



VCU

Curricular Changes Requiring Curriculum Council Approval Policy

Policy Statement and Purpose

The Curriculum Council is responsible for the oversight of the curriculum as a whole at the Virginia Commonwealth School of Medicine and has responsibility for the overall design, management, integration, evaluation, and enhancement of a coherent and coordinated medical curriculum. This council is comprised of representatives of students and faculty charged with ongoing review and central management of the undergraduate medical curriculum at VCU.

The Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) has established standards regarding the involvement of the faculty in the design, content, management, evaluation, and enhancement of the curriculum.

LCME Standard 6: Competencies, Curricular Objectives, and Curricular Design

The faculty of a medical school define the competencies to be achieved by its medical students through medical education program objectives and is responsible for the detailed design and implementation of the components of a medical curriculum that enable its medical students to achieve those competencies and objectives. Medical education program objectives are statements of the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes that medical students are expected to exhibit as evidence of their achievement by completion of the program.

LCME Standard 7: Curricular Content

The faculty of a medical school ensure that the medical curriculum provides content of sufficient breadth and depth to prepare medical students for entry into any residency program and for the subsequent contemporary practice of medicine.

LCME Standard 8: Curricular Management, Evaluation, and Enhancement

The faculty of a medical school engage in curricular revision and program evaluation activities to ensure that medical education program quality is maintained and enhanced and that medical students achieve all medical education program objectives and participate in required clinical experiences and settings.

In accordance with these standards and the charge to the Curriculum Council outlined in the Faculty By-laws, this SOP defines changes to curricular design, content, delivery, and management that must be approved by the Curriculum Council prior to implementation.

Stakeholders

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



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Definitions

CC: Curriculum Council: The CC will define the architecture of the curriculum, ensure graduated advancement of curricular topics, assure coverage of all objective-related content, and address any unnecessary redundancy of material, patterns of student evaluations or performance by course or content area, and reviews data at specified intervals to monitor and evaluate the curriculum as a whole and make informed decisions to enhance, coordinate, and ensure coherence of the educational program.

LCME: Liaison Committee on Medical Education. The group with authority to accredit medical education programs leading to the MD degree in the United States and Canada.

Responsibilities

Office of Medical Education: The Office of Medical Education will assist in curriculum planning by documenting curriculum design, delivery and performance. At the direction of the CC, the Office of Medical Education will support meetings and/or retreats to review individual phases of the curriculum and the curriculum in toto. The Office of Medical Education will schedule curricular reviews to ensure continuous quality improvement and will provide administrative support, in conjunction with the Office of Assessment, Evaluation, and Scholarship, and Technology Services (SOMTech). The Office of Medical Education will assemble committee members monthly, providing necessary supports. Recommendations from curricular reviews from each course and clerkship will be presented to the CC for their review and approval.

Curriculum Council: The CC will receive and review recommendations from course and clerkship directors, annual retreat discussions, CC evaluation reviews of courses and clerkships within the undergraduate medical curriculum, reviews of the curricular phases and curriculum in toto in order to ensure curricular objectives and LCME standards are being met. The CC will also review additional proposed curricular changes, as outlined in the procedures for implementation, on an ongoing, as needed basis. A vote of approval from a majority of the CC committee must be obtained prior to implementing the requested changes.

Course/Clerkship Director: The Course/Clerkship Director is responsible for bringing changes requiring approval forth to the CC prior to implementing the changes within their course/clerkship.

Curricular Operations Specialist: Individual within the OME who is responsible for the administrative management of the CC.

Procedures

To ensure compliance with the identified LCME Standards and the faculty governance code, the following lists have been developed to distinguish between changes that may be implemented without CC approval, and those changes requiring CC approval prior to implementation.



Changes that do not require CC approval prior to implementation:

- Minor revisions to scheduling within a course that do not involve a change in the total number of hours allocated to a course or to the overall or block calendar
- Revisions to specific course assignments
- Day-to-day management procedures for the course (e.g., selection of teaching faculty)
- Revisions to required course materials
- Revisions to session level objectives or keywords

Changes that must be reviewed and approved by the CC prior to implementation:

- Major changes to content (e.g., blocks of content, major themes) that would significantly impact the curriculum as a whole
- Revisions to course/clerkship level objectives
- Changes to course/clerkship activities related to longitudinal content delivery
- Changes to course structure involving an increase or reduction in course hours
- Changes to course schedules that could impact other courses/realignment of course sequencing
- Revisions in teaching methods or content delivery systems
- Changes in assessment methods and procedures (i.e., how students are given formative feedback and/or summative grading)
- Changes in course/clerkship leadership
 - This includes both Director and Assistant/Co-Director level changes
- Approval of proposed new courses (e.g., new M4 elective rotations)
- Deleting an existing course or adding a new course to the curriculum
- Proposed changes to existing education related policies/procedures
- Changes to graduation requirements

For all curricular revisions requiring CC approval, the following steps will be followed to achieve timely review by the CC:

- The Course/Clerkship Director will outline the proposed changes, in detail, and provide these to the Curricular Operations Specialist
- These proposed changes will be distributed to the CC Chair, and Associate/Assistant Medical Education Deans in OME for review
- The proposed changes to the next scheduled CC meeting agenda for review, discussion, and vote
 - If the revision is of an urgent nature, and it is determined by the Chair of the CC that review of the request cannot wait until the next scheduled meeting, the Curriculum



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Facilitator will distribute the request for revisions electronically to CC members for email discussion and vote

- Once a vote has been completed the Curricular Operations Specialist will notify the Course/Clerkship Director of the results of the vote

In order to ensure changes to each course and clerkship are documented, and parallel processes—such as curriculum mapping—are updated accordingly, any change in the design, delivery, content, or administration of a course or clerkship must be provided to the Office of Medical Education in advance of the change being implemented.

- Changes for courses occurring in the pre-clinical years (M1 and M2) of the curriculum should be emailed to the Associate Dean for Pre-Clinical Medical Education and Assistant Dean for Educational Excellence, Quality & Accreditation
- Changes for courses or clerkships occurring in the clinical years (M3 and M4) of the curriculum should be emailed to the Assistant Dean for Clinical Medical Education and the Assistant Dean for Educational Excellence, Quality & Accreditation

Related Policies

Curricular Evaluation Policy

Course and Clerkship Director Responsibilities 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.

Current Approved Version: 04.11.2024

Previously Approved Version: 12.14.2021

Applicable Laws, Regulations & Standards

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

- LCME Standard 6
- LCME Standard 7
- LCME Standard 8