INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE:

The educational program must balance student academic load, including scheduled instructional activities and required assignments outside of class, with protected blocks of time that allow for independent study, self-directed learning and other activities.

This policy relates to LCME Standard 6.3: Self-Directed and Life-Long Learning. The purpose of this policy is to ensure students have adequate and protected time in the medical curriculum for self-directed learning experiences and independent study in order to develop the skills of lifelong learning.

The Curriculum Committee has determined Academic Load parameters for the pre-clerkship phase of the curriculum (Phase 1) to ensure that there is a balance between student academic load, including scheduled instructional activities and required assignments outside of class, with protected blocks of time that allow for independent study, self-directed learning and other activities.

This policy limits the amount of scheduled time for a given week during the pre-clerkship phase of the curriculum (Phase 1). This policy also affirms the Curriculum Committee’s responsibility for oversight of the academic load.

CANCELLATION:

This replaces the CMS White Space Policy 8.12.19

SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY:

This policy applies to Phase 1 (Year 1 and Year 2) of the Chicago Medical School allopathic medicine program.

POLICY STATEMENTS:

The following are Phase I Academic Load parameters \textit{averaged} per term in Phase I:
1) Protected Time: Academic load includes at least two (2) half-days of protected time per week, totaling 8 hours.

2) Total Scheduled Activity: Academic load is limited to 30 hours per week of scheduled activities, including in-class instruction, course-related activities, time to complete assigned readings and/or preparations for in-class activities, laboratories, and online modules.

DEFINITIONS:

Pre-Clerkship Protected Time in the academic program weekly schedule that ensures students have sufficient time to support self-directed and life-long learning.

Academic Load reflects the educational program’s weekly schedule including obligated time for scheduled class activities and required out-of-class assignments and online modules. Academic Load weekly schedule calculations reflect in-session (non-Holiday, non-break) weekdays 8:00 am - 5:00 pm.

Half- Day is a continuous four (4)-hour block of time extending either through the morning or afternoon.

Self-Directed Learning is learners taking the initiative for their own learning: diagnosing needs, formulating goals, identifying resources, implementing appropriate activities, and evaluating outcomes.

Independent Study is instructor-/ or mentor-guided learning activities to be performed by the learner outside of formal educational settings (classroom, lab, clinic); Dedicated time on learner schedules to prepare for specific learning activities, e.g., case discussions, TBL, PBL, clinical activities, research project(s).

PROCEDURES:

1) The Associate Dean for Basic Science oversees the academic program calendar, including the initial scheduling and sequencing of courses, instructional activities, and Protected Time.

2) The Associate Dean for Basic Science works with Course Directors to develop a draft academic program calendar in adherence with the Phase I Academic Load parameters.

3) The Curriculum Committee ultimately reviews and approves the academic program calendar.
4) After the academic program calendar has been approved for the year, Course Directors may not modify the course schedule without approval from the Associate Dean for Basic Science.

5) Course Directors requesting the scheduling of an academic activity during Pre-Clerkship Protected Time must present a proposal to the Associate Dean for Basic Science for approval. The request will be evaluated on the basis of the educational value and the workload assigned to students. If the course modification creates a potential for policy violation, the Curriculum Committee will review the request.

6) Students will be notified of the policy using communication mechanisms including, but not limited to, orientation sessions, D2L learning management platform, and other meetings with students, as appropriate.

7) The Curriculum Committee, including its subcommittees, will review compliance with total scheduled activity parameters set by the Curriculum Committee to determine appropriate adherence to policy. This review will occur annually in the spring.

POINTS OF CONTACT:

Associate Dean for Basic Science
Chairs of the Curriculum Committee
SBCQL Lead Standard 6

REFERENCES AND RELATED POLICIES:

LCME Standard 6, Element 3: Self-Directed and Lifelong Learning
MedBiquitous Curriculum Inventory Standardized Vocabulary for Instructional and Assessment Methods and Resource Types