Dartmouth
GEISEL SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Clinical Student Work Hour Policy

Summary of Purpose

This policy sets the guidelines for work hours in the clinical rotations.

The Medical Education Committee (MEC) recognizes that some of the best opportunities for learning occur on nights and weekends, while “on call”. The MEC regulates student hours “on call” during clerkships and electives in order to provide the optimum learning experience to help students achieve a healthy balance of study and personal time during the clerkships.

Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to all Geisel medical students. Faculty, residents, and staff are required to support students in following this policy.

Definitions

Clinical: Refers to the period of medical education where teaching and learning are devoted to the clinical sciences and occur in the clinical rotations (clerkships, electives, and sub-internships).

Work Hours: A unit of measure that represents the total number of hours medical students are required to spend in clinical and educational activities, including formal assessment, during clinical rotations.

On Call : A period of work duty considered to be outside of, or in addition to, typical scheduled hours for a given clinical experience. Students may be on call from a location in, or outside of the hospital.

Policy Statement

All clinical rotations and electives must adhere to the medical student learning/work hour policy as follows:

- The frequency of on-call experiences for each clerkship will be established by the respective clerkship directors, with the intent of optimizing the total educational experience for each student.
- No student should be on call more often than one night in three.
- On average, at least one 24-hour period every week will be free of all patient care and scheduled educational activities.
- Student work hours are not to exceed 80 hours per week in the hospital/clinic setting.
- Students work hours are not to exceed 30 consecutive hours in the hospital/clinic setting.
- Students will report work hour violations on the end-of-clerkship evaluation questionnaire.
- If the clerkship allows, a student may switch call days during the course of the clerkship if an event of significant educational opportunity is at a time when the student is scheduled to be post-call. However, the student must complete the total number of required call nights for the clerkship.
- Didactic conferences should be scheduled so that as many students as possible can attend. Post-call students should attend required teaching conferences if occurring within the above-outlined learning/work hours. However, post-call students may be required to miss didactic conferences in order to abide by the learning/work hour restrictions.
- On-call rooms at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center will be available twenty-four hours a day for post-call students wishing to take a nap prior to driving home after their nights on call, if they feel too tired to drive home safely. The Office for Clinical Education will work with other affiliated hospitals that have night call for Geisel students, and try to arrange a similar arrangement for having rooms available to students during the afternoon while they are post-call.

Procedure

The implementation procedure for this policy includes the following:

1. Clerkship directors must arrange the clerkship schedule (i.e. didactics) to comply with this proposal.

2. Clerkship directors must provide for communication of this policy to all attendings and residents who work with students (including the contact physicians at away sites).

3. Students should keep track of their own work hours.

4. Students will be queried on work hours on evaluations to monitor the policy. Violations will be centrally logged.

LCME Standard

Standard 8.8 – Monitoring Student Workload

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.

Related Information: Documents, Policies, Links, Etc.

None.

Policy Administration

Policy Number:	UME-CURR.CE-0001		
Reviewed By:	Office of Clinical Education	**Effective:**	October 18, 2005
Approved By:	Medical Education Committee	**Last Date Approved:**	November 19, 2025

Policy Contact Information

Office of Clinical Education
Clinical.Education.Office@dartmouth.edu

History

Date	History
October 18, 2005	Policy was created and came into effect.
May 17, 2011	Policy was revised and approved by the Medical Education Committee.
June 30, 2017	Policy was reviewed.
June 15, 2018	Policy was reviewed.
February 26, 2019	Policy was reviewed.
April 10, 2025	Updated to new policy template.
November 19, 2025	Policy was revised and approved by the Medical Education Committee to streamline language, define “on call”, and updated formatting.

Background

None.