



Policy Title

Academic Workload and Duty Hours

Identifier

USCSOMG – ACAF – 3.00

Prepared by: Office of Academic Affairs

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Reviewed by: Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs

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LCME Standards

8.8 – Monitoring Student Time

Scope

University of South Carolina School of Medicine Greenville (USCSOMG) students, faculty and clinical clerkships

Policy Statement

Academic Workload

USCSOMG recommends an average of 28 hours of required educational activity per week in the first two years, including no new material the day before an exam, and no required weekend classes. During these years, the average time students spend in class is 24 hours per week, with an additional 4 hours on average of required pre-class preparation. This permits at a minimum, 12 hours within the standard work week for self-directed learning, in addition to evenings and weekends for study.

Duty Hours

Duty hours are defined as all clinical and academic activities related to the education of the medical student; i.e., patient evaluation, time spent in-house during call activities, and scheduled activities such as conferences. Duty hours do not include reading time spent away from the clerkship or elective site.

Duty hours must be limited to 80 hours per week, averaged over 4 weeks, inclusive of all in-house call activities.

Medical students must be provided with 1 day in 7 free from all educational and clinical responsibilities, averaged over 4 weeks, inclusive of call. One day is defined as one continuous 24-hour period free from all clinical and educational duties.

Adequate time for rest and personal activities must be provided. This should optimally be a 10 hour time period provided between all daily duty periods and after in-house call.

On-call Activities

The objective of on-call activities is to provide medical students with a continuity of patient evaluation experiences throughout a 24-hour period. In-house call is defined as those duty hours beyond the normal work day, when medical students are required to be immediately available in the assigned institution.

In-house call must occur no more frequently than every third night.

Continuous on-site duty hours, including in-house call, must not exceed 24 consecutive hours. Medical students may remain on duty for up to 4 additional hours to participate in didactic activities and maintain the continuity of medical and surgical care (hospital rounds).

Exceptions

Limited and carefully justified exceptions to this policy may be permissible. It is recognized that students do not work the consistently demanding and lengthy hours of resident physicians. In addition, their educational experiences in many areas are of limited duration. Maximizing their opportunity to experience some clinical or educational opportunities may from time to time justify exceeding the normal duty hours policy.

Examples of justifiable exceptions might include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Prescheduled educational conferences or ‘rounds’ that must occur beyond the ‘24/4’ limits.
- A student-initiated request to participate in or observe a medical activity or procedure (e.g. surgery, diagnostic study, specialty consult or treatment, etc.) that must occur beyond the “24/4” or 80 hour policies.
- A student-initiated request to waive or alter the ‘days off’ policy in order to accommodate a special event (e.g. attend a special conference, attend a wedding, birth, or funeral, etc.) or ensure continuity of care or experience with a particularly valuable or interesting clinical case. It is anticipated that such exceptions will be infrequently invoked.

Reason for Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide USCSOMG students clarity on institutional expectations.

Procedures

Monitoring

It is the responsibility of the clerkship director, supervising faculty, and Academic Vice-Chair and/or Chair of each department to monitor and ensure that medical students do not exceed the limitations of their duty hours. The Curriculum Committee may periodically request verification of monitoring by individual departments.

Students are required to report infractions of the duty hour policy to their clerkship director and/or the Office of Academic Affairs. Infractions will be investigated by the Office of Academic Affairs with a report to the M3/M4 Subcommittee and the Curriculum Committee and appropriate action taken to ensure infractions do not continue.

Sanctions

Repeated violations by a clerkship will be addressed by the Office of Academic Affairs and/or respective Clinical

Additional Contacts

Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs

Manager of Clinical Clerkship Education
Clerkship Director(s)
Clerkship Coordinator(s)

Related Information

USC School of Medicine Greenville Student Handbook

History

- Date of Change: 06/18/2018
- Change: Move to standardized template
- Reason for Change: LCME CQI