

 DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY FACULTY OF MEDICINE Clerkship On Call Policy	Policy sponsor: Associate Dean, UGME	Approval date: Dec 2009
	Responsible unit: Undergraduate Medical Education Office	Amendments: June 28 2012 May 22 2014 October 1 2024

A. Background & Purpose

Evening, night, and weekend call may be a required part of Dalhousie clerkship rotations. Decisions about the type of call to be required (in-house vs. home call) as well as the hours and frequency of call will be made by the individual Clerkship Director in consultation with their faculty, and may differ among rotations and sites.

B. Application

This policy applies to all clerkship students on rotations overseen by the Undergraduate Medical Education Unit in the Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie University.

C. Definitions

Home call: Students perform call duties from a personal place of residence and are called back to the institution for clinical duties as required.

In-house call: Students remain in the institution for the duration of their call and are available for clinical duties.

Weekend: After 1700 hours on Friday and all-day Saturday and Sunday, until 0700 hours on Monday.

Distant site: is defined as outside of the home campus, in accordance with the *Release of Clerks from Service Prior to Examination Days policy*; outside being considered outside HRM for Halifax based students and greater than 100 km between the current and reporting site for New Brunswick based students.

D. Policy

Clerks will not be required to be on night-call for more than 7 days out of any 28-day unit/rotation. For rotations longer than 28 days, no more than 25% of the time will be scheduled for overnight call. The maximum period of time for in-house call will be 25 hours (24 hours plus a maximum of 1 hour for sign over). Clerks who have been on call in-house will be dismissed at the end of 25 hours and are not required to attend clinics or teaching sessions on that day. Where possible, clerks will not be required to work two sequential weekends with 24-hour in-house call commitments within a single unit/ rotation

(for rotations under 28 days (i.e. emergency medicine), working two sequential weekends may be unavoidable). Clerks who take call from home must be able to return to the hospital within 20 minutes. Clerks taking call from home will not typically be excused from responsibilities the day after call. However, if the clerk has been called into the hospital between midnight and 6 a.m. or has been called repeatedly during that time period resulting in major disruption of sleep, they will be excused following morning sign-over (typically by 0900). In such situations the clerk must ensure that the relevant attending staff and clinical service are aware of their post-call status.

When the final night of the rotation is the Sunday before a new rotation starts, Clerks will not be on call past 2200 hours. Clerks who must move to a distant site for their next rotation will be dismissed no later than 1800 hours 2 days before the next rotation begins, e.g., 1800 hours on a Saturday if the next rotation begins on Monday morning.

A distant site is defined as outside of the home campus, in accordance with the *Release of Clerks from Service Prior to Examination Days* policy; outside being considered outside HRM for Halifax based students and greater than 100 km between the current and reporting site for New Brunswick based students.

During exam time please refer to the Clerkship section regarding *Release of Clerks from Service Prior to Examination Days*. This policy can be found at <https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/core-units/undergraduate/current-students/policies-regulations.html>

Clerks who are pregnant will be excused from overnight call and overnight shifts after 28 weeks gestation. Any student requiring additional accommodation should contact the Student Accessibility Centre and reach out to Student Affairs if guidance is needed. Clerkship Directors will work with pregnant students to adjust the educational experiences, as needed, in order to ensure the objectives are met.

E. Administrative Structure

1. Authority: This Policy is sponsored by and falls under the authority of the Campus Specific Associate Deans.
2. Undergraduate Medical Education: Undergraduate Medical Education is the unit responsible for the administration of this Policy.
3. Policy Review: This Policy will be reviewed in accordance with Dalhousie's Policy on Policies or earlier if deemed necessary by the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine

F. Procedures

Clerkship Directors have opportunity to review, provide feedback and accept policy changes at the Clerkship Committee led by the Assistant Deans Clerkship. It is the responsibility of Clerkship Directors to communicate the policy widely to rotation supervisors to ensure compliance.

Students are oriented to the location of all policies during orientation week and clerkship policies are linked in the student learning management system.

In the event faculty is non-compliant with the Clerkship on Call Policy, students contact their Campus-Specific Assistant Dean Clerkship to discuss and mediate any required changes.