



Medical Student Duty Hours Policy

Policy #
9-105

Category:	9-General Education Policies
Curriculum Phase:	Clerkship and Transition to Residency
Author/Authoring Body:	Curricular Affairs
Responsible Unit:	Curricular Affairs
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Next Review Year:	2026

Summary

This policy establishes duty hour limits and scheduling requirements for medical students in clinical clerkships, defines institutional responsibilities for fatigue management and student safety, and requires documentation of duty hours to ensure compliance with standards that protect both patient care and student well-being.

Related LCME Standards:

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.

Applicability & Scope

This policy applies to all College of Medicine – Tucson medical students engaged in clinical clerkships.

Definitions

None

Policy Statement

I. Duty Hour Limits and Scheduling Requirements

- A. Duty hours for medical students must be limited to 80 hours per week, averaged over the clerkship period, inclusive of all in-house call activities.
- B. Duty periods of students may be scheduled to a maximum of 24 hours of continuous duty in the hospital.

- 1) Clerkship directors must encourage residents to use alertness management strategies in the context of patient care responsibilities. Strategic napping, especially after 16 hours of continuous duty and between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m., is strongly suggested. It is essential for patient safety and medical student education that effective transitions in care occur. Students may be allowed to remain on-site to accomplish these tasks; however, this period must be no longer than an additional four hours.
 - 2) Students must not be assigned additional clinical responsibilities after 24 hours of continuous in-house duty, but may remain for required formal learning activities such as noon conferences, scheduled didactic sessions, etc.
 - 3) In unusual circumstances, students, on their own initiative, may remain beyond their scheduled period of duty to continue to provide care to a single patient. Justifications for such extensions of duty are limited to reasons of required continuity for a severely ill or unstable patient, academic importance of the events transpiring, or humanistic attention to the needs of a patient or family.
 - 4) Medical students must have eight hours between scheduled duty periods. They must have at least 14 hours free of clinical duty after 24 hours of in-house duty.
- C. Medical students must be scheduled for in-house call no more frequently than every-fourth night (when averaged over the clerkship period).
- D. Medical students must be scheduled for a minimum of one day free of all duty every week. This can be averaged over any assigned rotation only if there is a compelling educational need that has been approved by the CCS. At-home call cannot be assigned on these free days.

II. Institutional Responsibilities for Fatigue Management

- A. The sponsoring institution must have a process in place to allow for adequate sleep facilities or suggestions for alternate transportation if the medical student feels like driving home would be dangerous. The College of Medicine – Tucson must do the following:
- 1) Educate all students to recognize the signs of fatigue and sleep deprivation.
 - 2) Educate all faculty members and students in alertness management and fatigue mitigation processes.
 - 3) Adopt fatigue mitigation processes to manage the potential negative effects of fatigue on patient care, learning and personal safety, such as strategic napping and personal strategies for safe transportation home.

III. Documenting Duty Hours

- A. Students are expected to record their duty hours. Students are exempted from this requirement while participating in clerkships that do not require call of any type.
- B. Students must complete recording of their duty hours by the last day of the clerkship.
- 1) Clerkship directors or clerkship coordinators will routinely review cumulative duty hours data and correct any systemic problems that prevent compliance with the stated duty hours policy.
 - 2) Where students report a violation of duty hour limits, they will indicate the reason for that violation with the report.
 - 3) Students will not be penalized for accurate reporting, nor will duty hours information be used to determine grades or for student evaluations.

- 4) Duty hours reports will be retained in the electronic database systems.
 - 5) Grades will not be released until duty hours are reported by the student.
- C. Where a breach of duty hours is noted in a student's report, the clerkship coordinator will report that violation and its explanation to the clerkship director.
- 1) The director will determine whether the breach is acceptable per the guidelines set above.
 - 2) Where reasons indicate an unacceptable violation of the duty hour limits per the guidelines set above, the director will contact the site director, or student's supervisor to investigate and remediate those conditions leading to the violation.
- D. Clerkship directors/coordinators will be asked annually by the Tucson Educational Policy Committee to report on compliance with the duty hour policy.

Procedures

None

Related Information

None

Revision History

2021/09/30: Policy revised.

2012/06/20: Policy approved.