



**THE GEORGE  
WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY**  
WASHINGTON, DC

**Responsible University Official:**  
Associate Dean for Pre-clinical Education  
**Responsible Office:** Office of Medical  
Education  
**Approved/revised:** 10.2022; 6. 2023

## **POLICY ON MEDICAL STUDENT WORKLOAD IN PRE-CLINICAL YEARS**

### **Policy Statement**

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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 non-educational tasks and healthy behaviors.

### **Reason for Policy/Purpose**

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As per LCME DCI element 8.8, to address the amount of scheduled time during a given week during the pre-clerkship phase of the curriculum (also addresses DCI element 6.3 regarding Self-Directed Learning Opportunities in the Pre-clerkship Phase).

### **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 hours of required instructional time per week over the course of an academic year 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, self-directed learning activities (e.g. sessions)] 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 which are noted on the Google student calendar but occur outside the classroom according to a student's own schedule and count towards hours of required instruction 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, entrust able professional activities (EPAs) and the Master Adaptive Learning method of self-directed learning. Unscheduled asynchronous activities that are specifically required to be completed before coming to class but that are not noted on the Google student calendar include completion of a worksheet, reading a "designated" reading, etc.

**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, and to attend to one's personal care activities.

## **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.

## **Note**

The term "required" in this policy refers to required instructional time and not to required attendance (at large group patient/guest panel sessions); the latter is addressed in a separate policy.

## **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/block 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 (monitored on a semester basis at meetings of the Pre-Clinical subcommittee) and
4. 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**

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Medical students, faculty members, residents, fellows, and staff

## **Contact**

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Associate Dean for Pre-Clinical Education ([rjablonover@mfa.gwu.edu](mailto:rjablonover@mfa.gwu.edu))

## **Who Approved This Policy**

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Pre-clinical subcommittee 10.2022

Committee on the Undergraduate Medical Education Curriculum 11.2022

Richard Simons, MD, Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education 10.3.22

## **History/Revision Dates**

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Approved: 10.2022; June 21, 2023