# Year 4-6 Medical Student Clinical Placement Hours

## Aims of this document

To provide guidance for medical students, clinical supervisors and course coordinators on the expectations for clinical placements for medical students.

## Principles

1. The medical program is a full-time degree
2. The timetable provided for each clinical placement should include time for specific activities, including face-to-face teaching time, patient contact time/clinical activities and private study time.
   1. Of these learning activities, patient contact time/clinical activities is recognised as the most important component of medical studies in Years 4-6 of the medical program. However, students should not attend clinical activities when face-to-face teaching sessions are scheduled.
3. Out of hours time is recognised as an important opportunity to develop additional clinical experience and prepare medical students for becoming junior doctors.
   1. Out of hours time includes
      1. Evening shifts
      2. Weekend shifts, and
      3. Overnight shifts.
4. The specific timetable should be consistent with the proposed guidelines below but flexible enough to fit with the needs of students and clinical teams, recognising that the balance between patient contact time/clinical activities and teaching may vary between clinical placements.
5. The guidelines below should not detract from the development of professionalism, including that
   1. The health and wellbeing of the patient should be the first consideration – patient care requires (at times) personal sacrifice.
   2. The health and wellbeing of students is crucial to their ability to learn and to provide care of the highest standard
6. The guidelines below should not prevent students from participating in additional activities they may wish to attend out of personal interest.

## Guidelines

1. The weekly timetable for each clinical placement (that includes face-to-face teaching time, patient contact time/clinical activities, and private study time) should
   1. Not exceed 38 hours of total time per week;
   2. Ensure that patient contact time/clinical activities comprise at least 50% of the total time per week (e.g. at least 19 hours in a 38-hour week);
   3. Not contain shifts longer than would be expected of a junior doctor (i.e. no shifts should be longer than 12 hours), and the number of continuous hours should recognise the need to support student health and wellbeing;
   4. Ensure that private study time is a minimum of a 4 hour block (e.g. is at least 4 hours in a 38 hour week);

*Note: Private study time is not intended to be “time off” but rather time when neither clinical activity nor formal teaching is scheduled. The time will be determined by the clinical supervisor, recognising the need to fit with the weekly timetable of the clinical team.*

* 1. Be available at least 4 weeks in advance; and
  2. Not require a student to attend clinical placement on public holidays.

1. Out of hours time (evening shifts, weekend shifts, and night shifts):
   1. Should be justified on the basis of educational value
   2. General expectations regarding out of hours time for a placement should be clearly indicated in the course outline. Specific shift times and details should be communicated via Canvas.
   3. Should be made known to the students at least 4 weeks in advance where possible.

*Note: if this is not possible, it should be justified, and the information should be provided to students as soon as possible.*

* 1. Should not be expected routinely in addition to a 5-day week.
  2. Should not be expected during assessment periods
  3. Night shifts should have a 12-hour rest period before and after (students are not required to attend fixed face-to-face teaching sessions or patient contact time/clinical activities immediately before or after a night shift).