



Duty Hours, Years 3 & 4

Senior Leader: Medical School Dean

Responsible University Officer: Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education

Policy Owner(s): Assistant Dean for Curriculum

Policy Contact: Director for Clinical Immersion & Transitions

POLICY STATEMENT

Student duty hours are defined as all required clinical and academic activities related to the medical student experience on shifts during a required rotation (exclusive of reading and preparation time spent away from the duty site). Duty hour standards need to integrate time for students to have a significant clinical experience, to prepare for course assessments, and to obtain sufficient time to attend to personal matters to maintain well-being. Ideally, the planning of duty hours should be a collaboration between the student and the supervising faculty and/or resident.

REASON FOR POLICY

This policy exists to provide clarity to clinical supervisors and students about the UMMS' formal expectations for clinical scheduling and time off.

This policy also ensures the medical school meets LCME Accreditation requirements as follows:

Element 8.8: MONITORING STUDENT TIME. "The medical school faculty committee responsible for the medical curriculum and the program's administration and leadership ensure the development and implementation of effective policies and procedures regarding the amount of time medical students spend in required activities, including the total number of hours medical students are required to spend in clinical and educational activities throughout the curriculum."

PROCEDURES

- Overnight Call (after day shift) frequency cannot be greater than every fourth night over the period of a rotation (i.e. cannot be on call every second or 3rd night)
- Minimum 10 hours of rest between work periods
- 24 hours consecutive on call time limit
 - No new patients after 24 hours will be assigned
 - Additional 4 hours allowed for patient care responsibilities and educational opportunities (i.e. lecture, skills lab)
- Required core clerkships will schedule students to have at least one day off every 7 days. In addition, a second, consecutive day off will be scheduled, on average, every two weeks. One day is defined as a 24-hour period. Example: A student ends a shift at 5:30 pm and starts their next scheduled shift at 5:30pm the next day, that is 24 hours and a "day off". Official University holidays count as a day off under this policy. Example: Memorial Day is a University holiday; students may be required to work the other six days in that week. Students, with the consent of the Clerkship Director, can work a University holiday in exchange for another day off during that week

- Clerkships will schedule at least two half-weekdays of Independent Learning Time (ILT) for every 4 weeks. This time is to be scheduled during regular business hours, M-F, will appear on the student's clerkship calendar marked as ILT, and will be scheduled as early as possible to allow for advance planning
- On some rotations, students may be required to participate in night float schedules in order to maximize exposure to patients and educational opportunities

Reporting Allegations of Duty Hours Violations

Students considering making a report of perceived Duty Hours violations should first, if possible, attempt to resolve the matter directly with the clerkship director or their designee to make adjustments to the student's schedule. However, when such an option is not viable for any reason, students may submit allegations of [Duty Hours violations](#). Allegations will be promptly investigated.

Exclusion for Reporting Clerkship and Program Evaluation Data on Duty Hours

For program evaluation and oversight, the UMMS conducts confidential clerkship evaluations that may include questions about duty hours. Although students may disclose instances of duty hours violations in clerkship evaluations, they do not serve as official reporting mechanisms.

Non-Retaliation

In order to protect the rights and freedoms of students who submit allegations of duty hours violations and to ensure the integrity of the process, the UMMS strongly enforces the University's non-retaliation policy. No student shall experience retaliation for statements or information shared as part of an allegation of duty hours violations, whether from faculty, staff, or other members of the community. Students may report suspected retaliation to the Assistant Dean of Curriculum. Reports of suspected retaliation will be promptly reviewed and investigated. Violations may result in appropriate administrative action up to and including rescinding faculty status, removal of clinical supervisory roles, and notification to the Department Head for department-level actions.

Monitoring

The UMMS has several methods for regular monitoring of clerkship and site compliance with this policy that includes:

- Summary reports on allegations of duty hours violations submitted by students
- Clerkship Evaluation data

These data are provided to the Clinical Education Committee (CEC), at minimum, annually for review and for quality improvement efforts when deficiencies are noted.

DEFINITIONS

Overnight Call: Scheduled night duty directly following a day shift, or an extended shift beyond a normal day shift. Call rooms will be made available for students on overnight call.

Night Float: A standard scheduled shift at night not preceded by a day shift

RESPONSIBILITIES

Clerkship Director (or designee)

Clerkship Directors or their designee are responsible for scheduling Independent Learning Time (ILT) and days off, as per the policy outlined above. Clerkship Directors or their designee will have final authority on decisions regarding student requests for schedule changes.

Students

Students are responsible for submitting requests to Clerkship Directors or their designee for changes in scheduled days off. Students should submit concerns about violations of this policy as directed above.

Assistant Dean for Curriculum

The Assistant Dean will receive student concerns about scheduling during specific clerkships, or allegations of violations of this policy and work to resolve such issues or refer the matter to the appropriate governing body.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Can a student *choose/request* to work additional hours that exceed the Duty Hours Policy?

Yes. There may be instances where a student may request to work additional hours to engage in activities they feel will personally benefit their learning. These instances should be rare and must not be a regular occurrence AND must represent unique and exceptional learning opportunities they are unlikely to participate in at other times. Students will also still be expected to work their scheduled hours as reflected on the clerkship calendar. Additionally, care should be taken to ensure additional time does not adversely impact their wellbeing or preparation for other educational activities (ie. preparing for Shelf Exams).

With whom should a student make a request to work additional hours?

Students must not work additional hours beyond their scheduled hours without notifying appropriate clerkship personnel. Students can make a request to work additional hours with their Supervising Attending, Site Director, or Clerkship Director, as available.

Can clerkships (formally or informally) require/expect students to exceed the hours stipulated in this policy?

No. Clerkships are expected to strictly adhere to this policy.

Will working additional hours beyond those scheduled impact a student's evaluation of performance?

No. Students who choose to work additional hours as described above, should do so for their own perceived benefit. Working additional hours are not considered in student performance evaluations.

What should students do if ILT is not scheduled in their clerkship calendar or if they would like to change it?

Students can speak with the Site Director or Clerkship Director to ensure ILT is made available to them or to request a change to their scheduled ILT. Requests to use ILT or requests to change scheduled ILT must not adversely affect a student's (informal/formal) performance evaluations.

HISTORY

Amended: December 2018 by Clinical Education Committee

Approved: December 2018 by Education Council

Amended: October 2021

Reviewed and Approved: Medical School Education Committee (MSEC), July 2022

Reviewed and Approved: Medical School Education Committee (MSEC), March 2024