

# Undergraduate Medical Education

## Policy Governing Curricular Time in Year 1, Year 2, and the Clerkship Curricular Courses



*Curricular Component: Policy #CC-12 v2*

*Supersedes: Policy #CC-12 (original)*

*Lead Writer: Dr. M. Gibson*

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### Accreditation Standard ED-38

The committee responsible for the curriculum at a medical education program, along with the program's administration and leadership, must develop and implement policies 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 during clinical clerkships (or, in Canada, clerkship rotations). *Attention should be paid to the time commitment required of medical students, especially during the clinical years. Medical students' hours should be set after taking into account the effects of fatigue and sleep deprivation on learning, clinical activities, and health and safety.*

### 1.0 Background

1.1 This policy brings together a series of principles and decisions made by the Curriculum Committee since 2009 about the time medical students spend in required activities in order to provide a balance among academic learning events, independent study time, and personal lives of students. It is also intended to determine the length of a school day, protect Student Directed Study Time, and reflect other decisions about curricular time.

### 2.0 Definitions

2.1 In Year 1, Year 2, and the Clerkship Curricular Courses, curricular time for required activities for students is defined as from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., with 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. free for lunch ("lunch time"), Monday to Friday inclusive. There are no scheduled academic learning events on Saturday or Sunday. The exceptions to this definition are

statutory holidays as outlined by Queen's University.

2.2 "Independent Learning" (IL) is time in the calendar deliberately set aside during the school day for students to use as they deem fit, on their own specific study needs, determined by their own objectives. This time allows for such activities as volunteer work, service learning, First Patient Project, or any other independent study by students.

2.3 "Curricular learning events" are required learning activities for students that are part of a course, recognized by the Curriculum Committee. Types of learning events are defined by the Teaching Methodology Policy.

### **3.0 Regulations**

3.1 Students will be granted a 10-minute break for every 50 minutes of teaching.

3.2 No non-curricular events will be scheduled during curricular time.

3.3 In any given week, any one student should normally have a minimum of 8 hours of IL time, preferably in two 4-hour contiguous blocks or, at minimum, at least one 4-hour contiguous block, in addition to at least one 2-hour block and two other hours. In four-day weeks, ideally 6 hours of IL time are allotted, where students should have at least one 4-hour block and, if at all possible, 2 other hours of IL time in the week.

3.4 IL time will be protected, except in extenuating circumstances, so that nothing will be scheduled for students in those blocks. Extenuating circumstances (see procedures) must be approved by the relevant Year Director.

3.5 Lunch time is scheduled in addition to IL time.

3.6 Curricular events may not be scheduled during the student lunch hour.

3.7 Some curricular learning events such as those involving more than one cohort of students or students from other schools, may need to be scheduled outside of the school day. In this case, each event must be brought to Curriculum Committee for approval. If these are annual events, they must be brought back to Curriculum Committee for information purposes by the Year Director annually.

3.8 If a curricular learning event takes place outside of regular school day, students must have a reciprocal amount of IL time during the week in addition to the usual eight hours of IL time.

#### **4.0 Oversight and Monitoring**

4.1 The Year Directors, with the support of the Curricular Coordinators, are responsible for implementing and addressing challenges to the policy.

4.2 The Teaching, Learning and Integration Committee will track and report on independent learning events as part of the current learning type tracking processes.

4.3 Concerns from students, teachers or administrative staff members regarding breaches of this policy should be brought to the attention of the Course Director, initially, and if not resolved satisfactorily, then to the Year Director for review and redress. Finally, appeals to Curriculum Committee may be made if there is disagreement with the Year Director.

#### **5.0 Reporting**

5.1 A report of IL time in Pre-clerkship and the Clerkship Curricular Courses will be reviewed annually by the Year Directors and the Curriculum Committee as part of the Year Report. The Year report will also include data on when exceptions had to be made to the curricular time. Corrections will be made where necessary for the following academic year.

#### **6.0 Procedure In Pre-Clerkship and Clerkship Curricular Courses**

6.1 Scheduling is done by the Year Director in conjunction with Course Directors assisted by the Curricular Coordinators.

6.2 IL time will be scheduled for each week of curricular time.

6.3 With reference to 2.3, not all students will necessarily have the same 8 hours of IL time; it will vary according to small group schedules and individual schedules based on

group work, labs, etc. However, each student should have 8 IL hours in almost all curricular weeks.

- 6.4 With Reference to 2.4, an extenuating circumstance might include a situation where a teacher was unable to teach due to extenuating circumstances (e.g. death in the family, unexpected clinical urgent clinical commitment, etc.) and a session had to be rescheduled and could not be accommodated at any other time. The Year Director must approve this request.
- 6.5 Annual reports of IL time will be commissioned through MEdTech for attention by the Year Directors and the Curriculum Committee.