

Effective Date: January 1, 2019

Retired:

Revised:

Approved by:

**Maria F. Lima, Ph.D. Dean, School of Graduate Studies and Research**

**Subject:** MMC PA Student Duty Hours Policy

**PURPOSE:**

**The purpose of this policy is:**

To outline the minimum patient contact hours expected of Meharry Medical College Physician Assistant Program (MMC PA) students during Structured Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPE).

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

The student is required to complete a minimum of 116 contact hours for each 4-week SCPE. Most clinical rotations will require well above this minimum for successful performance. The clinic schedule is set by the preceptor which may include rotation hours spent with co-preceptors as designated by the preceptor. In the event the preceptor opts not to set the clinical rotation schedule, the schedule will be set by the Clinical Education Director. The following policies apply when averaged over a four-week period:

- Clinical and educational work hours must be limited to no more than 80 hours per week.
- Clinical work periods must not exceed 24 hours of continuous scheduled clinical assignments.
- Students who have appropriately handed off patients following the conclusion of scheduled clinical work periods have the flexibility to voluntarily remain at work in unusual circumstances, if, in their judgment, those circumstances benefit patient care or education. Such additional time must be counted toward the 80-hour limit.
- Students must have at least 14 hours free of clinical work after 24 hours of clinical assignments. Students have a responsibility to return to the SCPE rotation rested, and thus are expected to use time away from work to get adequate rest. In support of this goal, students are encouraged to prioritize sleep over other discretionary activities.

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- Students must be scheduled for a minimum of one day in seven free of clinical work and required education (when averaged over four weeks).
- In-house call may **not** take place more often than every three days. Overnight call for PA students varies by SCPE rotation and is not required on all clinical rotations.
- The facility for in-house call must provide access to food and a safe, quiet, clean, and private sleep/rest facilities available and accessible for students with proximity appropriate for safe patient care. The facility must have security and safety measures appropriate to the participating site.

**DEFINITIONS:**

Structured Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPE): a required clinical course in Phase V in the curriculum. Clinical courses include Geriatrics, Family Medicine, Emergency Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Psychiatry/Mental Health, Women's Health/Ob-Gyn, General Surgery and two electives.

Preceptor: an MMC PA Program approved instructor who provides supervision, instruction, and patient practice experiences consistent with their training and expertise.

**PROCEDURE:**

*Reporting, Assessing, and Correcting Violations:*

Students may report violations through end-of-course evaluations or directly to the Clinical Coordinator, Clinical Education Director, Associate Program Director, or Program Director during the course of the SCPE. The MMC PA Curriculum Review Committee (CRC) will determine the effectiveness of this policy by monitoring policy violations on selected student evaluations (e.g., including anonymous site, preceptor, and course evaluations). The veracity of findings may be triangulated and confirmed through multiple sources (e.g., comparing site, preceptor, and course evaluation ratings with written comments). The MMC PA CRC will provide corrective guidance for clinical rotations that violate this policy.

**EXHIBITS:**



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