

SOM OP: 40.02, **Student Attendance Policy**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this School of Medicine (SOM) Policy and Procedure is to explain attendance expectations for students in the School of Medicine.

REVIEW: This SOM Policy and Procedure will be reviewed within each odd-numbered fiscal year by the Student Affairs Committee (SAC). Revisions will be forwarded to the Office of the Dean for approval and publication.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

1. **General.** This policy is intended to address questions about student attendance in courses throughout the medical school curriculum.
2. **Years 1 and 2.**
 - a. Attendance Requirements: There are no personal days for medical students in Years 1 and 2. While highly recommended, attendance is not mandatory, except as specified for certain components of individual courses.
 - 1) First day of each course (orientation to the course)
 - 2) Scheduled examinations
 - 3) All other mandatory activities identified by the Course and Associate Directors and as listed in the course syllabus.
 - b. Excused Absences:
 - 1) Requests for an excused absence from mandatory activities must be submitted online no later than 45-days in advance of the date(s) of the requested excused absence. Request must include the specific mandatory activity (or activities) that would be missed. Mandatory course activities will be available to students via the SOM online curriculum management system at least 60-days prior to the start date for each block.
 - 2) A student is allowed no more than four (4) excused absences per academic year.
 - 3) A written rationale and supporting documentation (if requested by the SAC) for the student's excused absence request must be supplied.
 - 4) Categories for Non-Emergency Excused absence.
 - a) Absence to attend professional meeting/conference. Eligibility for this category of absence includes student must have ≥ 75 exam average in the current course; or if the request is for an excused absence at the beginning of a course (i.e., prior to exam 1), the student must have had a ≥ 75 exam average in the immediate prior course.

- b) Absence due to religious observance. Student must provide name and dates of the religious event/holiday and the location at which they will be observing the holiday.
 - c) Wedding attendance. Approval may be granted for family members, or if the student is a confirmed member of the wedding party. Student must indicate his/her relationship to couple, role in the wedding (i.e., attendee or member of wedding party), date of ceremony, and location of event.
 - d) Other requests. Other categories for requesting a non-emergency excused absence are considered at the discretion of the Student Affairs Committee.
- c. Requesting an Excused Absence from Mandatory Activities:
- 1) To request an excused absence, a student must complete the online Medical Student Absence Request form.
 - 2) Completion of this form will generate an email to appropriate Course Coordinator(s), who will verify student eligibility to request a non-emergency excused absence based upon academic standing and prior number of excused absences.
 - 3) Following confirmation from the Course Coordinator regarding student eligibility for an excused absence, an email is generated to the Course Director or responsible faculty member requesting review of the excused absence request. The Course Director is expected to respond/comment within 48-hours of receiving the request to comment.
 - 4) After 48 hours, the request is sent via email to all voting members of the SAC. Voting members of the SAC may select one of three choices:
 - a) Approve the excused absence request.
 - b) Deny the excused absence request,
 - c) Hold excused absence request for further discussion.
 - 5) A decision is automatically reached when one of these choices receives 50% + 1 (quorum) votes from the SAC voting members.
 - 6) If the decision is to further discuss the request or if no choice reaches a quorum, then the request will be discussed at the next scheduled SAC meeting.
 - 7) Once a decision is reached by the SAC, the student, the Course Director or responsible faculty member and the Course Coordinator are automatically notified by email of the SAC decision. The Course Coordinator is responsible for monitoring and logging all approved excused absence requests.
- d. Approval or Denial of an Excused Absence Request:
- 1) Each excused absence request is considered individually, except when several students request absences to attend the same professional meeting.
 - 2) Decision to grant or deny an excused absence request is made by vote of the SAC members.

