

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE**

SUBJECT: Clinical Duty Hours Policy
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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 that 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. Duty hours are the amount of time spent in a clinical experience.
- 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 at least 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 hour 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

A. Reporting:

In addition to reporting duty hour violations on end of clerkship evaluations, they should be reported in writing to one of these:

- Clerkship director/coordinator
- Associate Dean for Medical Education
- Associate Dean for Student Affairs, Admissions, and Outreach; or
- Anonymously through the mistreatment form [Student Mistreatment Report Form](#)

B. Process:

1. 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.
2. If initial inquiries represent a systemic problem, the violation(s) will be referred to the Learning Environment Committee, which shall address the systemic issue.
3. 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.

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V. MONITORING HOURS

- 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 and report to Curriculum Committee. Data for monitoring workload include: 1) feedback from Clerkship Director/Site Director; 2) student formative mid-clerkship feedback; 2) 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.
- 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. Monitoring policy:
Office of Medical Education

Approval History		
<i>Approver</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Date</i>
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