

UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION**SCHULICH SCHOOL OF MEDICINE & DENTISTRY****CURRICULUM LEARNING HOURS IN THE MD PROGRAM**

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Approved by the Curriculum Committee: September 2025

Approved by JSC:

Next Review: 2027

PURPOSE

- The Doctor of Medicine Program (the MD Program) at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry at Western University supports a learning environment that prepares students for continual professional development throughout their professional lives.
- Self-study is a core professional value that allows learners and physicians to advance their knowledge base and competency through active learning. The Program will allocate time for, relay the reason for, and monitor the outcomes of independent student learning throughout all years of medical school education.

RELEVANT ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

6.3 Self-Directed and Life-Long Learning The faculty of a medical school ensure that the medical curriculum includes self-directed learning experiences and unscheduled time to allow medical students to develop the skills of lifelong learning. Self-directed learning involves medical students' self-assessment of learning needs; independent identification, analysis, and synthesis of relevant information; appraisal of the credibility of information sources; and feedback on these skills.

8.8 Monitoring Time Spent in Educational and Clinical Activities The curriculum committee and the program's administration and leadership implement 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 during required clinical learning experiences.

DEFINITIONS

- **Synchronous Learning** – Learning sessions scheduled at a set time. These may occur via video conferencing software or in the classroom.
- **Asynchronous Learning** – Learning consists of materials available online. These may take a variety of formats, including lecture recordings, interactive cases, readings, or other digital content.

STATEMENT

The Program has determined the appropriate number of learning hours for the curriculum across all years ([Table 1](#)). This incorporates adequate time for self-study of curricular content and additional independent or active learning necessary for students professional needs and interests.

To support this, the Program will adopt the following:

Curriculum Hours Requirements:

- Large Group teaching sessions shall not exceed 3 hours per day in total
- The daily lunch break in years 1 and 2 may occur between 11:30am to 1:30pm hours and is not included in unscheduled time.
- Year 1 and 2 students will have one day per week for the majority of each semester dedicated to independent learning/self-study. In weeks that contain a statutory holiday this one day will not be included in the schedule.
- The total teaching hours per week for the pre-clerkship curriculum should be no more than 24 hours on average combined for all course delivery in a week.
- Synchronous Learning may take place between 8:00am and 10:00pm Monday through Thursday and 8:00am to 6:00pm Friday in accordance with the [policies of the University of Western Ontario](#).
- Students may choose to participate in additional learning experiences including Optional Clinical Learning Opportunities (OCLO) during their designated independent learning days.
- Exceptions for unusual circumstances (e.g. to recover a session cancelled on short notice due to University closure, etc.) will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Adherence to teaching hours is otherwise expected.
- Course Chairs and Committees are responsible for designing and implementing their courses to ensure compliance with these standards.
- Course Chairs are expected to be mindful of students' need for self-study prior to examinations and are encouraged to arrange the schedule of sessions in their courses accordingly.

Table 1 - Curriculum Hours:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3/Year 4
Synchronous Learning – Large Group (Large Group Teaching, Academic Half Days, Anatomy Labs)	6 hours/week	6 hours/week	3-6 hours/week
Synchronous Learning – Small Group (Integrated Small Group Learning, Discipline Specific Small Group, Clinical Skills, Case of the Week)	9 hours/week	9 hours/week	Variable
Asynchronous Learning	9 hours/week	9 hours/week	Variable
Clinical Learning (Longitudinal	4 hours/month or	4 hours/month	48 weeks

Clinical Experience, Clerkship Rotations, Electives)	one ½ day a month		Clerkship 16 Weeks Electives
Independent Learning/Self Study	8 hours/week = 1 day per week	8 hours/week = 1 day per week	Variable