SAN JUAN BAUTISTA
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
1978

Policy for Implementation of Self-Directed Learning (SDL) in the Pre- Clinical Curriculum

Policy Number:	**2026-02**
Policy Title:	Policy for Implementation of Self-Directed Learning (SDL) in the Pre-Clinical Curriculum
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Accreditation Agency:	LCME
Element:	6.3 Self- Directed and Life-long Learning
Policy Oversight:	Associate Dean of Biomedical Sciences

LCME Element 6.3 — Self-Directed and Life-Long Learning

The faculty of a medical school ensure that the medical curriculum includes self-directed learning experiences that 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; appraisal of the credibility of information sources; and feedback on these skills from faculty and/or staff.

Purpose

This policy establishes the institutional framework for integrating structured Self-Directed Learning (SDL) experiences across the pre-clinical years, ensuring the medical curriculum fosters the skills necessary for lifelong learning by requiring students to take responsibility for their own education through a structured, four-step SDL process.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- The pre-clinical curriculum (M1-M2)
- Course directors (coordinators), faculty facilitators, and curriculum sub-committees are responsible for SDL delivery and oversight.
- All structured learning activities designated as SDL components within course syllabi and curriculum map.
- SDL is regularly, and longitudinally integrated across the curriculum.

Practical Benchmark:

- M1 students: Complete two (2) SDL activities, one in each semester.
- M2 students: Complete three (3) SDL activities: two in the first semester and one in the second semester.

Definition of Self-Directed Learning

Self-Directed Learning is defined as a structured educational process in which students:

1. Identify personal learning needs or knowledge gaps through cases, formative assessments, or guided inquiry.
2. Independently locate, analyze, and synthesize relevant information from credible scientific and clinical sources.
3. Critically evaluate the quality and applicability of the information obtained.
4. Reflect on learning outcomes and receive formative feedback from faculty.

All four phases must be explicitly incorporated into each designated SDL activity.

Implementation Requirements

A. Curricular Design

- SDL activities must be clearly identified in course syllabi and the official calendar.
- Activities must include structured guidance for each of the four SDL phases.
- Courses must allocate protected study time for SDL.
- SDL integration must be documented in the institutional curriculum map.
- **Pre-Clerkship Phase:** The SDL activity typically occurs in small-group settings (e.g., Problem-Based Learning) where the tutor acts as a facilitator.

Component	Student Requirement	Faculty Requirement
I. Self-Assessment	Identify individual knowledge gaps based on a learning activity (clinical case or problem).	Design "trigger" learning activities (cases) that allow for diverse learning paths.
II. Resource ID	Independently search for and analyze peer-reviewed literature or data.	Provide access to databases; refrain from providing "reading lists."
III. Appraisal	Evaluate the credibility and relevance of the chosen evidence.	Facilitate a discussion on why certain sources were chosen.
IV. Feedback	Present findings and reflect on the learning process.	**Mandatory:** Provide individual or small-group feedback on the SDL skills.

B. Instructional Methods

Examples of approved SDL formats include:

- Problem-Based Learning (PBL) cases
- Case-based anatomical or pathophysiology investigations
- Independent literature review assignments
- Evidence-based clinical correlation modules

C. Assessment

Student performance in SDL activities must be evaluated using institutional rubrics assessing:

- Identification of learning needs
- Independent inquiry and synthesis
- Critical appraisal of sources
- Reflective learning

Faculty must provide formative feedback following each SDL activity.

Roles and Responsibilities

Course Directors (Coordinators)

- Ensure that SDL activities are incorporated and documented.
- Submit annual course reports, including SDL outcome data.

Faculty Facilitators

- Guide students in SDL processes without replacing independent inquiry.
- Evaluate student performance using institutional rubrics and provide feedback.

MD Executive Committee

- ECC presents the policy to the MD Executive Committee for the corresponding formal acceptance.

Executive Curriculum Committee (ECC)

- Monitor longitudinal integration of SDL across the pre-clinical curriculum.
- Review annual SDL performance data and make recommendations.

Office of Academic Affairs

- Maintain institutional SDL documentation for accreditation purposes.
- Coordinate faculty development related to SDL facilitation and assessment.

Oversight

The Associate Dean of Basic Sciences

Evaluation and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

SDL implementation effectiveness will be reviewed annually using:

- Course evaluation data
- SDL rubric performance summaries
- Student feedback regarding independent learning time and effectiveness

Review Cycle

This policy will be reviewed at least every three (3) years, or sooner as required by curricular changes or accreditation standards.

Appendices

None

History

None

Approval

Approved by: _____

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Approved on: 2/17/2026
Date