

Title:	<b>Unstructured Time in the Curriculum in Years 1 and 2</b>	Number:	<b>009</b>
Approved By:	Undergraduate Medical Education Committee (UGMEC)		
Approval Date:	20 June 2022	Next Review:	01 June 2025
Effective Date:	04 July 2022		
Audience:	Students, Faculty and Staff		
Purpose:	Describes the expectations for time allocated as Unstructured Time in Years 1 and 2 of the MD Undergraduate Program.		
Related Policies:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="#">Instructional Hours per Week in Years 1 and 2 #024</a></li> <li><a href="#">Scheduling Medical Students in Required Clinical Learning Experiences #010</a></li> </ol>		
Exclusions:	Workplace requirements (Health Authority Mandated training, e.g., Violence Prevention, SPECO, etc.)		
Calendar Statement:	None		
Contact:	Director, Curriculum		

## Preamble

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Medical students must have designated time within the curriculum to foster skills in self-directed and lifelong learning. This aligns with the Committee for Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools (CACMS) requirement: Element 6.3: Self Directed and Life-Long Learning<sup>1</sup>. This policy describes the expectations for scheduling such time in Years 1 and 2.

Aligning with [Policy 024](#) “Instructional Hours per Week in Years 1 and 2”, which outlines the maximum number of instructional hours per week, this policy describes the specific placement of dedicated Unstructured Time within the weekly schedule. The purpose of this Unstructured Time is to provide students with blocks of time within the curricular framework that they may use at their discretion for a range of activities.

Related to but not covered by this policy, medical students are expected to commit a significant amount of their personal time outside of the scheduled curriculum for preparation and study to successfully complete the MD Undergraduate Program at UBC. It is recognized that balancing the need to devote such time for study and preparation with other activities and personal commitments is a major challenge throughout medical education and practice as a physician. Faculty and students are encouraged to discuss this important element of career development and its impact on medical student and physician wellness and career satisfaction.

## Policy

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1. An average of 8 hours per week will be protected as Unstructured Time during Years 1 and 2. There may be exceptions when curricular activities are scheduled during Unstructured Time, as described below.
2. There is flexibility around the scheduling of Unstructured Time for the effective functioning of the curriculum (e.g., to accommodate the scheduling of clinical skills, family practice office visits or Faculty-wide inter-professional educational (IPE) activities). Adjustment to the blocks of

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<sup>1</sup> The faculty of a medical school ensure that the medical curriculum includes self-directed learning experiences and unstructured time for independent study to allow medical students to develop the skills of lifelong learning. Self-directed learning involves medical students’ self-assessment of learning needs; independent identification, analysis, and synthesis of relevant information; and appraisal of the credibility of information sources.

Unstructured Time to accommodate curricular activities requires prior approval of the Director, Curriculum in collaboration with the Associate Director of Curriculum for Years 1&2.

3. The average number of Unstructured Time hours per week must be maintained overall within the course schedule for the year.

## Guidelines for Scheduling and Modifications to Time for Unstructured Time

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1. Students will receive an average of 8 hours per week of Unstructured Time, but there are times when students may have a curricular activity scheduled into this time. Such occasions should be rare, and are only scheduled in this time after consultation with the Years 1&2 Curriculum Subcommittee and UGMEC as outlined below.
2. The standard weekly schedule provides for two four-hour sessions of Unstructured Time per week. In weeks shortened by a statutory holiday, Unstructured Time will be shortened to one four-hour session.
3. Whenever possible, Unstructured Time will be scheduled prior to case-based learning (CBL) tutorials so students can prepare for these sessions.
4. Due to the complexity of the distributed curriculum, it may not be feasible to schedule Unstructured Time for all students at all sites for the same two half days every week.
5. The use of **any** scheduled Unstructured Time for curricular, assessment or IPE activities must first be proposed to the Years 1&2 Curriculum Subcommittee by the appropriate Years 1&2 component lead/course director. Whenever possible the proposal should also indicate how Unstructured Time will be made up elsewhere in the course.
6. All anticipated use of Unstructured Time for curricular or assessment activities should be reported to the Years 1&2 Subcommittee and UGMEC on an annual basis. Under exceptional circumstances, the component lead/course director may seek approval of curricular or assessment use of Unstructured Time from the Associate Director of Curriculum for Years 1&2.
7. The Curriculum Management Unit will monitor course schedules for compliance with the Unstructured Time policy on an ongoing basis and provide data to the Years 1&2 Curriculum Subcommittee.
8. The Years 1&2 Curriculum Subcommittee will provide an annual report to UGMEC on the scheduling and use of Unstructured Time.

## Monitoring

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1. UGMEC will review and approve the report on Unstructured Time for each course annually to ensure compliance with the above criteria.
  2. Any failure to schedule Unstructured Time in accordance with this policy should be reported to the Year 1&2 Site Director, Associate Director Curriculum, Years 1&2, the Site Assistant Dean, Undergraduate Education, or the Director, Curriculum.
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## Review History

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Action	Committee	Date	Status
Review	Policy Advisory Subcommittee	October 2016 (annual review)	Endorsed
Review	Undergraduate Education Committee	17 October 2016	Approved
Revise	Year 1&2 Subcommittee Chair	April by email	Revised
Review	Policy Advisory Subcommittee	2 May 2018	Back to UGMEC for advice
Review	Undergraduate Education Committee	May 2018	Further discussion
Review	Policy Advisory Subcommittee	14 June 2018	Endorsed
Review	Undergraduate Education Committee	18 June 2018	Approved
Review	Policy Advisory Subcommittee	17 September 2020	Endorsed
Review	Legal Counsel	24 September 2020	Endorsed
Review	Undergraduate Medical Education Committee	19 October 2020	Approved
Review	Policy Advisory Subcommittee	21 April 2022	Reviewed
Review	Years 1 and 2 Subcommittee	4 May 2022	Endorsed
Review	Policy Advisory Subcommittee	19 May 2022	Endorsed
Review	Undergraduate Medical Education Committee	20 June 2022	Approved