

Policy Title: Student Work and Credit Hours Policy	
Policy Leader(s): Senior Associate Dean for Curricular Affairs	Reviewed By: MD Policy Review Committee Pre-Clerkship Curriculum Subcommittee Clinical Curriculum Subcommittee
Approved By: Executive Education Committee	Approved Date: 7/10/26

PURPOSE AND SCOPE:

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear, unified standards for medical student workloads across all phases of the curriculum. This policy ensures that the assignment of academic credit hours is accurately calculated based on combined structured and independent learning time. Furthermore, it regulates clinical duty hours in the clinical curriculum to protect student well-being, optimize the learning environment, and prevent cognitive fatigue.

RELEVANT LCME STANDARD(S):

- LCME Element 6.8 (Education Program Duration), LCME Element 8.8 (Monitoring Student Time)

POLICY:

Credit Hour Determination and Calculations

The MD program determines credit hour allocations by balancing faculty-led instruction with expected independent student workloads.

$$30 \text{ Contact Hours} + 45 \text{ Out-of-Class Independent Hours} = 1 \text{ Credit Hour}$$

- **Contact Hours:** Time spent in direct instructional activities with faculty, including lectures, seminars, workshops, laboratory sessions, and clerkship or clinical rotations.
- **Independent Hours:** Time students spend on independent study, academic reading, assignments, projects, research, and general preparation outside of formal instructional contexts.

Application to Modules & Courses: Total contact and out-of-class hours are estimated based on curricular objectives. The resulting credit total is divided by the standard formula and rounded to the nearest whole number.

Application to Clinical Experiences: For Clerkships, Acting Internships (AIs), and both clinical and non-clinical Electives, the allocation is simplified to standard calendar blocks:

$$1 \text{ Week} = 1 \text{ Credit Hour}$$

Pre-Clerkship Work Hours (Phase I)

- **Weekly Limit:** The maximum time of scheduled learning activities (e.g., live, synchronous, recorded/asynchronous) is 27 hours per week, averaged over the course.
- **Assigned activities** (e.g., required preparation, such as viewing audio/video recordings, reading assignments) are limited to a maximum of 40 hours per week, averaged over the course or module (estimating 1.5 hours of assigned activity per 1 hour of scheduled learning activity, averaged over the week).

Clinical Student Work Hours (Phases II and III)

To prevent fatigue and safeguard patient safety, clinical and educational activities are strictly bounded:

- **Weekly Limit:** Total duty hours must be limited to a maximum of 80 hours per week, averaged over the duration of the clerkship period.
- **Included in Duty Hours:** All clinical and educational activities where the student is physically present at a hospital or clinic (direct patient care, rounding, charting, and related administrative tasks). This also includes overnight in-house call, scheduled synchronous/asynchronous didactics, mandatory online modules/clerkship assignments, and required longitudinal experiences.
- **Excluded from Duty Hours:** Commuting time, independent reading, studying at home or away from the clinical site, preparing for shelf exams, or being on hospital grounds for non-clerkship activities.
- **Rest Periods:** Students must have a minimum of 8 hours free of duty between scheduled shifts.
- **Time Off:** Students must be provided with a continuous 24-hour block off during every 7-day period, completely free from clinical or educational obligations.
- **Pre-Exam Dismissal:** On the day before an NBME Subject Exam Assessment Day, students may attend clerkship duties but must be dismissed no later than 5:00 PM.
- **Protected FlexTime (Year 3):** Students receive one half-day of protected FlexTime for every 4 weeks of the curriculum.
- **Protected FlexTime (Year 4):** Students receive one full week of protected FlexTime following Match Week.

On-Call and Special Shifts

- **In-House Call Frequency:** Scheduled no more frequently than every third day.
- **Extended Day Call:** Added duty hours that do not extend overnight. These shifts must end no later than 9:00 PM, and students cannot be required to return earlier than 5:00 AM the next morning.
- **Overnight In-House Call:** Duty hours where a student is required to remain overnight at the site. Following an overnight call shift, the student must be fully dismissed and off duty by 9:00 AM the next morning.

- **Night Float Rotation:** Shift work taking place late at night/overnight with daytime rest. Night float sequences must not exceed 5 consecutive nights and require at least 8 hours off between shifts.

POLICY ADHERENCE:

The Curricular Affairs Support Team distributes this policy annually to Module, Clerkship and Site Directors. Residents and non-educator clinical staff receive copies at the start of each academic year.

Credit allocations, including the breakdown of contact and independent hours, must be clearly disclosed to students on module and clerkship information sheets.

Students can report duty hour violations confidentially via anonymous end-of-clerkship evaluations. Evaluation data is reviewed quarterly by the Clinical Curriculum Subcommittee (CCS). Aggregate, annual compliance metrics are delivered directly to the Executive Education Committee.

RELATED POLICIES:

- Medical Student Attendance and Absence Policy
- Clerkship Assessment and Grading Policy