

Clinical and Academic Policy		
	Policy Title	Student Course and Duty Hours
	Policy Number	OME-900.13
	Department/Office	Office of Medical Education
	Effective Date	November 17, 2016
	Last Reviewed	August 2020
	Approved By	Executive Medical Education Committee
	Approval Date	July 24, 2025
	Endorsement	Endorsed by WCM-Executive Policy Review Group on September 23, 2025

Purpose

To ensure that the Weill Cornell Medicine (WCM) medical school is appropriately determining and monitoring medical student time spent in required foundational and clinical educational activities throughout the curriculum, in accordance with LCME standards.

Scope

This policy applies to all students enrolled in the MD program during their participation in all phases of the curriculum and to clerkship/course directors who are responsible for developing student schedules.

Policy

A. Hours in Required Activities in the Foundational and Scholarship Phases

The maximum number of hours that a student is required to spend in classroom, clinical activities, laboratory activities, or required vodcast/online modules must not exceed 35 hours per week, on average, over the duration of a course.

Although scheduled time in required activities is limited by this policy, students are expected to spend considerable additional time studying, reviewing material, preparing for class and engaging in a scholarly pursuit of extracurricular activities that contribute to the formation of their professional identity as physicians.

B. Duty Hours During the Clerkships, Sub-Internships, and Clinical Electives

The maximum number of hours that a student may be on duty in one week is 80 hours, averaged over 4 weeks.

At a minimum, a student must have off 1 day (24 consecutive hours) per week.

For clinical rotations that use a shift-based schedule:

- The maximum number of scheduled shift time per week is 60 hours, with an additional 12 hours permitted for transitions of care and education.
- The maximum number of continuous duty hours, inclusive of patient care activities and/or required educational events, is 16 hours.
- Individual shifts are limited to a maximum of 12 continuous patient care hours followed by a minimum of 10 continuous hours off duty after a day shift and 12 hours after a night shift.
- Students may not be scheduled for more than 6 consecutive night shifts.

Definitions

Call: Extended duty hours that are scheduled on certain days, including weekends, that occurs in addition to standard duty hours. These are typically seen in inpatient clinical services such as Medicine, Surgery, and Anesthesiology.

Duty Hours: Time when a student is scheduled to participate in patient care or educational events, such as seminars, lectures, and rounds. It does not refer to academic reading, study time, off-site skills practice, off-site preparation time, or travel time.

Required Activities (for foundational and scholarship phases): Refers to time spent in classroom, clinical, laboratory, or required preparatory activities. It does not include time devoted to the MD/PhD program or electives, nor time needed to complete homework assignments, papers, case write-ups, optional reading or self-assessment activities.

Shift: A standard duty time block, with varying start and end times, designated by certain clinical departments that provide full continuous services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This is most commonly seen in the Emergency Department.

Procedure

A. Faculty Role in Monitoring Duty and Course Hours Policy

The course and clerkship directors are responsible for disseminating the policy to course faculty, residents, and students, and regularly monitoring time spent in required activities as outlined above. The monitoring will be done by the review of schedules and required preparatory activities, direct input from student course surveys and student course representatives and in the case of duty hours, reports of violations by students themselves. Course and Clerkship directors are expected to regularly review the number of required assignments in their courses including write-ups, required readings, essays, preparing for formal in-class presentations etc. Duty Hours violations are monitored annually by both the Longitudinal Science Curriculum Subcommittee and the Longitudinal Clinical Curriculum Subcommittee for their respective courses and clerkships. These subcommittees of the Executive Medical Education Committee (EMEC) will report their findings to EMEC annually. Based on the findings, EMEC will determine the ongoing effectiveness of the policy and its enforcement and take appropriate action.

The policy and its reporting requirements will be published annually in the Weill Cornell Medical College Student Handbook.

B. Student Role in Monitoring Duty Hours

Students are instructed to report violations of the student Duty Hours policy, and such reporting may be done in several ways. In the case of clerkships, where residents, attending physicians, or other hospital team members create the violation of the student Duty Hours policy, students may make a direct report to the course/clerkship director. Students may also make a direct report to an Associate/Assistant Dean (Academic Affairs, Curricular Affairs, Student Affairs). In addition, all students will be asked about course or clerkship compliance with the Student Course and Duty Hours Policy via a question on the course/clerkship evaluation form. Although student reporting on the course evaluation is anonymous, the evaluation survey is reviewed by course leaders and will allow them to identify whether a potential violation may be occurring during the course.

If a student reports the violation directly to the course or clerkship director, the course or clerkship director is required to investigate the situation and attempt to remedy it. If the situation is not remedied, the student must report the situation to the Assistant Dean of the Foundational or Clinical Curriculum or an Associate

Dean. Evidence of violation of the Student Duty Hours policy by direct student report to the Assistant Dean of the Foundational or Clinical Curriculum or an Associate Dean will be brought to the attention of the course or clerkship director. The course or clerkship director will be required to investigate the situation and provide a report to the Dean who filed the report of the violation with a copy to the Associate Dean of Curricular Affairs and the Senior Associate Dean of Education, indicating how the situation has been remedied.

Compliance with this Policy

It is the responsibility of the course and clerkship directors to ensure that the policy is complied with for the courses and clerkships for which they are responsible. It is the responsibility of the Executive Medical Education Committee (EMEC) and its curriculum subcommittees to ensure that the policies are complied with in the curriculum.

Contact Information

Office of Curriculum: curriculum@med.cornell.edu

References

LCME Standard 8.8 – Monitoring Student Time

Policy Approval

This policy was reviewed and approved by the Executive Medical Education Committee on July 24, 2025.

This policy was endorsed by WCM-Executive Policy Review Group on September 23, 2025.

Version History

Date	Author	Revisions
11/17/2016	Office of Medical Education	Original date of issue.
8/2020	Office of Medical Education	Minor updates.
7/24/2025	Office of Medical Education	Transfer to new policy template. Assigned policy number "OME-900.13." Removed process recommendations around scheduling in the preclinical courses. Added definitions of duty hours, shift, and call.

Appendix

N/A