

Curriculum Learning Hours in the MD Program

Adopted by Curriculum Committee: March 2014

Revised: August 2020

Next Review: August 2023

PURPOSE

The Doctor of Medicine Program (the Program) or Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry at Western University supports a learning environment that prepares students for adopting continual professional development throughout their professional lives.

Self-study is a core professional value that allows each physician to advance his or her 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.

DEFINITIONS

Synchronous Learning – Learning sessions scheduled at a set time. These may occur via video conferencing software or, in the classroom. Students are expected to attend all Synchronous sessions.

Asynchronous Learning – Learning consists of materials available on demand 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 includes adequate time for self-study of curricular content and additional independent or active learning necessary to grow student awareness of their own professional needs and interests.

To support this, the Program will adopt the following:

Curriculum Hours Guidelines:

- a. Large Group Teaching Sessions shall not exceed 3 hours per day in duration.
- b. The daily lunch break (11:30am to 1:30pm hours) is not included in unscheduled time.
- c. Year 1 and 2 students will have 1 day per week for the majority of each semester dedicated to independent learning/self-study. In weeks that contain a statutory holiday this 1 day will not be included in the schedule.
- d. The total teaching hours per week for pre-clerkship curriculum should be no more than 24 hours on average combined for all course delivery in a week.
- e. 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](#)
- f. Students may choose to participate in additional learning experiences including Optional Clinical Learning Opportunities during their designated Independent Learning days.
- g. 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
- h. Strict adherence to these teaching hours is otherwise expected.
- i. Course Chairs and Committees are responsible for designing and implementing their courses to ensure compliance with these standards.

- j. Course Chairs are encouraged 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 ½ Days, Anatomy Labs)	6 hours/week	6 hours/week	3-6 hours/week
Synchronous Learning – Small Group (ISGL, DSSG, Clinical Skills, COTW)	9 hours/week	9 hours/week	Variable
Asynchronous Learning	9 hours/week	9 hours/week	Variable
Clinical Learning (Longitudinal Clinical Experience, Clerkship Rotations, Electives)	4 hours/month or one ½ day a month	4 hours/month	48 weeks Clerkship 16 Weeks Electives
Independent Learning/Self Study	8 hours/week = 1 day per week	8 hours/week = 1 day per week	Variable