POLICY ON MEDICAL STUDENT WORKLOAD IN PRE-CLINICAL YEARS

Policy/Procedure Statement
The GW SMHS Committee on Undergraduate Medical (CUMEC) and its sub-committees are responsible for the medical education curriculum and to ensure the development and implementation of effective policies and procedures regarding the amount of time medical students spend in required activities. Medical students must have ample opportunity to consolidate their learning through self-study. Students should allow adequate time for study, review, and preparation for required formative and summative evaluations. Finally, student responsibilities should be commensurate with a balanced life-style that allows adequate time for other non-educational tasks and healthy behaviors.

Student Workload in Pre-Clinical Years Policy:

- While the number of hours of required instructional time/week will vary from week to week, in general, most weeks students are expected to have three half days (10-12 hours) of Independent Study (IS) time, free from required instructional time.

- The average number of hours of required instructional time for most weeks will be 28-35 hours.

- An average of 28-35 scheduled hours of required instructional time per week over the course of an academic year, which applies to in-class or any required synchronous or asynchronous E-learning activity. Required instructional time includes: interactive learning, online modules, case-based instruction, team-based/small group learning, laboratory sessions, preceptorships, and inter-professional activities.
Definitions:

Required instructional time includes both scheduled and unscheduled time.

Required regularly scheduled class time (direct instruction): Scheduled educational activities in formal educational settings that include in-person sessions in the standard curriculum and/or synchronous/live/interactive sessions in the virtual curriculum. Scheduled learning activities may include: lectures, labs, small group sessions (e.g. integrated case-based sessions, clinical integration and interview sessions in POM, Professional Development coaching sessions in POM, mentored small group sessions in PPS), and any other required instruction and/or scheduled exams, reviews or assessments that occur in a time specified in a course syllabus.

Required unscheduled time: Asynchronous learning activities occurring outside the class according to a student’s own schedule but counting towards hours of required instruction and typically include either stand-alone online modules or online modules to be reviewed in preparation for a subsequent, linked synchronous session (hybrid session). This also includes several hours each semester of meetings between a student and his/her Professional Development coach that focus on academic support, entrustable professional activities (EPAs) and the Master Adaptive Learning method of self-directed learning.

Self-directed learning (SDL) activities, such as clinical integrated sessions (POM), meet the four criteria for SDL: self-assessment of learning needs; independent identification, analysis, and synthesis of relevant information; independent and facilitator appraisal of the information; and assessment and feedback on student information skills.

Self-directed learning activities may occur in regularly scheduled required time (POM small group CIS sessions, Professional Development Coaching program) but may also be completed asynchronously in required unscheduled time.

Independent Study (IS) time: Approximately 10-12 hours of blocked out time on average per week available for the student to prepare for specific learning activities, participate in community service, or engage in independent study, individualized exam preparation and content review.
**Workload Targets**
In a typical week of the pre-clinical medical coursework, the amount of time spent in required scheduled and unscheduled instruction (includes asynchronous learning activities) and assessments should not exceed 35 hours per week. The weekly school schedule also provides up to 10 to 12 additional hours in a typical week for independent study.

**Responsibilities**
**Pre-clinical:** Course/block directors shall comply with this policy in preparing course material. Student evaluations, course reviews, and schedules shall be reviewed by the course and block directors. The Pre-clinical and Block/Theme/Discipline Curriculum Sub-Committees and the assistant dean for pre-clinical education shall monitor and review all relevant data for compliance.

**Monitoring Pre-Clinical Student Workload:**
Monitoring of this policy is through:
1) Student end of course evaluations
2) Annual recording of weekly required instructional time by course and block directors for their respective courses
3) Course and block directors’ reports including weekly workload to the respective curriculum committees and
4) Regular course review meetings of course and block directors, with ongoing summary of workload hours maintained by the Office of Medical Education and monitored by the assistant dean for pre-clinical education.

**Who Needs to Know This Policy**
Medical students, faculty members, residents, fellows, and staff

**Contact**
Assistant Dean for Pre-Clinical Education (rjablonover@mfa.gwu.edu)

**Who Approved This Policy**
Pre-clinical subcommittee
Committee on the Undergraduate Medical Education Curriculum

Richard Simons, MD, Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education

**History/Revision Dates**
Approved: