



Preclerkship Student Workload Policy

Policy #

9-103

Category:	9-General Education Policies
Curriculum Phase:	Preclerkship
Author/Authoring Body:	Curricular Affairs
Responsible Unit:	Curricular Affairs
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Summary

This policy establishes parameters for student workload during the Preclerkship Phase.

Related LCME Standard: 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.

Applicability & Scope

The policy applies to all students in the Preclerkship Phase of the MD Program (M1 and M2), beginning in Academic Year 2024–25 with the classes of 2027 and 2028.

Definitions

Contact Hours – Faculty-led instructional sessions scheduled between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., excluding the lunch hour from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. These sessions involve direct interaction between students and instructors, either in person or through faculty-developed independent learning modules (ILMs). Each Contact Hour equals 50 minutes of in-person instruction or 60 minutes for an ILM. Contact Hours include sessions from the preclerkship blocks, Clinical Reasoning Course, Doctor & Patient Course, and the Scholarly Project Program.

Assigned Learning – Required academic activities that occur outside of contact hours. Assigned learning is given by faculty to support or reinforce learning and prepare students for sessions/assessments such as Team-Based Learning (TBL), quiz review sessions, or Spiral Curriculum sessions. Assigned Learning may include but is not limited to:

- Preparing for a TBL session (e.g., reviewing lecture notes, readings, short videos, or completing an IRAT)

- Completing practice questions or quizzes
- Pre-work for labs or small-group discussions

Principles

- A. The weekly workload is structured to strike a balance between rigorous academic engagement, distinction tracks, scholarly projects, club activities, and personal well-being. Students should find sufficient time to immerse themselves in the curriculum while also ensuring they cater to their health and wellness needs.
- B. The priority is the medical curriculum. Required educational activities and assessments hold precedence over other commitments. While extracurricular engagements, including social, supplemental, and service activities, are valued, they should not detract from the primary educational requirements of the program.
- C. Any student who consistently finds themselves overwhelmed with coursework will be strongly encouraged to seek guidance and support from the Office of Student Success.

Policy Statement

I. Student Workload

- A. The maximum weekly contact hours are 32, averaged over 2 consecutive weeks. This includes up to 26 block contact hours, with an additional 4 hours allocated for the Doctor & Patient Course and 2 hours for the Clinical Reasoning Course.
- B. The maximum weekly Assigned Learning hours are 8, averaged over 2 consecutive weeks.
- C. All Assigned Learning must be clearly listed in syllabi.

II. Monitoring

- A. For each block, the Block Director(s) will be responsible for tracking weekly workload across all elements.
- B. Student perceptions of workload for each course will be monitored through the Block Advisory Group and evaluations at the end of each block.
- C. Student workload hours will be reported annually to the Tucson Educational Policy Committee (TEPC) and the Tucson Curriculum Management Subcommittee (TCMS) in the Course Oversight & Yearly Operational Tracking Evaluation (COYOTE) forms.

III. Review

- A. Student workload hours and student perceptions will be reported annually to the TEPC and TCMS in the Level 1 reports.
- B. This policy will be formally reviewed by the TEPC annually.

Revision History

2025/05/28: The Tucson Educational Policy approved revised definitions for Contact Hours and Assigned Learning (previously “Homework”) and minor clarifications to the policy statement.

2024/1/10: The Tucson Educational Policy Committee voted to approve revisions to clarify the policy.

2023/11/8: The Tucson Educational Policy Committee voted to approve the policy, effective for Academic Year 2024–25 with the classes of 2027 and 2028.