

Policy on Medical Student Work Hours

MSU College of Human Medicine

Providing students with a sound academic and clinical education must be carefully planned and balanced with concerns for student well-being and patient safety.

All courses, including pre-clerkship, clerkships, and elective rotations must adhere to the medical student work hours policy.

Pre-clerkship Phase (Early and Middle Clinical Experiences and Intersessions)

- Student workload will be limited to 70 hours per week (averaged over the semester) to ensure it is manageable. Of these 70 hours, students will spend up to 28 hours per week (on average) attending scheduled activities (e.g., large group activity, scholar group, labs, clinical simulation, clinic, required class meetings, etc.) with the remainder of the time spent completing assigned work. Assigned work is listed on JIT and may include, but is not limited to, reading, online modules, viewing preparatory videos, creating assigned diagrams, and completing quizzes (e.g. weekend learning modules, assigned LGA/simulation/scholar group preparatory assignments, weekly formative assessments).
- All efforts will be made to ensure that the total weekly hours do not exceed this policy and data will be collected from students as part of mid/end experience surveys to continually monitor the workload based on student experience. This data will be included in the ECE, MCE, and Intersessions reports to the Curriculum Committee.
- Concerns about violations of this policy may be shared with the Assistant Dean for Clinical Experiences who will investigate the concern. In addition, anonymous reporting is available through the Student Resolution Advocate.

Clerkship Phase (Late Clinical Experience)

- Work hours, often also called duty hours, are defined as all clinical and assigned academic activities related to the students, including patient care (both in-patient and out-patient), handovers or transfers of patient care, time spent in-house while on-call, and scheduled academic activities such as didactics or exams. Work hours do not include reading or preparation time spent away from the duty site.
- Work hours during the Late Clinical Experience must be limited to 80 hours per week, averaged over a four-week period, inclusive of all in-house call activities.
- Students must be provided with one day in seven free from all educational and clinical responsibilities, averaged over a four-week period, inclusive of call. One day is defined as one continuous 24-hour period free from all clinical, academic, and administrative activities.

- On-call duty is intended to allow a student to experience patient care with continuity outside of the standard day. In all cases, student schedules will be planned so that they have no more than 28 hours of continuous responsibilities, and students must be excused after 28 hours. In rare cases, the student may choose to continue working beyond 28 hours on an active case with overriding educational value; this is allowable as long as it is clearly the student's choice.
- Students must have a minimum of 14-hours free of duty after 24-hours of in-house duty.
- All efforts will be made to ensure that the total weekly hours do not exceed this policy. Data regarding adherence to duty hours will be collected from students as part of the mid-clerkship and end of clerkship student evaluation of the clerkship and as part of the elective rotation student evaluation. This data will be included in the clerkship reports, and then in the LCE report to the Curriculum Committee. Students may report concerns about duty hours to the clerkship director at any time.
- Concerns about violations of this policy may be shared with the Community Assistant Dean or the Assistant Dean for Clinical Experiences, who will collaborate to investigate the concern. In addition, anonymous reporting is available through the Student Resolution Advocate.

Resolution

The Assistant Dean(s) who have investigated a concern and either the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education or the Associate Dean for Community Academic Programs will meet with the course director if a violation of student work hours is found to have occurred. They will design a plan to ensure compliance to the policy, with ongoing close monitoring.

Monitoring

Course directors will report on the data regarding their course or component, as outlined above, with ultimate review by the Curriculum Committee annually.

The Assistant Dean for Clinical Experiences will provide a summary of concerns reported and their resolution for review annually by the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education, the Associate Dean for Community Academic Programs, and the Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

References:

Liaison Committee on Medical Education, Structure and Function of a Medical School – Standards for Accreditation of Medical Education Programs Leading to the MD Degree

Stanford University – 3.18: Student Duty Hours and Work Environment

University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine – Work Hours Policy