

TEXILA AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

College of Medicine

Policy on Student Academic Workload During Basic Science

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1. Purpose

This policy establishes TAUCOM guidelines governing the amount of required scheduled instructional time and required out-of-class educational activities during the Basic Science phase of the Doctor of Medicine (MD) program.

The policy ensures that students have adequate protected time for self-directed learning (SDL), independent study, reflection, and preparation for active participation in the curriculum.

2. Policy Statement

TAUCOM recognizes that effective medical education requires an appropriate balance between faculty-directed instruction and protected independent learning. Hence, the Basic Science curriculum shall maintain a workload that supports student learning, academic achievement, professional development, and personal well-being.

The curriculum shall provide:

- Structured scheduled instructional activities that average no more than 25 required contact hours per week, exclusive of examinations.
- Required out-of-class preparatory activities averaging no more than 8 hours per week.
- Protected self-directed learning (SDL) time of approximately 8–10 hours per week, intentionally incorporated into the curriculum schedule.

These guidelines apply across all Basic Science courses in MD I through MD IV semesters.

3. Guiding Principles

The academic workload shall:

- Promote deep learning rather than excessive content delivery.
- Foster independent learning and lifelong learning skills.
- Support preparation for USMLE and NBME-style assessments.
- Maintain student wellness through an appropriate balance of instructional and independent learning activities.
- Ensure that required educational activities are realistic, achievable, and educationally meaningful.

4. Definitions

4.1. Scheduled Instructional Time

Scheduled instructional time includes all required faculty-directed educational activities including but not limited to:

- Lectures
- Team-Based Learning (TBL)
- Problem-Based Learning (PBL)
- Case-Based Learning (CBL)
- Small-group discussions
- Laboratory sessions
- Clinical skills sessions
- Simulation activities
- Required workshops
- Required review sessions

Scheduled instructional time does not include optional review sessions or voluntary academic support activities.

4.2. Required Out-of-Class Learning Activities

Required out-of-class learning activities include mandatory educational assignments completed outside scheduled class time, including:

- Assigned readings
- Preparatory exercises
- Pre-class assignments
- Required quizzes
- Reflection assignments
- Other required coursework supporting scheduled educational activities

4.3. Self-Directed Learning (SDL)

Self-directed learning refers to protected, unscheduled time intentionally incorporated into the curriculum that enables students to independently:

- Review and consolidate course content
- Prepare for laboratories and active learning sessions
- Complete formative assessments
- Practice NBME- and USMLE-style questions
- Identify individual learning needs
- Develop learning strategies
- Integrate knowledge across disciplines
- Preparing for examinations

As students' progress through the curriculum, SDL increasingly emphasizes higher-order synthesis, clinical reasoning, board examination preparation, and learner autonomy.

5. Academic Workload Standards

5.1 Scheduled Instructional Activities

Required scheduled instructional activities shall average no more than 25 hours per week during the Basic Science phase.

These activities include:

- Lectures
- Laboratories
- Clinical skills instruction
- Problem Based Learning
- Case Based Learning
- Small-group learning
- Other mandatory instructional sessions

5.2 Required Out-of-Class Activities

Mandatory out-of-class educational activities should average no more than 8 hours per week across the Basic Science curriculum.

These activities include:

- Required reading
- Preparatory assignments
- Required online learning modules
- Mandatory quizzes

- Other required coursework

Estimated completion time for each assignment shall be considered during course planning.

5.3 Protected Self-Directed Learning Time

The Basic Science curriculum shall provide students approximately 8–10 hours per week of protected, unscheduled self-directed learning time.

This protected time shall remain a core curricular component and shall not routinely be replaced by additional required instructional activities.

SDL time supports:

- Independent study
- Knowledge integration
- Review of learning objectives
- Preparation for active learning sessions
- Practice questions
- Examination preparation
- Development of lifelong learning skills

6. Responsibilities

6.1. Course HODs:

- Design courses consistent with institutional workload expectations.
- Estimate completion times for all required assignments.
- Review required preparatory activities before each semester.
- Avoid unnecessary duplication of assignments.
- Monitor student workload throughout course delivery.
- Collaborate with the Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs to address workload concerns.

6.2. Assistant Dean of Academic Affairs:

- Monitor compliance with institutional workload standards.
- Review course schedules and instructional hours.
- Work collaboratively with Course HODs to address workload concerns.
- Present workload reports to the Basic Science Curriculum Subcommittee and Curriculum Committee.

6.3. Students

- Utilize protected SDL time responsibly.
- Complete required preparatory activities before scheduled sessions.
- Participate in workload surveys and course evaluations.
- Report concerns excessive workload through established institutional processes.

7. Curriculum Oversight and Monitoring

TAUCOM continuously monitors academic workload to ensure an appropriate balance between scheduled instructional time and independent learning.

Monitoring includes review of:

- Course schedules
- Curriculum maps
- Contact hours
- Required assignments
- Estimated assignment completion times

- Student evaluations
- Faculty feedback
- NBME performance
- Student performance outcomes
- Student Council feedback
- Curriculum quality improvement reports

The Basic Science Curriculum Subcommittee reviews workload data each semester and submits recommendations to the Curriculum Committee.

8. Curriculum Committee Responsibilities

The Curriculum Committee has overall responsibility for monitoring academic workload across the Basic Science curriculum.

The Committee shall:

- Review reports from the Basic Science Curriculum Subcommittee.
- Ensure compliance with institutional workload standards.
- Monitor consistency of protected SDL time.
- Review trends identified through student evaluations.
- Evaluate workload data across courses.
- Recommend curricular modifications when necessary.
- Monitor the effectiveness of implemented changes.