

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE
ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM**

SUBJECT: Clinical Duty Hours

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- A. To provide students, faculty and staff with guidelines related to student duty hours during any clinical portion of the medical education curriculum.
- B. To ensure safe and professional learning and clinical environments for all medical students, residents/ fellows, healthcare providers, and patients.
- C. To ensure the University of Houston College of Medicine (UHCOM) complies with the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) standards for the medical education program, including LCME Standard 8.8.

II. BACKGROUND

The University of Houston College of Medicine (UHCOM) has adopted the duty hour regulations followed by the Graduate Medical Education programs co-sponsored by University of Houston College of Medicine and Hospital Corporation of America Houston Healthcare (HCA Houston Healthcare). These regulations comply with the Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) *Clinical Experience and Education, formerly Duty Hours Standards*.

III. POLICY

- A. Duty hours are limited to a maximum of 80 hours per week, averaged over a four-week period.
- B. Students must have at least one (1) 24-hour period of non-working time provided for each week (when averaged over two (2) weeks). Non-working time is defined as time away from training or any patient care activities.
- C. Up to a three-hour transition period is allowed following a 24-hour on-call assignment. The transition period is not intended for the assignment of new patient care activities, but it can be used to complete assignments, transition patient care and for rounds/Grand Rounds.
- D. Students should have 10 hours, and must have eight (8) hours, free of duty between scheduled duty periods.
- E. Students must not be scheduled for in-house call more frequently than every 4th night.
- F. Students are expected to record any duty hours violations in the end of clerkship evaluation forms or report breaches to the clerkship director, staff member, faculty, or leadership.
- G. Compliance with this policy is monitored by the Associate Deans for Medical Education and Curriculum Committee through the clerkship evaluation process which occurs following completion of each clerkship. Any concerns will be discussed with the clerkship director(s).

IV. PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING VIOLATIONS

Duty hour violations can be reported at any time to the Associate Dean for Medical Education, Associate Dean for Student Affairs, Admissions, and Outreach; clerkship director; or faculty or staff member. In the event of a duty hour violation, the Associate Dean for Medical Education, or his/her designee, will investigate the circumstances of the violation to determine if the violation represents a systemic problem or a situation unique to the student. If initial inquiries represent a systemic problem, the violation(s) will be referred to the Learning Environment Committee. If the investigation reveals a situation unique to the student, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, Admissions, and Outreach will discuss the situation with the student and his/her supervisors, and counsel him/her, as necessary, to prevent further violations.

V. MONITORING OF THIS POLICY

- A. The Pre-Clerkship Subcommittee will monitor the clinical workload for the Longitudinal Primary Care course on a quarterly basis. The Pre-Clerkship Subcommittee will provide an interval report to the Curriculum Committee twice a year and a summary report annually.
- B. The Clerkship Subcommittee will review data regarding the clinical workload. Data for monitoring workload include: 1) feedback from Clerkship Director/Site Director; 2) student formative mid-clerkship feedback; 3) student evaluations of quality of teaching, clinical experiences, and clinical workload; 3) clerkship schedules approved by the Curriculum Committee; and 4) any reports from the Office of Student Affairs regarding any violations of the duty hours policy. The Clerkship Subcommittee will provide an interval report to the Curriculum Committee twice a year and a summary report annually.
- C. If an issue with excessive clinical workload requiring immediate attention arises, the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, Admissions and Outreach will bring the issue to the attention of the Associate Dean for Medical Education, who will work with the clerkship director to address it in a timely manner.

VI. DEFINITIONS

Any definitions listed in the following table apply to this document only with no implied or intended institution-wide use.	
Duty hours	Duty hours are the amount of time spent in a clinical experience.

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