

Student Clinical and Educational Credit and Contact Hours Policy

Definition:

Clinical and educational credit hours are defined as all educational contact across the four-year curriculum. Each course and clerkship is assigned a number of credit hours. Calculating credit hours for the MD curriculum will be distinguished into two broad categories: **guided instruction** and **experiential learning**.

Guided instruction may be delivered online or in a face-to-face classroom format. Guided instruction may include but not limited to didactic learning activities in classrooms, online computer-assisted modules, multimedia interaction, pre-recorded lectures, team-based learning, problem-based learning, and/or small group discussions. **One credit hour of guided instruction** is equivalent to **1 contact hour** of guided instruction per week for 15 weeks (or the equivalent amount of work for a shorter or longer period of time), totaling to 15 contact hours. For each hour of credit, students should expect two hours of unguided study time, which may include reading, independent or group studying, self-directed learning and preparation for assessments.

Experiential learning may include but not limited to scheduled laboratory, research, service learning, clinical observation, clinical experience, preceptorships, and simulation learning opportunities. **One credit hour of experiential learning** is equivalent to **3 contact hours** of experiential learning per week for 15 weeks (or the equivalent amount of work for a shorter or longer period of time), totaling to 45 contact hours.

The credit hour assignment for particular courses will be ascertained by summing (total contact hours of guided instruction/15) and (total contact hours of experiential learning/45).

Curriculum Committee must continually monitor the protection of time students use to conduct independent and self-directed learning. As existing learning activities are modified and/or new learning activities are created, the curriculum committee must monitor whether students have sufficient time to engage in self-directed learning activities and whether changes in course/clerkship credit hour assignment are required.

Student Clinical and Educational Hour Rules for the pre-Step 1 Curriculum:

The pre-Step 1 curriculum is defined as all courses that students must pass prior to sitting for the USMLE Step 1 examination. The aim of the student clinical and educational hour rules for the pre-Step 1 curriculum is to prevent the effects of sleep deprivation on students' personal safety, students' isolation, effects on students' mental well-being and students' ability to study and learn.

- The number of scheduled contact hours will be limited to 20 hours a week, averaged over each term across all courses in the pre-Step 1 curriculum

Student Clinical and Educational Hour Rules for the post-Step 1 Curriculum:

The post-Step 1 curriculum is defined as all courses and graduation requirements that students must pass after passing the USMLE Step 1 examination. The aim of the student clinical and educational hour

rules for the post-Step 1 curriculum is to prevent the effects of sleep deprivation on students' personal safety, students' isolation, effects on students' mental well-being and students' ability to study and learn.

The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) clinical and educational work hour rules provides a model for formulating this medical student policy.

- Medical students will learn and work no more than eighty contact hours a week, averaged over the course or clerkship blockperiod.
- Clinical services that have a low volume of nocturnal and weekend activity are encouraged to allow students to take call from home. These hours spent at home do not count towards the 80-hour limit rule. Should a student be required to return to the hospital during an 'at home' call situation, then the hours physically present in the hospital do count towards the 80-hour weekly average.
- Students may not exceed more than six consecutive nights of in-house night float or night shift.
- Students may not have in-house call more frequent than every 3rd night averaged over the course, clerkship or rotation block
- Students should not be scheduled for more than 24 continuous in-hospital shifts.
- Students who have been on a 24-hour shift may participate in patient care or educational activities (e.g., grand rounds) for an additional 4 hours. However, during this additional 4 hours, students may not be assigned new patients. Students must have a 14-hour break after a 24-hour shift.
- Students should have at least one in seven days off when averaged over the length of the course, clerkship or rotation block.
- If students believe that they are being asked to participate in clinical or educational activities that violate these rules, then students should immediately consult with the course/clerkship director and the appropriate campus Dean of Student Services. It is preferred that anticipated violations be brought to the attention of the course or clerkship director to prevent rule violations. Course, clerkship and rotation evaluations will contain questions pertaining to the compliance of the clinical and educational hour rules.
The course, clerkship, and rotation directors and the appropriate campus Dean of Student Services will review any reported rule violations to assess compliance with the policy and take action on a case-by-case basis.
- Faculty should be cognizant of the cumulative hours the students are learning, assess signs of student fatigue and adjust schedules accordingly.
- Student Clinical and Educational Hours Policy will be reviewed and adjusted periodically to reflect the best practices in assuring a safe and productive learning environment that centers on student wellbeing. Policy compliance will be regularly reviewed during course, clerkship, and rotation evaluations by the Assessment Subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee for the MD Degree.

LCME Standard 8: Curricular Management, Evaluation, and Enhancement

The faculty of a medical school engage in curricular revision and program evaluation activities to ensure that that medical education program quality is maintained and enhanced and that medical students achieve all medical education program objectives and participate in required clinical experiences and settings.

Applicable 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 during clerkships.

***Drafted by Course Director Subcommittee: Summer 2006 Approved
by MD Degree Curriculum Committee: November 2006 Revised by the
Clerkship Directors Subcommittee: April 2011 Approved by the MD
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Updated: July 2015

Updated and approved by the MD Curriculum Committee: April 2017 to take effect July 1, 2017

Updated and approved by the MD Curriculum Committee: June 2019. *This policy will take effect in an incremental fashion starting in August 2020 with the Class of 2024 and succeeding classes. The "Student Clinical and Educational Hours Policy" will remain in effect for previously matriculated cohorts.*

Updated: June 2020