



### **Policy Title**

Academic Workload and Duty Hours

### **Identifier**

USCSOMG – ACAF – 3.00

<b>Prepared by:</b> Office for Academic Affairs	
<b>Reviewed by:</b> Curriculum Committee	<b>Review Date:</b> 06/13/2024
<b>Approved by:</b> USCSOMG Policy Committee	<b>Approval Date:</b> 06/19/2024
	<b>Effective Date:</b> 07/01/2024

### **LCME Standards**

8.8 – Monitoring Student Time

### **Scope**

University of South Carolina (USC) School of Medicine Greenville students, faculty and staff

### **Policy Statement**

USC School of Medicine Greenville recommends an average of 28 hours of required educational activity per week for students in the pre-clerkship phase of the standard four-year curriculum. Students enrolled in the Primary Care Accelerated Track (PCAT) curriculum have six additional hours of required educational activity per week.

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

Due to the rigor of the medical education curriculum, it is strongly recommended that students do not pursue outside employment opportunities.

### **Reason for Policy**

The medical school faculty ensures that the medical education curriculum includes unscheduled time to allow medical students to develop lifelong learning skills. In keeping with LCME expectations, the medical school faculty committee responsible for the medical curriculum and the program’s administration and leadership are committed to 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.

### **Procedures**

**Academic Workload in Pre-clerkship Phase**

USC School of Medicine Greenville recommends an average of 28 hours of required educational activity per week in the pre-clerkship phase including no new material the day before an exam, and no required weekend classes. Due to the nature of assessment in the Multiorgan systems module, new material may be given the day before an exam.

Students should refer to the syllabus and the learning management system (i.e., Canvas) for assignments and required readings. For IPM I and II, this includes service learning and EMT shift requirements.

Students should spend additional time beyond the required educational activities to engage in self-directed learning and studying to master the material.

### **Duty Hours in Clerkship and Post-clerkship Phase**

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.

### **Report Infractions**

Students must report infractions of the duty-hour policy to their clerkship director and/or the Office for Medical Education. Students also have an opportunity to report infractions on the duty hour policy on the Clerkship Evaluation.

### **Monitoring**

The Module Directors are responsible for ensuring that academic workload is not exceeded in the pre-clerkship phase. Module Directors are responsible for documenting in-class time and out-of-class assignments in the Module Delivery Template. Ensuring that required educational activities does not exceed the average of 28 hours in the Pre-clerkship Phase, including hours spent in class and hours required outside of class, is reported to the Pre-clerkship sub-committee and Curriculum Committee in the Pre-Clerkship Phase Report for review, monitoring and potential recommendations for change.

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 during the clerkship and post-clerkship phase. The Office for Medical Education monitors responses to the Clerkship Evaluation for reported violations in Duty Hours. Infractions are investigated by the Office for Medical Education with a report to the Clerkship and Post-Clerkship Subcommittee and the Curriculum Committee. Appropriate action is taken to ensure infractions do not continue. A report on duty hours is included in the Clerkship Phase report, which is reviewed annually by the Curriculum Committee.

### **Sanctions**

Deviations in Academic Workload and Duty Hour Policy by a module or clerkship are monitored and addressed by the Curriculum Committee.

### **Additional Contacts**

Office for Medical Education  
Clerkship Director(s)  
Clerkship Coordinator(s)  
Module Director(s)

### **Related Information**

USC School of Medicine Greenville Student Handbook

### **History**

Date	Change
July 2024	Added expectations for PCAT, clarified expectations in Pre-clerkship Phase, and updated monitoring section.
July 2019	Added EMT shifts in M1/M2 years. The average workload in M1/M2 remains at 28 hours per week. Clarified monitoring procedures and updated branding.
June 2018	Moved to standardized template for LCME CQI