



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH ALABAMA

Policy No: N/A

**Responsible Office: The Division of
Medical Education**

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Next Required Review: N/A

Medical Student Duty Hours in the Clerkship Phase (M3 & M4 year)

1. Purpose

The Frederick P Whiddon College of Medicine (Whiddon COM) seeks to balance the professional demands of time on students in clinical settings for educational purposes with the learner's need for rest, personal time and study. The medical student policy on duty hours for clerkship phase is based upon the ACGME expectations for interns and resident duty hours.

2. Applicability

Medical students in the M3 and M4 year.

3. Definitions

Duty or Work Hours – Identified as hours spent on patient care and in required educational activities within the clinical setting. These activities apply to direct patient care, administrative duties of patient care, transfer of patient care, in-house call, didactic teaching sessions, simulation, and small group learning activities. Excluded from this policy are hours for individual study and reading time, self-directed learning, individual preparation for planned activities, at home call, volunteer clinical activities, and time for transportation to and from clinical settings.

Clinical Setting providing Medical Education – A site that a student is assigned in order to complete a clinical course.

4. Policy Guidelines

4.1 General Guidance

- 4.1.1 Required student duty hours will not exceed 80 hours per week when averaged over four weeks.
- 4.1.2 Students must be provided with a continuous 24 hours off for every week of duty, when averaged over four weeks, free from all clinical and educational responsibilities.
- 4.1.3 Continuous on-site assigned shifts, including in-house call, must not exceed 24 consecutive hours per day for patient care during one scheduled period of time. Up to four hours of

additional time may be used for activities related to patient safety, such as assisting with transitions of care, and/or student education. Additional patient care responsibilities must not be assigned to the student during this time.

- 4.1.4 If a student stays an additional 4 hours after a 24-hour assigned shift as described in 4.1.3, then the student should submit a justification for the additional time through the course evaluation platform.
- 4.1.5 The minimum time off between consecutive scheduled shifts is 8 hours. If a student has completed 24 consecutive hours, then a minimum of 14 hours off is required before the next scheduled shift.

5. Procedures

- 5.1. The policy on duty hours will be communicated to students and supervising physicians (including residents, fellows, and faculty).
- 5.2. Students must log their duty hours in the evaluation platform and notify their course director if they are close to exceeding maximum hours.
- 5.3. Email notifications are automatically sent from the evaluation software platform to the Course Director, Clerkship Coordinator and/or Evaluation/Clinical Coordinators for prompt action should a student report a duty hour violation.
- 5.4. A student concerned about a violation of the duty hours policy at a clinical site should contact the Course Director. If there is a perceived conflict of interest the student should contact the Associate Dean for Medical Education, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, or their designee directly.
- 5.5. Clerkships are subject to ongoing centralized monitoring of student work hours and responsible for assuring that students log their duty hours on a weekly basis into the online time tracker database.
- 5.6. A student who feels they are too fatigued to safely report or complete assigned clinical activities should contact their course director or coordinator and/or the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, or their designee, to develop an appropriate plan of action.

6. Enforcement

N/A

7. Related Documents

N/A