## Resident Duty Hours

### Purpose
It is the policy of the UTHSCSA Graduate Medical Education Committee to follow requirements established by the ACGME regarding duty hours for residents in accredited training programs. Specific details and FAQs can be found at the ACGME website, [www.acgme.org](http://www.acgme.org) and are subject to change without notice.

### Definitions
- **Duty hours**: all clinical and academic activities related to the residency program, i.e., patient care (both inpatient and outpatient), administrative duties related to patient care, the provision for transfer of patient care, time spent in-house during call activities, and scheduled academic activities such as conferences. Duty hours do not include reading and preparation time spent away from the work site.

- **Moonlighting**: Voluntary, compensated, medically-related work performed at any institution. Time spent moonlighting must be counted toward all duty hours rules.

- **Home call (pager call)**: Call taken from outside the assigned institution. This call is not subject to the every third night limitation. If the residents are called into the hospital from home, those duty hours are counted toward the 80-hour limit.

### Policy
The Institution recognizes that a sound academic and clinical education should be carefully planned and balanced with concerns for patient safety and resident well-being. Learning objectives of the program will not be compromised by excessive reliance on residents to fulfill service obligations.

There are many nuances and definitions associated with duty hours assignment and monitoring, and all members of the GME community are strongly advised to gain and maintain familiarity with the program requirements and FAQs, and to ensure that all residents and fellows are similarly informed.

Each GME program must have written policies and procedures consistent with the Institutional and Program Requirements for resident duty hours and the working environment. These policies must be distributed to the residents and the faculty. All residency programs must monitor resident duty hours, on an ongoing basis. All residents must log hours worked.
contemporaneously, as defined by the ACGME, in New Innovations. The Duty Hours Subcommittee of the GMEC will review program data monthly at its meetings and report to the GMEC.

**Professionalism, Personal Responsibility, and Patient Safety**

All programs must educate residents and faculty members concerning the professional responsibilities of physicians to appear for duty appropriately rested and fit to provide the services required by their patients and promote patient safety and resident well-being in a supportive educational environment.

All Program Directors must ensure a culture of professionalism that supports patient safety and personal responsibility. Residents and faculty demonstrate an understanding and acceptance of their personal role in:

- assurance of the safety and welfare of patients entrusted to their care;
- assurance of their fitness for duty;
- management of their time before, during, and after clinical assignments;
- recognition of impairment, including illness and fatigue, in themselves and in their peers;
- honest and accurate reporting of duty hours.

All residents and faculty members demonstrate responsiveness to patient needs that supersedes self-interest. Our physicians recognize that, under certain circumstances, the best interests of the patient may be served by transitioning that patient’s care to another qualified and rested provider.

**Duty Hours Requirements**

As duty hour standards vary by program and by the resident’s training level, policies regarding program-specific duty hours policy will include that portion of the ACGME Program Requirements for the program in question, and will be updated as the Program Requirements change. (See link to the institutional template at the end of this policy.)

**Duty Hours Reporting/Monitoring**

All UTHSCSA GME programs must document compliance with ACGME duty hour standards. The GME Committee Duty Hours Subcommittee determines program compliance with standards, based on review of the following program data:

1. duty hours documentation.
2. justification for staying beyond recommended hours
3. moonlighting (if any)

Programs judged to be substantially noncompliant will be counselled as needed, and recurrent/persistent violations will be addressed on a case by case basis.

**Reporting Violations** – Residents/fellows are encouraged to discuss scheduling issues with the appropriate supervisors in the program, the Chief Resident, the Program Director, or others with authority over
scheduling. Residents/fellows who perceive that their concerns are not being satisfactorily addressed are referred to **GME Policy 3.6, Policy on Resident Concerns.**

**Process for Consideration of Program Waiver of Compliance with Duty Hours Requirements** - Programs may petition the GMEC for permission to request approval from their RC for waiver of one or more aspects of duty hours compliance, for sound educational purposes (and only if the particular Review Committee accepts such requests).

Minimum information to be included in the request includes:

1. All circumstances under which residents may be expected to work more than 80 hours per week, averaged over 4 weeks (and/or other deviations from ACGME duty hour standards). Include the specific rotations and the year of training for which the request is being made.
2. Why the program cannot maintain the 80-hour limit.
3. The specific improvements in educational experience that are anticipated to result from this increase in duty hours. This may include RC requirements the program will not meet if residents work 80 or fewer hours per week.
4. How the program will monitor resident hours to assure compliance with the duty hour rules.
5. Statement of support by the Department Chairman.

The UTHSCSA GME Program Specific Duty Hours template is located at [http://uthscsa.edu/gme/documents/2014-03DutyHoursProgram-SpecificTemplate.docx](http://uthscsa.edu/gme/documents/2014-03DutyHoursProgram-SpecificTemplate.docx)