

UC Riverside, School of Medicine Policies and Procedures

Policy Title: Amount of Time Per Week Students Spend in Required Activities (In- Class and Out-of-Class) During the Pre-clerkship Curriculum and Protected Time for Independent Learning, Self-Directed Learning and Self Study

Policy Number: 950-06-028

Responsible Officer:	Senior Associate Dean, Medical Education
Responsible Office:	Office of Medical Education
Origination Date:	04/17/2014
Date of Revision:	03/29/2021; 07/21/22; 11/16/23
Scope:	Faculty, Administration, Students

I. Policy Summary

This policy covers the amount of time per week that students spend in required activities during the pre-clerkship phase of the curriculum. The policy addresses scheduled in-class activities and also includes required activities that must be completed outside of scheduled class time. This policy also addresses the promotion and protection of time for independent learning, self-directed learning and self-study.

II. Definitions

A. LCME Element 6.3 Self-Directed and Life-Long Learning

The faculty of a medical school ensure that the medical curriculum includes self-directed learning experiences that allow medical students to develop the skills of lifelong learning. Self-directed learning involves medical students' self-assessment of learning needs; independent identification, analysis, and synthesis of relevant information; appraisal of the credibility of information sources; and feedback on these skills from faculty and/or staff.

B. LCME Element 8.8 - Monitoring Student Time

The medical school faculty committee responsible for the medical curriculum and the program's administration and leadership 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 clinical and educational activities throughout the curriculum.

C. Independent Learning – Instructor-assigned learning activities to be performed by the learner outside of formal educational settings and "outside-of-class" time. Independent learning is considered a form of active learning. Examples include:

1. Post-class homework
2. Pre-class homework - Dedicated time on learner schedules to prepare for specific in-class learning activities e.g., case discussions, team-based learning (TBL), problem-based learning (PBL), case-based learning (CBL), clinical activities, research project(s), self-directed learning sessions, etc.)
3. Independent required formative assessments - assigned during "out-of-class hours".

D. Self-directed Learning (SDL) – One form of active learning that may include both an in-class and an out-of-class component. For an instructional session to qualify as SDL, the student must drive learning (as defined by the 2023-24 LCME Element 6.3 Data Collection Instrument published April 2022) by satisfying all of the following four criteria:

1. Self-assessment of their learning needs

2. Independent identification, analysis, and synthesis of relevant information
 3. Independent and facilitator appraisal of the credibility of information sources
 4. Assessed on and received feedback on their information-seeking skills
- E. Self Study - Students' own time for regular study or review.
1. The LCME does not count student's own time for regular study or review as part of independent learning time.
 2. This is not instructor-assigned learning activities.

III. Policy Text

A. Amount of time per week that students spend in required activities "in-class" during the pre-clerkship phase of the curriculum

1. Students in the pre-clerkship phase will not exceed more than 26 total contact hours "in-class" per week of required instruction.
2. "In-class" hours may be instructional time either in person, by video conference or online modules.
3. Of those 26 "in-class" hours, on average, no more than 11 hours will be classroom lecture hours. Active learning modalities are encouraged such as case-based instruction / learning, clinical experience – ambulatory, laboratory, small group, etc. (See Policy - Nomenclature System for Instructional Methods and Identification of Instructional Methods Considered Active Learning).
4. Attendance is not required but strongly encouraged at lectures, but attendance and participation are required at all active learning sessions (See Policy - Planned, Emergency, Unexcused and Extended Absences).

B. Promoting and protecting time for independent learning

1. UCR SOM sets standards to ensure students have opportunities for independent learning.
2. Independent Learning Time
 - a. Four (4) hours of protected time for "out-of-class" independent learning occurs every week during the first and second academic years. No other required instruction or assessment should be scheduled during this time. On occasion, exceptions may occur because of scheduling conflicts (e.g., holidays, multiple courses ending at same time, weather emergencies, special events, etc.) and students will be notified.
 - b. The amount of out-of-class homework and/or preparatory work (termed out of class "independent learning") assigned each week by one course leader within a Block Course (e.g., Directors of Foundational module, LACE module, Case-based Learning module, Doctoring module, Clinical Skills module, Anatomy module, etc.) must be coordinated with other concurrent course leaders. Together, they cannot exceed the maximum four (4) hours per week of independent learning.
 - c. Independent learning is shown on the schedule at specific times but represents discretionary time to be used by the student. This allows for individualization of schedule by students for self-care, self-study, religious observance, personal business, participation in electives, etc.

3. Flipped Classroom Time Accounting

- a. For every 1 hour of "in-class" flipped classroom seat time, up to 1 hour of advanced preparation (termed out of class "independent learning" or more simply homework) can be assigned.

C. Promoting and protecting time for self-directed learning (SDL)

1. UCR SOM promotes opportunities for students to engage in SDL.
2. To meet the challenges of the rapidly expanding knowledge, lifelong learning skills, and attitudes required of physicians, UCR SOM is committed to developing SDL skills of medical students.
3. Ongoing enforcement and monitoring of this policy enables UCR SOM to consistently comply with LCME Element 6.3, which requires faculty of a medical school to ensure that the medical curriculum includes SDL experiences.
4. Block Course Directors (e.g., Foundation module director, the Case-based Learning director) and faculty are encouraged to incorporate techniques that foster self-directed and lifelong learning in their courses.
5. The in-class component time of an SDL session is counted in the curriculum management system (e.g., Altus) and reflected in the learning management system (e.g., Canvas) and course calendar.
6. If the in-class SDL component requires out-of-class pre- and/or post- preparation by students, for every 1 (one) hour of the in-class component, up to one hour of preparation time can be assigned.

D. Promoting and protecting time for student self-study

1. UCR SOM sets standards to ensure students have protected time for self-study.
2. Students are provided 10 hours per week for self-study weekdays between 8:00am and 5:00pm. Students have the discretion for using this time for self-care, medical appointments, optional elective experiences.
3. Instructional and assessment sessions are not scheduled before 8:00am or after 5:00pm thus further protecting time for self-study 'after-hours'.

IV. Responsibilities

- A.** The Associate Dean for Preclerkship Curriculum and Block Course Coordinators are directly responsible for monitoring the weekly schedule and ensure that 1) the maximum 26 total contact hours "in-class" per week of required instruction is not exceeded, 2) the maximum of 11 hours of classroom lecture hours per week is not exceeded, 3) that self-directed learning is promoted in each Block Course 4) the 4 hours of time each week for independent learning, which includes "out-of-class" self-directed learning time, is protected and 5) adequate time for self-study is protected each week. On occasion, exceptions may occur because of scheduling conflicts (e.g., holidays, multiple courses ending at same time, weather emergencies, special events, etc.) and students will be notified.
- B.** The Medical Education Committee (MEC) is responsible for the curriculum of the medical education program, along with program's administration and leadership. MEC develops and implements policies regarding the amount of time that medical students spend in required activities in-class and out-of-class and the promotion and protection of time for independent learning, self-directed learning, and self-study.
- C.** The Office of Medical Education Quality and Integration provides reports to the MEC, PCCS, Block Course Directors, Associate Dean for Preclerkship Curriculum, and Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education with student satisfaction data with the overall student workload in the pre-clerkship phase.
- D.** The MEC will regularly review and designate the relative time allocations for each of the individual courses within each term.

V. Related Information

Policy - Nomenclature System for Instructional Methods and Identification of Instructional Methods
Considered Active Learning
LCME Element 6.3
LCME Element 8.8

Approvals:

MEDICAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE (11/16/2023)

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