- 3) When an excused absence request is granted, the student is responsible for coordinating with the Course Director or faculty member to remediate any missed curricular requirements.
- 4) The requesting student shall be notified of the SAC decision by email.

e. Appealing a Denial of an Excused Absence Request:

- 1) Decisions made by the SAC regarding an excused absence request are considered final. Appeal of a denial of an excused absence request may be made only if substantively new information becomes available or “extraordinary circumstances” occur following the decision of the SAC. Excused absence appeals must be submitted in writing to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs with specific notation of the grounds for appealing the denial. Excused absence appeals will be reviewed and dispositioned by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Chair of the Student Affairs Committee whose decision is final with no further right of appeal.
- 2) In the event the student does not adhere to the decision of the SAC and misses a mandatory activity without approval (or meeting other excused absence criteria), the absence will be considered unexcused.

f. Absence Due to Illness/Health Condition:

Absence from any mandatory attendance activity in Year 1 or Year 2 due to a physical health or wellbeing issue requires documentation from a licensed health care provider in support of the student having an excused absence due to illness/health condition.

g. Excessive and Unexcused Absences:

Excessive excused or any unexcused absences are not permitted. Students with greater than four (4) excused absences in one academic year or any unexcused absence will be referred to the Student Conduct Administrator or the Student Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee for possible disciplinary action. Graded activities missed due to unexcused absence(s) cannot be remediated.

3. Year 3.

Attendance Requirements:

Year 3 students are required to be present for all scheduled Year 3 exams, the first day of each clerkship period, and a minimum of 90% of each clerkship period in order to fulfill curricular requirements. Students with greater than four (4) approved excused absence days during any one clerkship period will be required to remediate the missed work days at the discretion of the responsible Clerkship Director. If it is not possible to remediate all of the missed work days in excess of four during the remaining time within the involved clerkship, the student will be required to remediate the missed work days (at the discretion of the responsible Clerkship Director) at the end of the Fall or Spring semester so as to not conflict with completing any other Year 3 curricular requirement.

• Excused Absences:

- a. Students may be granted up to twelve (12) absences during completion of the Year 3 curriculum.

- b. No more than two (2) days (including state holidays) can be missed per clinical experience week and no more than four (4) absence days per clerkship overall.
- c. In the event that more than two days of a clinical experience week may need to be missed due to exceptional circumstances, a student's exceptional absence request may be considered during the Regional Education Office's monthly meeting.
- d. Absence requests must be electronically submitted at least thirty (30) days in advance of the requested absence date(s). To request an excused absence a student must complete the online Student Absence Request form.
- e. Non-emergency absence requested less than 30 days in advance of absence date may be considered on an ad-hoc basis by the senior Student Affairs personnel on the student's "home" clinical campus. Ad-hoc absence requests considered on a case-by-case basis will be reviewed, approved or denied by the senior Student Affairs personnel with no right of appeal once a decision has been made.
- f. Any absence for any reason must be reported to the Clerkship Director and Coordinator. If an absence for illness is for more than one day, documentation of the illness and/or a diagnosis from a licensed health care provider must be provided to the Clerkship Director/Coordinator and forwarded to the student's campus Student Affairs Office for inclusion in the student's file.

Absence Due to Illness/Health Condition:

- a. Sick leave is intended for use only in the event of personal illness/health related condition or to assist a family member who has a verifiable illness/health condition needing medical care.
- b. Use of sick leave for family members not residing in the student's household is strictly limited to the time necessary to provide care and assistance to a spouse, dependent (minor or adult), or parent of the student who needs such care and assistance as a direct result of a documented medical condition.
- c. The use of sick leave for any reason other than due to personal illness or family health needs as detailed above will be considered misconduct and subject to referral to the Student Conduct Administrator on the student's home campus and/or disciplinary action through the Student Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee Year 3-4 Subcommittee.
- d. Absence from clerkship duties for more than one (1) day due to a physical health or wellbeing issue requires documentation from a licensed health care provider in support of the student having an excused absence due to illness/health condition.

Tracking of Student Absences:

- a. Student absences will be centrally tracked through each regional Student Affairs Office. Once a student reaches a total of eight (8) absences during Year 3, notices will be sent to all remaining clerkships noting the exact number of absences the student has already accrued.
- b. A student who does not successfully remediate greater than four (4) excused absences days in an eight-week clerkship to the satisfaction of the responsible Clerkship Director will be referred to their "home" clinical campus Office of Student Affairs for review of their number of excused absence days. This review may result

in further referral to the student's "home" clinical campus Student Conduct Administrator (SCA) and/or the Year 3/Year 4 Student Promotions and Professional Conduct Subcommittee (Yr3_Yr4 SPPCC). Additionally, a student who is absent for more than twelve (12) working days during completion of their Year 3 curriculum may also be referred to their "home" clinical campus SCA and/or the Yr3_Yr4 SPPCC.

