

Student - Policy on Student Workload and Self-directed Learning for Phase 1 Pre-clinical Curriculum



Policy Number: 301.1009.100

Policy Revision Date: 5/24/2022

Policy Category: Academic

Policy Owner: Associate Dean for Education Administration

Policy Audience: Faculty, Students

1. Definitions:

LCME Standard - Element 8.8: Monitoring Student Workload

The Medical Curriculum Committee (MCC) is responsible for the medical curriculum and the program's administration and leadership to ensure the development and implementation of effective policies and procedures regarding the amount of time medical students spend in required activities, including the total number of hours medical students are required to spend in educational activities during their preclinical coursework.

LCME Standard- Element 6.3: Self-Directed and Lifelong Learning:

The MCC is also responsible for ensuring that the curriculum includes self-directed learning experiences and independent learning time for students to develop the skills of lifelong learning. This policy applies to all students pursuing the M.D. degree. The preclinical curriculum covered by this policy includes all medical degree courses offered prior to the student's promotion to the Phase 2 of medical school.

2. Leadership Council Review:

Medical Curriculum Committee Review: May 24, 2022

3. Introduction / Purpose:

The Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine endeavors to cultivate an environment that facilitates medical student learning. This policy was developed to balance student workload between scheduled pre-clinical responsibilities, classroom learning in a variety of formats, independent learning, and time for attention to personal health and well-being.

4. Governance and Enforcement:

Associate Dean for Education Administration

5. Policy:

Contact Hour:

A contact hour is defined as 50 minutes per United States Department of Education guidelines.

Direct Instruction Time:

Direct instructional time in phase I includes scheduled learning activities that are supervised by faculty and specified in a course syllabus.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Case-based learning
- Didactic
- Independent learning
- Laboratory
- Patient presentation
- Reflections
- Simulation
- Small group discussion
- Team-based learning
- Workshops

Indirect Instruction Time:

Indirect instructional time in the preclinical years Phase I includes self-directed learning activities and independent learning activities.

Self-Directed learning activities:

Includes time spent studying; Identifying, analyzing, and synthesizing unassigned readings or other research relevant to student identified learning needs,

For an activity to be defined as self-directed learning, students must complete the following elements in specific, defined sequence:

- Self-assessment of their learning needs
- Independent identification, analysis, and synthesis of relevant information
- Independent and facilitator appraisal of the credibility of information sources
- Assessed on and received feedback on their information-seeking skills

Independent learning activities:

Instructor-/ or mentor-guided learning activities or assignments which are performed by the learner outside of formal educational settings (classroom, lab, clinic).

Options include:

1. Reading assignments
2. Specific handouts created for the topic
3. Short podcasts created just for the topic
4. Videos curated from other sources (e.g., Osmosis, YouTube)

A combination of any of these

WORKLOAD TARGETS:

Total Instruction Time - is defined as the sum of direct and indirect instructional time and shall not exceed 60 contact hours/week in the preclinical years. (The target indirect/direct time ratio is typically 1.5).

Direct Instructional Time - shall not exceed 24 contact hours/week in the preclinical years.

Indirect Instructional Time - shall not exceed 36 contact hours/week in the preclinical years

RESPONSIBILITY:

Course Directors are responsible for indicating total instructional time for each course in the yearly course report. The MCC will conduct yearly reviews of preclinical courses workload targets.

6. Key Stakeholders:

Faculty, Students