Course and Clerkship Director Responsibilities Policy

Policy Statement and Purpose

The Virginia Commonwealth University MD curriculum is delivered by multiple faculty across the University. To ensure consistent delivery and quality of content, all Course and Clerkship Directors are expected to comply with the established responsibilities of their leadership role within the curriculum.

Stakeholders

The faculty and staff of the VCU School of Medicine are responsible for knowing this standard operating procedure, its contents, and provisions.

Definitions

CC: Curriculum Council

CD: Course/Clerkship Director, Assistant Director, and/or Co-Director of a course or clerkship in the required, core MD curriculum at the VCU SOM

Clinical Phase: The final two (2) years of the MD curriculum, including the M3 and M4 year

Department Chair/Supervisor: Leadership of the academic department/division in which the course/clerkship is housed

OME: Office of Medical Education

Pre-Clinical Phase: The first two (2) years of the MD curriculum, including the M1 and M2 year

VCU SOM: Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine

Responsibilities

OME: The Office of Medical Education will aid in the ongoing, continuous quality improvement of the curriculum, as well as act as a resource for all CD's as it relates to course/clerkship content, creation, delivery, and outcomes.

CC: The Curriculum Council, acting in its capacity as the faculty-led body charged with the overall design and delivery of the MD curriculum, will monitor compliance from all CD's with this policy.

CD: Individuals leading courses or clerkships within the MD curriculum are responsible for ensuring leadership and delivery of their respective course or clerkship is consistent with the standards and

expectations of the VCU SOM curriculum as outlined by the CC. CD's are responsible for informing their Department Chair/Supervisor, and the OME, of any issues that may impede full compliance with this policy.

Department Chair/Supervisor: The Department Chair/Supervisor is responsible for supervising CD's within their department/division who are teaching in the MD curriculum. They will work collaboratively with the CD and the OME to support curricular delivery and ensure CD's have the resources necessary to provide an optimal learning environment.

Procedures

Qualifications

The VCU SOM is committed to excellence in both the design and delivery of the MD curriculum. To ensure the quality of the curriculum and creation of an optimal learning environment, faculty charged with leading a course/clerkship in the capacity of CD is expected to demonstrate the following skills:

- Manage the design and delivery of curricular content in a complex medical education program
- Demonstrate effectiveness as a teacher, including an understanding of the following concepts:
    - Curricular design
    - Pedagogical principles
    - Giving and receiving feedback
    - Assessment methods
    - Continuous quality improvement (CQI)
- Act as an effective administrative and academic leader

Pre-Clinical Phase CD's

CD's leading courses within the pre-clinical phase of the curriculum are responsible for:

- **Creation of Objectives**
    - Use the institutional learning objectives, with respect to the requirements and recommendations of accreditation standards, to drive course specific objectives for review by the CC.
        - Ensure all course level objectives are linked to the appropriate institutional learning objectives (ILOs).
    - Develop session level objectives for each session taught within the course
        - Course objectives, session level objectives, and keywords will be reviewed yearly by the CD and provided to the OME for curriculum mapping purposes and review and approval by the CC.
- **Management of Faculty within the Course**
    - In consultation with the Department Chair, recruit and develop faculty for delivering, facilitating, and/or precepting educational content.
    - Ensure all faculty, residents, other health care professionals providing instruction or supervision in the course, and students are aware and understand the course objectives, learning goals, relevance to the larger curriculum, and relevant policies.
    - Delegate course duties to all assigned faculty.

- Provide guidance, feedback, and oversight to assigned faculty on the preparation of course materials and andragogy such that course and institutional objectives are met, and consistency and the overall course design is maintained.
- Preview and approve all course materials submitted by the assigned faculty to ensure that the information to be covered is consistent with the overall course and institutional learning objectives and is relevant to both institutional course examinations and national examinations.
- Monitor the teaching effectiveness of assigned faculty and overall delivery of the course in an on-going manner (i.e., during the course) so that any mid-stream corrections can be made.
- Assist the OME with distribution of Course Faculty/Resident Evaluations by providing the correct roster of faculty to be evaluated, and overseeing the distribution of the collected data to faculty and residents.

