policies and emergency procedures. See UNC SOM Emergency Plan for important emergency planning information.

August
(Step 7) Remember to leave some time and energy to re-enter gently and wrap things up when you return
If you have applied for elective credit, you will need to submit an evaluation of your elective, a preceptor’s evaluation of your performance and experience, and whatever project or paper is required by your faculty advisor for the specific class you registered for. The elective evaluation and the preceptor evaluation should be submitted electronically to the Office of International Activities.

Please visit our website for more information!
www.med.unc.edu/oia/going-abroad