



# VCU

## Student Clinical Duty Hours Policy

### Policy Statement and Purpose

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The Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) has established a standard regarding the monitoring of student time spent in clinical educational environments during required clerkships. This standard outlines the requirement for a medical school to have defined policies and procedures that include information on specific duty hour requirements for clinical clerkships, and how these requirements are distributed to students, residents, and faculty. Additionally, the LCME requires institutions to have defined mechanisms in place for students to report violations of published duty hour policies, as well as how data regarding compliance with duty hour policies is collected and reviewed.

### Stakeholders

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The faculty, staff, students, and residents supervising students at the VCU School of Medicine are responsible for knowing this standard operating procedure, its contents, and provisions.

### Definitions

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**VCU SOM:** Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine.

**CC:** Curriculum Council.

**LCME:** Liaison Committee on Medical Education. The group with authority to accredit medical education programs leading to the MD degree in the United States and Canada.

**OME:** Office of Medical Education.

**Duty Hours:** Duty Hours includes time spent on all clinical and academic activities by students, e.g. patient care, administrative duties related to patient care, the provision for transfer of patient care and scheduled academic activities such as conferences and didactics. Duty hours do not include reading and independent study time.

**CD:** Clerkship Director/Assistant Director/Co-Director.

**AES:** Office of Assessment, Evaluation, and Scholarship.

### Responsibilities

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**Students:** Students are responsible for knowing duty hour restrictions and ensuring they are not working beyond the allowable hours. Students who experience instances where they are asked to work a



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schedule that violates the published duty hour policies should report these using the procedures outlined within this policy.

**CD:** CD's are responsible for the distribution of these procedures to students, as well as to faculty, residents, and other health care professionals supervising students in clinical learning environments. CD's hold responsibility for addressing concerns of duty hour violations and ensuring compliance with established policies.

**AES:** AES is responsible for the collection of student evaluations and assimilation of data regarding compliance with duty hour policies.

**CC:** The CC is responsible with reviewing data regarding compliance with duty hour policies on an annual basis.

## Procedures

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### *Duty Hours Policy*

- During clinical experiences:
  - Students will be on duty no more than an average of eighty (80) hours per week over the duration of the clinical experience.
    - This time includes work hours spent in required clinical and educational activities.
    - Reading done in preparation for the following day's cases, clinic preparation, studying, and research done from home are not counted toward the 80-hour maximum.
  - Students must be provided one (1) day in seven (7) on average over the duration of the clinical experience free from all educational and clinical responsibilities.
  - Students should have at least eight (8) hours off between the end of scheduled periods of work before participating in educational activities or clinical care
    - There may be circumstances when students choose to stay to care for their patients or return to the hospital with fewer than eight (8) hours free of clinical experience and education.
      - If choosing to stay or return early, this must occur within the context of the average eighty (80)-hour a week and the average one (1)-day-off-in -seven (7) requirements
  - Clinical and educational work periods for students must not exceed twenty-four (24) hours of continuous scheduled clinical assignments.
    - Students must have at least fourteen (14) hours free of clinical work and education after twenty-four (24) hours of in-house call
  - Students will not be required to take overnight shift for the two (2) evenings prior to the end of a clerkship in order to allow for adequate study time for the NBME Shelf Exam and/or transition time to the students next rotation.
    - Day shifts for this two (2) day time period will end no later than eight (8) pm.



### ***Reporting Violations***

- If a student experiences a duty hour violation, it is the responsibility of the student to address the issue with the CD or clinical preceptor as soon as possible.
  - If the issue cannot be resolved with this initial conversation then the student should bring the concern to the Assistant Dean for Clinical Medical Education.
- Retaliatory action against students who accurately report infractions of this policy is prohibited.
  - Instances of retaliation should be reported using the procedures for reporting mistreatment.
    - These reports will be referred to the Learning Environment Response Team for review and follow up.

### ***Collection and Review of Data***

- Compliance with duty hour policies will be monitored through a collection of data from end-of-clerkship evaluation forms.
  - AES will assimilate this data for inclusion in the annual review of individual clerkships, as well as the annual review of the clinical phase of the curriculum.
    - This data will be presented to the CC for their review and approval on an annual basis.

### ***Dissemination of Duty Hour Policies***

- Students
  - Students will receive a copy of all duty hour related policies during:
    - Transition to M3 Course (TTM3)
    - Transition to M4 Course (TTM4)
    - Orientation for each required clinical clerkship
  - Students may access information regarding duty hour policies through the:
    - Clerkship Syllabus
    - OME Policies Webpage: <https://medschool.vcu.edu/education/medical-education/lcme-accreditation/policies/>
- Faculty, residents, and other health care professionals
  - Faculty, residents, and other health care professionals supervising medical students in clinical learning environments will receive a copy of all duty hour related policies annually.
    - These will be distributed by the OME in conjunction with the annual distribution of Institutional Learning Objectives.
  - Faculty, residents, and other health care professionals may access information regarding duty hour policies through the:
    - Clerkship Syllabus
    - OME Policies Webpage: <https://medschool.vcu.edu/education/medical-education/lcme-accreditation/policies/>



## Related Policies

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## Review Cycle and Revision History

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The policy is reviewed and may be revised by the Curriculum Council as necessary, but at least every three years.

**Current Revision Approved: 03.09.2023**

## Applicable Laws, Regulations & Standards

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LCME Standards for Accreditation of Medical Education Programs Leading to the MD Degree:

- LCME Standard 8, Element 8