



POLICY NAME: Academic Workload in Years 1 and 2

Responsible Party: Office of Medical Education

Applies To CMED: Faculty Students Residents Staff Administration

Approval Date: 7/21/2021 Curriculum Committee

Policy Procedure

PURPOSE:

CMED supports an atmosphere that encourages students to maintain a healthy balance between required academic activity and a lifestyle focused on wellness. In addition, CMED promotes and encourages students to engage in the processes underlying self-directed learning. In order to ensure a manageable workload and adequate time for self-directed learning and independent study during years 1 & 2, this policy outlines the time expectations for in-class and out-of-class learning activities. The curriculum should support the students' learning of the content and development of lifelong learning skills through a combination of in-class and out-of-class activities..

POLICY:

This policy defines limitations of total academic workload within the curriculum, to simultaneously maximize educational benefits and limit fatigue, which may impair the student's ability to learn. Contact hours should not exceed 25 hours per week, averaged over each course in Years 1 and 2. Contact hours should not exceed 8 hours in a given day, and should not start before 7:45 am or end after 6 pm. In no circumstances should contact hours, in any week, exceed 28 hours. Estimated total academic workload includes contact hours and directed study activities and should not exceed 60 hours per week.

Independent study and self-directed learning are important in the process of acquisition of knowledge and skills. For any given student in any given week, more than 60 hours may be necessary or fewer than 60 hours may be sufficient. This policy refers only to estimated academic workload.

DEFINITIONS:

- **Contact Hour:** A unit of measure that represents one hour of scheduled learning activity or assessment that appears on the students' weekly academic schedule in eMedley. These sessions may be synchronous or asynchronous. This unit of measure includes a typical 10-minute break between sessions but does not include time spent reviewing pre-readings or other activities that are assigned to students to allow them to prepare for the contact hour.
- **Synchronous Learning Activities:** Allow for students to convene in a common learning space as a whole class or in assigned sub-groups for the purpose of engaging in the learning activity. Not all synchronous learning activities are designated as mandatory attendance (i.e. these sessions may be designated as mandatory or non-mandatory attendance in eMedley).
- **Asynchronous Learning Activities:** Allow for students to complete the learning activity without the need to convene in a common learning space as a whole class or in assigned small groups. Examples include eLearning activities that are used in place of in-class instruction, or some community-based learning activities taking place in clinics or external sites.
- **Directed study:** Directed study includes time spent preparing for scheduled learning activities. This includes but is not limited to, reviewing faculty recommended/assigned readings, media, PowerPoints, and preparing for in-class analysis/discussion.
- **Self-directed learning:** Self-directed learning involves medical students' self-assessment of learning needs; independent identification, analysis, and synthesis of relevant information; appraisal of the credibility of information sources; and receiving feedback on these skills.
- **Independent Study:** Independent study includes unscheduled activities that students undertake to achieve an appropriate level of mastery of the knowledge and skills expected of a pre-clinical medical student. This time varies from student to student and is not calculated as part of the academic workload.

PROCEDURES:

1. Total academic workload along with components thereof should be presented for review by the Year 1-2 Committee, along with the proposed course calendar, according to the approved cycle of course review and revision. This same data should be summarized as part of the Course Review process following each iteration of a course.

2. Student perceptions of academic workload will be monitored in focus groups and in evaluation questions throughout the curriculum per course and used during course review to compare to estimated workload calculations.
3. Any exceptions to this policy must be reviewed and approved by the Year 1-2 committee and/or the Assistant Dean/Foundational Sciences Education.
4. On-going central monitoring of total academic workload will be performed by the Office of Medical Education to ensure that the established workload guidelines are appropriate, and that the actual workload prepared by faculty course directors is in compliance with this policy. The monitoring data collected by the Office of Medical Education will be forwarded to the Year 1-2 committee who will share this information with the Curriculum Committee upon the completion of each course. If individual courses are found to be out of compliance with this policy or the overall policy guidelines are deemed to be inappropriate, the Curriculum Committee through the Year 1-2 Committee will take action to remedy the situation and re-establish compliance.

RELATED POLICIES:

- [Attendance in Years 1 and 2](#)

The College of Medicine reserves the right to make exceptions, modify or eliminate this policy and or its content. This document supersedes all previous policies, procedures, or guidelines relative to this subject.

Policy History	
1/29/2020	Initial approval by Curriculum Committee
7/21/2021	Reviewed and approved by Curriculum Committee