

Community Service and Service Learning Policy

The School of Medicine requires **100 hours of service** prior to the granting of the Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree. Service may be defined as **community service, service learning, donations or service to the school**. Students log their service hours into SOLE. **Hours must be posted within 1 calendar year of when they were performed or they will not be counted.** The total number of hours will be tracked for students. **Students must obtain their hours through more than a single event or opportunity.** Opportunities will be posted in the Message of the Week. Students are also encouraged to create and/or investigate opportunities on their own. Students will receive reminders (approximately yearly) as to the number of hours recorded. Students are reminded that they are on the Honor system and should only record those hours and activities that have actually performed. Failure to do so may result in charges of academic dishonesty being brought before the Committee on Academic and Professional Standards (CAPS). The Associate Deans reserve the right to question the number of hours entered and make appropriate changes (increase or decrease) in the number recorded. Students who enter with an advanced standing will have their 100 hour requirement prorated at 25 hours per year as per the Associate Deans. **Students are encouraged to continue performing and entering hours beyond the 100 hours required until they graduate.**

The SOLE logging system allows students to **distinguish** their service hours between community service, service learning, donations, and service to the school.

Community service includes activities that contribute to the well-being of our citizens, community, and environment. Examples include volunteer time with patient care groups, work in respective religious organizations, health care organizations, self-help groups, hospital organizations, donating blood or bone marrow, local school education or health assessment programs, monitoring blood pressures at the mall/senior center; volunteering at Health Right, etc.

Service learning is defined as a structured learning experience that combines community service with preparation and reflection. Service learning hinges on a response to community-identified concerns and students learn about the context in which in which service is provided, the connection between their service and their academic coursework, and their roles as citizens and professionals. Examples include educational projects and programs such as Family Friends, which has preparation activities. The SOLE logging system for service learning includes opportunities for students to reflect on their service learning experiences.

Service to the school is limited to 10 hours. Examples of service to the school include: serving as a school student advisor, mentor, tour guide, or usher for school events.

In general, **donations** in lieu of service are discouraged and do not meet the spirit of this requirement. However, it is anticipated that students will become future doctors who will likely have a solid earning potential that would allow them to contribute monies to their communities. Thus, in order to foster future giving tendencies, a limited amount of donations are acceptable. A **limit of 5 total hours** of service may be granted for donations (monetary, goods or food valued at least \$10) to meet the 100 hour requirement. These must be accumulated in 5 different service projects or events. A minimum of \$10 donation, with no dollar cap, is set to be equivalent to one hour of service. Students will enter the following information related to each donation: Date/s of donation; Amount of donation; Benefactor/Organization; Person in charge of the organization; Contact information, Narrative on why the student chose the benefactor, the purpose of the benefitting organization, and how he/she believes the money, goods or food will improve the “community.” Failure to enter this information into SOLE will cause the donation to be disallowed.

Service that may be considered self-serving, or not truly of benefit to our **external** community usually does not count. Similarly, if the service is performed as part of a department or school curricular requirements, this will not count toward the community service requirement. Service or work that is monetarily compensated for will also not count towards the time requirement.

Students are encouraged to perform service that will develop into a habit and continue throughout their careers. This enhances their relationship with the community they serve. This also allows the future physician to become more a part of the community and helps counter isolationism that tends to occur with this profession. Medicine is a service profession and the School of Medicine endorses service learning as an integral part of the curriculum.

Service may occur in a wide variety of areas including: volunteer time with patient care groups, education projects, work in respective religious organizations, health care organizations, self-help groups, hospital organizations, donating blood or bone marrow, local school education or health assessment programs, monitoring blood pressures at the mall/senior center; volunteering at Health Right, etc.

In general, Student Services will **grant hour-for-hour credit**. In some instances, credit may be increased above that for preparatory work needed to complete the service. Every effort to coordinate with the other HSC schools to award similar hours of credit will be made for activities that occur with HSC students.

Community Service Guidelines

- The service credit is **hour-for-hour** unless specified in writing.
- The 100 hours must be served in more than one project or event.
- MD/PhD, MD/MPH or other dual degree students are required to perform 100 hours of service for graduation, but may earn these throughout their dual degree time.
- Transfer students into the curriculum will have this community service requirement prorated to a 25 hour per year basis.
- Students who have a question as to the amount or validity of credit for a given project should first ask their respective Community Service representative (CSR) via email. The

CSR may consult an Associate Dean as needed and respond to the student and copy the Associate Dean of Student Services regarding approval.

- The Associate Dean may deny service that hasn't been pre-approved or may change the number of hours for a particular project as deemed necessary. The Associate Dean of the School of Medicine reserves the right to offer differing credit than that approved by other schools at HSC.
- **A limit of ten total hours of service** is granted for activities that directly serve the school. Examples of this would include: serving as a school student advisor, mentor, tour guide, or usher for school events.
- Activities that appear to be self-serving, in general, will not count toward the graduation requirement. Serving as a research subject may be acceptable if no compensation occurs. Those who wish to work within a medical department or clinic without compensation must clear this beforehand with their CSR if they want community service credit.
- Students are encouraged to enter their service shortly after it has been performed. **Activities must be entered within 1 calendar year of performance or they will not count.**
- All entries must be submitted and approved one week before graduation (or the announced due date) or the diploma may not be presented at graduation ceremonies.
- Occasional exceptions to the above guidelines can be made and generally made known to the students through this policy and via Message of the Week.

LCME Standard 3: Academic and Learning Environments

A medical school ensures that its medical education program occurs in professional, respectful, and intellectually stimulating academic and clinical environments, recognizes the benefits of diversity, and promotes students' attainment of competencies required of future physicians.

3.5 Learning Environment/Professionalism

A medical school ensures that the learning environment of its medical education program is conducive to the ongoing development of explicit and appropriate professional behaviors in its medical students, faculty, and staff at all locations. The medical school and its clinical affiliates share the responsibility for periodic evaluation of the learning environment in order to identify positive and negative influences on the maintenance of professional standards, develop and conduct appropriate strategies to enhance positive and mitigate negative influences, and identify and promptly correct violations of professional standards.

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.

6.6 Service-Learning/Community Service

The faculty of a medical school ensure that the medical education program provides sufficient opportunities for, encourages, and supports medical student participation in service-learning and/or community service activities.

"Service-learning" is defined as a structured learning experience that combines community service with preparation and reflection. Medical students engaged in service-learning provide community service in response to community-identified concerns and learn about the context in which service is provided, the connection between their service and their academic coursework, and their roles as citizens and professionals. [Definition from Seifer SD. "Service-learning: Community-campus partnerships for health professions education." Academic Medicine, 73(3):273-277 (1998).]

"Sufficient opportunities" means that medical students who wish to participate in a service learning activity will have the opportunity to do so. To encourage medical student participation, institutions could, for example, develop opportunities in conjunction with relevant communities or partnerships, provide information about available opportunities, offer elective credit for participation, or hold public presentations or public forums. Support for medical student participation could include offering or providing information about financial and social support for medical student service-learning (e.g., stipends, faculty preceptors, community partnerships).

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