



Policy Title: Emergency Preparedness: Curriculum Response Plan

Accountable Dean(s) or Director(s):

Associate Dean for Medical Education & Academic Affairs
Assistant Dean for Basic Science Education
Assistant Dean for Clinical Education

Approved By:

Curriculum Committee

RELEVANT LCME STANDARD:

5.7 Security, Student Safety, and Disaster Preparedness

POLICY STATEMENT:

The LCME states: A medical school ensures that adequate security systems are in place at all locations and publishes policies and procedures to ensure student safety and to address emergency and disaster preparedness.

POLICY PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that medical students are informed of institutional emergency and disaster preparedness plans as they relate to curriculum delivery.

PRE-CLINICAL CURRICULAR RESPONSE PLAN:

Communication Expectations after a Hurricane Impacts our Region

Communication from Administration

- Scenario 1 (evacuation): If there is an evacuation or major threat to the area, there will be communication from administration to students every day from 3 days out to one week after the event (as needed; for example, if there is no damage or the storm misses New Orleans, communication will cease prior to 1 week).
- Scenario 2 (affected by weather event): If there is a direct or indirect hit by hurricane force winds in the New Orleans area, there will be email or text communication from administration to students every day for up to two to four weeks (depending on magnitude of storm and damage; time starts at the date of the weather event and ends when students have returned to classes). After 4 weeks post-event, the administration may elect to change the frequency of communication at the discretion of the institutional leadership. Administration communication will be made by at least one Dean and will include updates on the following information: estimated impact on our campus and Tulane community (if known), and any information regarding timing of classes and expectations of students at that time.

Communication from Students

- Scenario 1 (evacuation): Students are expected to communicate their plans for the potential weather event and update their status if that changes via a survey link in eMedley.
- Scenario 2 (affected by weather event): Students will receive a survey via email and text message so that they can let us know how and if they have been affected by the storm, with the expectation that they respond within 3 days of the event. Should their plans change, students will be able to submit a follow-up survey with updated information.
- Students who have not responded within 3 days will receive a phone call (method of phone call distribution will be decided based upon the number of students who fall into this category; e.g., TLC groups, student leaders, administration).
- After data is collected, decisions as to the timing of return to campus will be adjusted as needed.
- A special task force will be formed to assist and connect students with needs to regional resources (housing, clothing, food, etc.).

Curricular Adjustments due to Hurricane Threat and Impact

Change to in-person activities

- Scenario 1 (evacuation): Storm threat causes evacuation without hitting New Orleans. (Hurricane force winds are threatening, and New Orleans is in the cone 3 days out).
 - There will be a standard delay (1 week) before resuming in-person activities. During this week, classes will be taught virtually (no lab or in person small group) for the preclinical students.
- Scenario 2 (affected by weather event): It is difficult to predict damage that will impact the New Orleans area during a storm with hurricane force winds. However, the following estimations are provided to serve as a guide so that students can have general expectations regarding the amount of time that classes and curricular activities will be suspended or held virtually. Entergy published in the 2022 hurricane season to expect a 7-day power outage for a category 1 hurricane and 21 days for a category 4 hurricane.
 - Minimal damage= Expect approximately one to two weeks depending on level of impact to students and facilities. Classes are likely to resume virtually before they resume in person.
 - Moderate damage= Expect approximately one month of suspension of in person activities depending on the level of impact to students and facilities. Classes are likely to resume virtually before they resume in person.
 - Heavy damage= Damage incurred causes extended delays (more than one month) on returning to campus and the New Orleans area (e.g., Katrina). Expect that classes will resume virtually before students return to campus and in person activities may resume at another physical location before resuming on the Downtown campus.

Response to lost curricular time

In the event curricular time is lost due to the impact from a hurricane or other weather event, the following discussions will occur at the curriculum committee level:

- Scenario 1 (loss of less than 1 week of classes): The committee members will meet (including subcommittee members) to remove non-essential class sessions from the calendar to fit necessary class sessions into the new academic calendar.
- Scenario 2 (loss of more than 1 week of classes): The curriculum committee members will meet (including subcommittee members) and choose class sessions that could be converted to asynchronous online learning prior to the return of students to classes. Exam questions on that material will be removed from the module exam and the students will be able to complete the online modules by the Winter/Summer make up dates.
 - For example, if the weather event happened in September, the modules would need to be made up by the January date. If the weather event occurred in the Spring, the modules would need to be completed by the Summer make-up date.
 - The online modules will use different assessment methods and questions than the regular module exam, but the grades will be incorporated into the final grade in the usual proportion as the material content was originally scheduled (for example, if that material represented 3% of the module exam score, then 3% of that module exam score would be represented by the score on the online module assessment).
- See the *Preclinical Contact Hours* policy for the maximum weekly instructional hours permitted should the emergency preparedness policy be enacted.

Pandemic Impact

Since the outbreak of Covid-19, several spikes in transmission have resulted in decisions to adjust the curricular schedule to limit in-person activities. Currently, mask mandates in response to respiratory infectious agents are set by the school and local government; vaccination mandates are set by our institution.

The following processes are to serve as a guide as to when didactic, small group, standardized patient, simulation, and laboratory activities will be offered in-person or online.

- Scenario 1 (classes hybrid): Hybrid classes will occur for didactics and small group activities. Simulations, standardized patient sessions, and laboratory sessions will occur in-person as long as there are no city-imposed restrictions on in-person activities.
- Scenario 2 (only necessary small group activities): Didactic sessions will occur virtually and only laboratory sessions, simulations, and standardized patient sessions will occur in person. This phase will be initiated if there are city-imposed restrictions on in-person activities. This phase will be discontinued when city restrictions have been lifted.
- Scenario 3 (classes all virtual): This phase will occur if there is a city mandated “lockdown” in place to limit individuals from visiting non-essential businesses.

CLINICAL CURRICULAR RESPONSE PLAN:

Curricular Adjustments due to Weather or Pandemic Events

Clinical site responses may vary based on their geographic locations. When emergency situations arise, students can expect to not be allowed at clinical sites until it is deemed safe to return.

- Scenario 1: If there is an evacuation of the city due to a weather event or short closure due to a pandemic (less than two weeks), students will be advised to use that time to study for their NBME Shelf Exam (if possible).
- Scenario 2: If more than two weeks of a rotation is affected by a weather event or closure due to a pandemic, the following will occur:
 - Students will be advised to study for the NBME Shelf Exam during their time out of school, if possible. If students cannot return to clinics for an extended period of time, but the institution is operational, the NBME exam could be taken early.
 - Re-entry of students into clinical areas following a disaster will be at the discretion of the respective clinical site leadership as operations and patient care may temporarily need to be prioritized over the educational mission.
 - When students are allowed to return to clinical sites, arrangements will be made to make up for lost clinical time such that clerkship-specific required clinical experiences and expectations may be achieved. At the discretion of clerkship leadership, this may include additional night shifts, night call, night float, overnight and/or weekend shifts (1 per week that needs to be made up). The institution will provide students with call rooms and some food options (e.g., delivery service) during these shifts.
 - The affected clerkship will be converted to “pass”/”fail.”
- Scenario 3 (very rare): If there is an extended period of time that is affected by a weather event (e.g., more than a month affected), the remaining rotations may need to be shortened to allow students to meet the rotation-specific educational objectives.

LAST REVIEW DATE/APPROVAL:

Curriculum Committee: 11/05/25

REVIEW CYCLE:

Every 3 years