UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH DAKOTA
SANFORD SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Together in teaching, innovation and compassion

Medical Student Duty Hours Policy

LCME Standard: 8.8 Monitoring Student Time
Originating Office: Medical Education
Responsible Executive: Assoc Dean, Medical Education
Date Issued: 5/2017
Date Last Reviewed: 11/2024
Date Last Revised: 5/2018

Policy Contents

Medical Student Duty Hours Policy 1

I. REASON FOR THIS POLICY 1

II. STATEMENT OF POLICY 1

IV. RELATED DOCUMENTS, FORMS AND TOOLS 3

I. REASON FOR THIS POLICY

The LCME, in Element 8.8, indicates 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 throughout the curriculum.

II. STATEMENT OF POLICY

The following policy for SSOM Medical Student Duty Hours is based upon the ACGME duty hour requirements for residents:

- Duty hours are defined as all clinical and academic activities related to the medical education program, i.e., patient care (both inpatient and outpatient), administrative duties relative to patient care, the provision for transfer of patient care, time spent inhouse during call activities, and scheduled activities such as conferences. Duty hours do not include reading and preparation time spent away from the duty site.

- o It is both the responsibility of the supervising faculty and each medical student to ensure compliance with the restrictions below, so a student does not violate the medical student duty hours as defined by this policy.
- o If a student chooses to disregard faculty recommendations regarding this policy or willingly chooses to not follow the duty hours policy as outlined, their actions may be reflected in their professionalism grade assigned to them by their respective LIC Campus Coordinating Committee.

• Restrictions:

- o Clinical and educational work hours must be limited to 80 hours per week, averaged over a four-week period, inclusive of all in-house clinical and educational activities.
- o Clinical and educational work periods must not exceed 24 hours of continuous scheduled assignments. Up to four hours of additional time may be used for activities related to patient safety, such as providing effective transitions of care, and for student education. However, additional patient care responsibilities must not be assigned to the student during this time.
- o Students must be provided with one day in seven free from all educational and clinical responsibilities, averaged over a four-week period, inclusive of at-home call. One day is defined as one continuous 24-hour period free from all clinical and educational duties.
- o Adequate time for rest and personal activities must be provided. This should consist of an eight-hour break provided between all work shifts.
- o All students must have at least 14 hours free of clinical work after 24 hours of clinical assignments.
- o Students must be scheduled for in-house call no more frequently than every third night (averaged over a four-week period). In-house call is defined as those duty hours beyond the normal workday, when students are required to be immediately available in the assigned institution.
- o Time spent on patient care activities by students on at-home call must count toward the 80-hour and one-day-off-in-seven requirements. At-home call (or pager call) is defined as a call taken from outside the assigned institution. The frequency of at-home call is not subject to the every- third-night limitation. At-home call, however, must not be so frequent as to preclude rest and reasonable personal time for each student. Students taking at-home call must be provided with 1 day in 7 completely free from all educational and clinical responsibilities, averaged over a 4- week period.
- o When students are called into the hospital from home, the hours students spend inhouse are counted toward the 80-hour limit. The course or clerkship director and the faculty must monitor the demands of at-home call in their programs and make necessary scheduling adjustments as necessary to mitigate excessive service demands and/or fatigue.

Duty Hours & On-Call Activities

- In-house call is defined as those duty hours beyond the normal workday, when students are required to be immediately available in the assigned institution. In-house call must occur no more frequently than every third night, averaged over a 4-week period. Continuous on-site duty, including in-house call, must not exceed 24 consecutive hours.

Students may remain on duty for up to 4 additional hours to participate in didactic activities, transfer care of patients, conduct outpatient clinics, and maintain continuity of medical and surgical care. No new patients may be accepted after 24 hours of continuous duty.

• At-home call (or pager call) is defined as a call taken from outside the assigned institution. The frequency of at-home call is not subject to the every-third-night limitation. At-home call (FARM), however, must not be so frequent as to preclude rest and reasonable personal time for each student. Students taking at-home call must be provided with 1 day in 7 completely free from all educational and clinical responsibilities, averaged over a 4-week period.

• When students are called into the hospital from home, the hours students spend in-house are counted toward the 80-hour limit. The course or clerkship director and the faculty must monitor the demands of at-home call in their programs and make scheduling adjustments as necessary to mitigate excessive service demands and/or fatigue.

III. PROCEDURES

Not applicable.

IV. RELATED DOCUMENTS, FORMS AND TOOLS

This policy is also posted in the Medical Student Affairs Handbook.