- **Course Content: Creation and Delivery**
  - Assume responsibility for the delivery of the course including content, scheduling, assessment, organization, and course execution.
  - Provide oversight of curricula and programs with a focus on development and implementation of course and session-specific objectives, linking stated objectives to educational strategies, formative feedback, and learner assessment.
  - Collaborate with other course and clerkship directors to ensure appropriate vertical and horizontal integration of content.
  - Determine the temporal sequence of course topics in conjunction with other course directors so that the course topics/content are coordinated, both vertically and horizontally, with other courses.
  - It is understood that there is no "perfect" curriculum so that the coordination should be negotiated among course directors and faculty in a common sense, collegial manner with the students' best interest in mind.
  - Ensure syllabi, course materials, schedules, and other content are of high quality, current, posted in the learning management system (LMS), easily accessible, and reflect the educational objectives and content being delivered.
    - Course schedule and syllabus must be posted at least thirty (30) days prior to the first day of the semester
    - Course materials (including PowerPoints, assigned reading videos, etc.) must be posted at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the session
  - Identify and evaluate materials that support the curriculum such as learning experiences, assignments, reading materials, videos, or online resources.
  - Construct the course syllabus using the CC approved Standardized Non-Clinical Course Syllabus Template. The syllabus must include a clear outline for the weighting of assessments and an overall course grading rubric.
    - CD's must adhere to all grading schema as outlined within their distributed syllabus.
    - Course specific grading must follow all assessment policies outlined by CC approved standard operating procedures.
  - Provide fair and effective formative and summative assessments.
  - Assure that the assessments are prepared appropriately (either preparing them personally or delegating responsibility) and support student learning and development:
    - Link assessment questions to course content

        - Finalize and submit all assessment questions at least one (1) week in advance of the scheduled assessment
        - Monitor reliability, validity and alignment of exams with learning objectives and course content.
        - Review and revise assessment questions based on their performance history.
        - CD's will provide rationale within the testing platform for each assessment item.
        - CD's will ensure timely review and communication to students regarding questions that arise from exam reviews.
    - Assure that examinations are scored appropriately after review of item analysis.
    - Provide oversight of the course site within the LMS to ensure content is complete and made available in a timely fashion to students.
    - Provide schedules and other information and communicate with the appropriate staff so that the LMS course website, assessment/examination platform, and video-recording platform are constructed and adequately maintained.
    - Serve as a resource and communicate in a timely manner with students, administrative staff, and faculty.
    - Promote a positive learning environment and collaborate with OME, department chairs, and other appropriate individuals to address mistreatment and learning environment concerns.
- **Monitoring of Student Performance**
    - Grade all assignments and submit final grades in a timely fashion adhering to university and SOM policy.
    - Adhere to SOM expectations for remediation and counseling of students experiencing academic difficulty.
    - Ensure early identification of students in academic or personal difficulty and refer students to other appropriate individuals and offices for assistance.
    - Identify appropriate remediation plans for students with academic difficulty.
- **Continuous Quality Improvement**
    - Be aware of and abide by all VCU and CC approved policies and procedures, and LCME standards.
    - Participate in Annual Course Reviews with the OME, providing a reviewed copy of course and session level objectives and required self-study report to the OME.
    - Modify existing or develop new curricula or methods of delivery based on needs, changing LCME requirements, and as charged by curriculum oversight bodies.
    - Track, monitor, assess, and identify areas for improvement in the curriculum with the goal of continuous quality improvement or as dictated by the curriculum oversight bodies.
    - With the assistance of the OME, evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum in achieving course learning outcomes.
    - Serve as a review team member for other courses and/or clerkships as part of the annual curricular review and evaluation process.
    - Communicate with the OME regarding any difficulties in fulfilling the above responsibilities.
    - Collaborate with the Department Chair and the Associate Dean for Pre-Clinical Medical Education to request the necessary resources to run the course effectively.
    - Regularly attend and actively engage in the pre-clinical course directors' meetings, and other meetings as requested by the OME, to improve and standardize elements of the curriculum, develop policies, provide input, ensure compliance with LCME standards, and disseminate best practices.
    - Participate in all curriculum retreats.

