

Policies and Procedures

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PURPOSE

GME Programs, in partnership with Creighton University, must design an effective program structure that is configured to provide residents with educational and clinical experience opportunities, as well as reasonable opportunities for rest and personal activities.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Creighton University Omaha Hospice and Palliative Medicine Fellows.

POLICY

The Hospice and Palliative Medicine (HPM) Fellowship at Creighton University School of Medicine complies with the ACGME clinical and educational work hour requirements.

DEFINITIONS

- **Clinical and Educational Work Hours** - Clinical and educational work hours must be limited to no more than 80 hours per week, inclusive of all in-house clinical and educational activities, clinical work done from home, and all moonlighting. It does not include educational activities, reading and preparation for conferences, research or studying done at home.
- **Work from Home** - Types of work from home that must be counted include using an electronic health record and taking calls from home. Reading done in preparation for the following day's cases, studying, and research done from home do not count toward the 80 hours. Resident/Fellow's decisions to leave the hospital before their clinical work has been completed and to finish that work later from home should be made in consultation with the resident/fellow's supervisor. The program shall structure work so that the fellows are able to complete most work on site during scheduled clinical work hours. In such circumstances, residents/fellows should be mindful of their professional responsibility to complete work in a timely manner and to maintain patient confidentiality.
- **Moonlighting/Volunteer Work** – Moonlighting and volunteering is defined as any voluntary clinical activity, not related with training requirements, in which an individual performs duties as a fully-licensed physician. The hours spent moonlighting are counted towards the total hours worked for the week., Moonlighting must not interfere with the ability of the resident/ fellow to achieve the goals and objectives of the educational program and must not interfere with the resident's/fellow's fitness for work nor compromise patient safety
- **At home call** - an assigned period-of-time when the fellow is on-call. At home call must satisfy the one-day-in-seven free of duty, averaged over four weeks. Fellows are permitted to return to the hospital while on at-home call to care for new or established patients. Each episode of this type of care must be included in the 80 weekly maximum and does not initiate a new "off-duty period".
- **Day off** - one continuous 24-hour period completely free from all administrative, clinical and required educational activities. Home call cannot occur on a day off.
- **Work hour flexibility** - Fellows who have appropriately handed off patients following the conclusion of scheduled work periods have the flexibility to voluntarily remain at work in unusual circumstances, such as:
 - continue to provide care to a single severely ill or unstable patient
 - humanistic attention to the needs of a patient or family; or,
 - to attend unique educational events.

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These additional hours must be counted toward the 80-hour limit. The fellow must not stay if fatigued.

It is important to note that a fellow may remain or return only if the decision is made voluntarily. Fellows must not be scheduled beyond work period restrictions or required to stay by an attending or more senior fellow.

PROCEDURE

Clinical and educational assignments must be assigned while recognizing that faculty and fellows collectively have responsibility for the safety and welfare of patients. The ACGME Common Program Requirements recognize that fellows may choose to work beyond their scheduled time or return to the clinical site during a time off period to care for a patient. The requirements preserve the flexibility for fellows to make those choices as long as they recognize the responsibility to work rested and fit for duty. This clinical work must adhere to the 80-hour work week and on the one-day-off-in-seven requirements.

Fellow Logging:

Fellows must document their and track work hours on a weekly basis in New Innovations.

Workhours must be limited to 80 hours per week; this is inclusive of all “at home call” activities, work from home, and moonlighting.

In the case of an 80-hour work hour violation, the fellow must document on why there was a violation. The PD will then review and document on that violation. A violation may be justifiable, but the PD must approve. Please see the section on flexibility to see examples of what is justifiable.

Work hour logging must be completely documented by the 7th day of each month for the hours in the previous month. Failure to meet this requirement will result in sanctions to the fellow and the program. Fellows are encouraged to review the GME Clinical and Educational Work Hours Policy for sanctions.

Time off between scheduled clinical work and education periods:

Fellows should have eight hours off between scheduled clinical work and education periods.

Work periods for fellows must not exceed 24 hours of continuous scheduled clinical assignments. A fellow may have an additional 4 hours for care of established patients. These additional 4 hours cannot include ambulatory work or new patients to care for.

Days off:

Fellows must be scheduled for a minimum of one 24-hour day in seven free of clinical work and required education. This can be averaged over four weeks to allow flexibility in scheduling time off. Home call cannot be assigned on a free day.

In House Call:

Hospice and Palliative fellows do not take in-house call but are required to take “home call”.

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Home Call:

At home call is not subject to the “every third night” limitation but must not be so frequent or taxing to preclude rest or reasonable personal time for each fellow.

Time spent in the hospital by fellows on at-home call must count towards the 80-hour maximum weekly hour limit.

The program has adopted the following mitigation of fatigue policy:

If a fellow is too fatigued to complete assigned duties due to the on-call work load, she/he must communicate with the PD or the assigned supervising physician about leaving early and having another team member assigned to the clinical duties. The supervising physician or PD will be responsible for assuming or reassigning the clinical work.

The supervising physician is readily available to assume patient care responsibility whenever a fellow identifies they cannot perform their patient care duties due to fatigue.

REFERENCES

ACGME

Creighton University GME Clinical and Educational Work Hours Policy

AMENDMENTS OR TERMINATION OF THIS POLICY

Creighton University reserves the right to modify, amend or terminate this policy at any time.

In the event of any discrepancies between program policies and the GME policy, the GME policy shall govern.