

UL SOM Medical Student Work Hour Policy

The aim in restricting work hours is to provide an optimum environment to facilitate medical student learning. In an effort to address the effects of fatigue and sleep deprivation on learning and patient care, the Educational Policy Committee, adopted this policy on student work hours in June 2011. Student duty during the clinical clerkships will be designed with these requirements in mind and clinical course directors will monitor student duty hours. All clinical rotations and elective rotations must adhere to the medical student work hour policy as defined below:

1. Duty hours must be limited to 80 hours per week, averaged over a four-week period, inclusive of all in-house call activities.
2. Continuous on-site duty, including in-house call, must not exceed 24 consecutive hours. Students may remain on duty for up to 4 additional hours to participate in didactic activities, transfer care of patients, and maintain continuity of medical and surgical care.
3. Clinical rotations that are scheduled as shift work, such as the emergency medicine elective and night float, will be limited to approximately 12 consecutive hours of patient care. Shifts should be separated by 10 hours between work periods.
4. Students must be provided with 1 day in 7 free from all educational and clinical responsibilities, averaged over a 4-week period, inclusive of call. One day is defined as one continuous 24-hour period free from all clinical, educational, and administrative activities. (see EPC Days Off policy)
5. Adequate time for rest and personal activities must be provided. This should optimally be a 10-hour time period provided between all daily duty periods and after in-house call.

Limiting required duty hours does not imply that medical students must cease providing essential patient care services at arbitrary cut-off times. Priority must always be given to patient safety and well-being and to avoid the transfer of patient care responsibilities to others at inappropriate times in the continuum of care (e.g., during an operative procedure, in the midst of a rapidly evolving clinical event).

COMPLIANCE

This policy will be monitored for compliance by the clerkship directors, elective course directors, the Associate Dean for Medical Education and the Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs. If it is found that students have worked beyond the allowable time frame described above during the monitoring process via course evaluations, the track captain process or individual student reporting, the Associate Dean for Medical Education will meet with the specific clerkship director to assure compliance to the policy