- Collaborate with the OME and the Office of Faculty Affairs to coordinate facilitator and faculty development needs.
- Represent the course at the Promotion and Advancement Committee based on the established participation schedule.

Clinical Phase CD's

CD's leading courses within the clinical phase of the curriculum are responsible for:

- **Creation of Objectives**
  - Use the institutional learning objectives, with respect to the requirements and recommendations of accreditation standards, to drive clerkship specific objectives for review by the CC.
    - Ensure all clerkship level objectives are linked to the appropriate institutional learning objectives (ILOs).
  - Develop session level objectives for each session taught within the clerkship
    - Clerkship objectives, session level objectives, and keywords will be reviewed yearly by the CD and provided to the OME for curriculum mapping purposes and review and approval by the CC.
- **Management of Faculty and Educational Sites within the Clerkship**
  - In consultation with the Department Chair, recruit and develop faculty for delivering, facilitating, and/or precepting educational content.
  - Ensure all faculty, residents, other health care professionals providing instruction or supervision in the clerkship, and students are aware and understand the clerkship objectives, learning goals, relevance to the larger curriculum, and relevant policies.
  - Ensure resident physicians and non-faculty instructors who supervise or teach medical students understand the educational objectives of the clerkship and are prepared for their roles in teaching and evaluation.
  - Ensure that student learning experiences throughout required components of the clerkship are supervised by members of the medical school's faculty.
    - Ensure all hospitals and clinical sites must have an affiliation agreement/MOU.
    - All individuals providing clinical instruction or supervision to learners must be VCU SOM faculty or have an affiliate faculty appointment.
  - Evaluate patient care learning environments to ensure sites are conducive for learning and patient care opportunities.
  - Ensure comparable educational experiences and equivalent methods of evaluation across all teaching sites for the clerkship.
  - Ensure adequacy of clinical sites and provide an updated roster of all sites on an annual basis to the OME.
  - Communicate the clerkship learning objectives, MD program institutional learning objectives, and required clinical experiences to all faculty, fellows, residents, other healthcare professionals and staff with direct responsibilities for medical student education.
  - Delegate educational duties to all assigned faculty.
  - Provide guidance, feedback, and oversight to assigned faculty on the preparation of clerkship materials and andragogy such that clerkship and institutional objectives are met, and consistency and the overall clerkship design is maintained.

- Preview and approve all materials submitted by the assigned faculty to ensure that the information to be covered is consistent with the overall clerkship and institutional learning objectives and is relevant to assessments.
- Monitor the teaching effectiveness of assigned faculty and overall delivery of the clerkship in an on-going manner (i.e., during the clerkship) so that any mid-stream corrections can be made.
- Assist the OME with distribution of Clerkship Faculty/Resident Evaluations by providing the correct roster of faculty to be evaluated, and overseeing the distribution of the collected data to faculty and residents.

- **Clerkship Content: Creation and Delivery**
  - Assume responsibility for the delivery of the clerkship including content, scheduling, assessment, organization, and course execution.
  - Provide oversight of curricula and programs with a focus on development and implementation of clerkship and session-specific objectives, linking stated objectives to educational strategies and learner assessment.
  - Collaborate with other course and clerkship directors to ensure appropriate vertical and horizontal integration of content.
  - Identify and evaluate materials that support the curriculum such as learning experiences, assignments, reading materials, videos, or online resources.
  - Construct the clerkship syllabus using the CC approved Standardized Clerkship Syllabus Template. The syllabus must include a clear outline for the weighting of assessments and overall course grading rubric.
    - CD's must adhere to all grading schema as outlined within their distributed syllabus.
  - Ensure syllabi, clerkship materials, schedules, and other content are of high quality, current, posted in the learning management system (LMS), easily accessible, and reflect the educational objectives and content being delivered.
    - Clerkship syllabus must be posted at least thirty (30) days prior to the start of the M3 year.
    - Individual student schedules must be posted at least two (2) weeks prior to the start of the rotation.
    - Course materials (including PowerPoints, assigned reading videos, etc.) must be posted at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the session.
  - Define and communicate clear and specific expectations, roles, and responsibilities for student involvement in patient care and learning activities.
  - Determine and distribute schedules for clinical and learning activities related to the clerkship.
  - Monitor and oversee student compliance with required clinical experiences, including required clinical conditions and procedures, as defined by the Completion of Required Clinical Experiences SOP.
  - Design an overall strategy for formative and summative assessment of individual students that are linked to educational goals and objectives.
  - Participate in standard setting, grading, and feedback of required clinical assessments, including OSCEs and simulation.
  - Provide oversight of the clerkship site within the LMS to ensure content is complete and made available in a timely fashion to students.
  - Provide schedules and other information and communicate with the appropriate staff so that the LMS clerkship website is constructed and adequately maintained.

