

Contact Hours and Clinical Work Hours Policy

Effective Date: January 01, 2022

Responsible Party: University of Alabama at Birmingham Marnix E. Heersink School of Medicine's Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education

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POLICY ABSTRACT

The University of Alabama at Birmingham Marnix E. Heersink School of Medicine recognizes that education is the primary goal of medical students. This policy outlines the limitations on work hours to allow students to maximize the educational benefit and limit fatigue which may impair the student's ability to learn. The policy includes oversight of all aspects of the educational experience of a medical student.

REASON FOR POLICY

This policy ensures faculty oversight of the amount of time medical students spend in required activities and that the medical school meets the requirements set forth by the Liaison Committee for Medical Education (LCME) accreditation requirements as follows:

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.”

SCOPE

This policy applies to all UAB Heersink School of Medicine students and visiting students participating in medical school coursework.

POLICY

Students will be provided a sound educational experience that is carefully planned and balanced with concerns for patient safety and student well-being. The learning objectives of each educational experience cannot be compromised by excessively scheduled contact hours in the preclinical educational experience or clinical assignments in the clinical educational experience. The oversight of this policy will be the responsibility of the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education and the Medical Education Committee.

PROCEDURE

Preclinical Education

1. The general structure of each preclinical module is defined by the module directors in collaboration with the Office of Undergraduate Medical Education. The content in the preclinical curriculum may be delivered via lecture, small group or team-based learning activities, simulation activities, or laboratory-based activities. The total duration of these activities should not exceed 20 hours per week when averaged over the length of the module.
2. The Medical Education Committee will formally assess student contact hours in the preclinical curriculum as a component of the formal module evaluation process. Student contact hours are also monitored by the Office of Undergraduate Medical Education and reviewed with module directors at least 90 days prior to beginning of each module.

Clinical Education

1. Clinical work hours are defined as all clinical and academic activities related to the educational experience; i.e., patient care (both inpatient and outpatient), administrative duties relative to patient care, the provision for transfer of patient care, time spent in-house during call activities, and scheduled activities such as conferences. Clinical work hours do not include reading and preparation time spent away from the duty site.
2. In the clinical curriculum, student clinical work hours are assigned in accordance with the ACGME regulations for first-year residents. Specifically, students:
 1. Must have at least 14 hours free of clinical work and education after 24 hours of in-house call.
 2. Must average 1 day off per week when averaged over the length of the clinical course or clerkship;
 3. Cannot be on duty over 80 hours per week when averaged over one month.
3. Clerkships students can report clinical work hour violations on the clerkship evaluation form. Violations can be reported directly to the clerkship director, the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education, the Associate Dean for Students, the Assistant Dean for Clinical Education, or the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education. In addition, students can use the SOM ReportIt System or the UAB Ethics Hotline to report violations.
4. The Medical Education Committee will formally assess student clinical work hours in the clinical curriculum as a component of the formal clerkship evaluation process. In addition, reports of clinical work hour violations are reviewed in Clerkship Directors Committee meetings on a regular basis.

5. The Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education and Assistant Dean for Clinical Education will work with clerkship directors to resolve issues relative to reported or identified duty hour violations.
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HISTORY

Created: 2014

Approved: January 12, 2022 by UA Systems Office

Revised: January 01, 2022

University of Alabama at Birmingham Marnix E. Heersink School of Medicine policies shall be reviewed periodically to determine whether revisions are appropriate to address the needs of the medical school community.