- Ensure that clerkship provides required proctors for all NBME shelf exams and institutional examinations/assessments.
- Serve as a resource and communicate in a timely manner with students, administrative staff, and faculty.
- Promote a positive learning environment and collaborate with the OME, departmental chair, and other appropriate individuals to address mistreatment and learning environment concerns.
- Actively engage in all Transitions Courses in the clinical phase of the curriculum.

- **Monitoring of Student Performance**
  - The CD or their delegate must meet with student mid-clerkship to discuss the student's required mid-clerkship self-assessment and provide written formative feedback.
  - Submit final grades for each student, including a narrative noting strengths and areas for improvement for cognitive and non-cognitive competencies, within 5 weeks of the completion of the clerkship as outlined in the Grade Timeliness and Grade Appeals Policies.
  - Document progress of all students. Adhere to the SOM guidelines for remediation and counseling of students experiencing academic difficulty.
  - Evaluate each student early enough in the clerkship to allow time for remediation of deficiencies and refer students to other appropriate individuals and offices for assistance.
  - Participate in the development of a remediation plan for students experiencing academic difficulty.
  - Advise and mentor students in the residency selection and application process.
  - Provide letters of recommendation/evaluation to students applying to residency.
  - Represent the clerkship at the Promotions and Advancement Committee.
- **Continuous Quality Improvement**
  - Be aware of and abide by all VCU and CC approved policies, procedures, and LCME standards.
  - Ensure that examinations and assessment methods are current, valid, and reliable.
  - Participate in Annual Clerkship Reviews with the OME, providing a reviewed copy of course and session level objectives and required self-study report to the OME.
  - Serve as a review team member for other courses and/or clerkships as part of the annual curricular review and evaluation process.
  - Implement, modify existing or develop new curricula or methods of delivery based on needs, changing LCME requirements, and as charged by curriculum oversight bodies.
  - Track, monitor, assess, and identify areas for improvement in the curriculum with the goal of continuous quality improvement or as dictated by the curriculum oversight bodies.
  - With the assistance of the OME, evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum in achieving learning outcomes.
  - Communicate with the OME regarding any difficulties in fulfilling the above responsibilities.
  - Collaborate with the Department Chair and the Assistant Dean for Clinical Medical Education to request the necessary resources to run the clerkship effectively.
  - Regularly attend and actively engage in the clinical course directors' meetings, and other meetings as requested by the OME, to improve and standardize elements of the curriculum, develop policies, provide input, ensure compliance with LCME standards, and disseminate best practices.
  - Participate in all curriculum retreats.
  - Assist with development of the process to generate faculty and resident medical student teaching evaluations.

- Collaborate with the OME and the Office of Faculty Development to coordinate facilitator and faculty development needs.
- Represent the course at the Promotion and Advancement Committee based on the established participation schedule.

Related Policies

Grade Timeliness Policy
Clinical Supervision of Students Policy
Completion of Required Clinical Experiences Policy
Curricular Changes Requiring Curriculum Council Approval Policy
Curriculum Review and Evaluation Process Policy
Direct Observation Policy
Learning Environment and Student Mistreatment Reporting and Response Policy
Professionalism Policy
Roles and Responsibilities of Faculty Teaching in the MD Curriculum Policy
Student Clinical Duty Hours Policy

Review Cycle and Revision History

The policy is reviewed and may be revised by the Curriculum Council as necessary, but at least every three years.

Currently Approved Version: 03.12.2026

Previously Approved Versions: 01.12.2023

Applicable Laws, Regulations & Standards

LCME Standards for Accreditation of Medical Education Programs Leading to the MD Degree:

- LCME Standard 8, Element 3