Excused Absence for Integration Seminar:

All students in Year 3 will be excused from regular clerkship duties for the presentation of Integration Seminar (Student Grand Rounds). Students will also be excused for 1-2 planning sessions for the Integration Seminar as described in the syllabus for this course. Students on night float will be excused at midnight prior to the seminar presentation.

Appealing a Denial of an Excused Absence Request in Year 3:

- a. Appeal of a denial of a non-emergency excused absence request submitted more than 30 days in advance of the requested absence date may be made only if "unforeseen" new information becomes available or "extraordinary circumstances" occur following denial of the absence request.
- b. Excused absence appeals must be submitted in writing to the senior Student Affairs personnel on the student's "home" clinical campus with specific notation of the grounds for appealing the denial.
- c. Excused absence appeals will be reviewed and dispositioned by the senior Student Affairs personnel on the student's "home" campus in consultation with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. This decision is final with no further right of appeal.

Unexcused Absences:

Unexcused absences are not permitted in Year 3 and may result in disciplinary action by the Student Conduct Administrator and/or the student's "home" clinical campus Year 3/Year 4 Student Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee.

4. Year 4.

Attendance Requirements:

Year 4 students are required to be present for a minimum of 90% of each course period in order to fulfill curricular requirements. Students with greater than two (2) excused absence days during any four-week course or greater than one (1) excused absence day during any two-week course will be required to remediate the missed work days at the discretion of the responsible Course Director. If it is not possible to remediate all of the missed work days during the remaining time within the involved course, the student will be required to drop the course (only if less than 50% of the course has been completed). Students are not allowed to remediate excess missed work days during any time when scheduled to complete other curricular requirements. Students who do not successfully remediate excess missed work days will receive a grade of "Fail" for the involved course.

Excused Absences:

- a. Students may be granted up to twelve (12) absences during completion of the Year 4 curriculum. Absence requests must be electronically submitted at least fifteen (15) days in advance of the requested absence date(s). To request an excused absence a student must complete the online Student Absence Request form.
- b. Non-emergency absence requested less than 15 days in advance of absence date may be considered on an ad-hoc basis by the senior Student Affairs personnel on the student's "home" clinical campus. Ad-hoc absence requests considered on a case-by-case basis will be reviewed, approved or denied by the senior Student Affairs personnel with no right of appeal once a decision has been made.
- c. Any absence for any reason must be reported to the Course Director and Coordinator. If an absence for illness is for more than one day, documentation of the illness and/or a diagnosis from a licensed health care provider must be provided to the Elective Director/Coordinator and forwarded to the student's campus Student Affairs Office for inclusion in the student's file.

Absence Due to Illness/Health Condition:

- a. Sick leave is intended for use only in the event of personal illness/health related condition or to assist a family member who has a verifiable illness/health condition needing medical care.
- b. Use of sick leave for family members not residing in the student's household is strictly limited to the time necessary to provide care and assistance to a spouse, dependent (minor or adult), or parent of the student who needs such care and assistance as a direct result of a documented medical condition.
- c. The use of sick leave for any reason other than due to personal illness or family health needs as detailed above will be considered misconduct and subject to referral to the Student Conduct Administrator on the student's home campus and/or disciplinary action through the Student Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee Year 3-4 Subcommittee.
- d. Absence from clerkship duties for more than one (1) day due to a physical health or wellbeing issue requires documentation from a licensed health care provider in support of the student having an excused absence due to illness/health condition.

Tracking of Student Absences:

- a. Student absences will be centrally tracked through each regional Student Affairs Office. Once a student reaches a total of eight (8) absences during Year 4, notices will be sent to all remaining electives noting the exact number of absence the student has already accrued.
- b. A student who does not successfully remediate greater than one (1) excused absence days during a two-week elective or two (2) working days during a four-week elective to the satisfaction of the responsible Course Director will be referred to their "home" clinical campus Office of Student Affairs for review of their number of excused absence days. This review may result in further referral to the student's "home" clinical campus Student

Conduct Administrator (SCA) and/or the Year 3/Year 4 Student Promotions and Professional Conduct Subcommittee (Yr3_Yr4 SPPCC). Additionally, any student who is absent for more than twelve (12) working days during Year 4 may also be referred to the SCA and/or the Yr3_Yr4 SPPCC.

Appealing a Denial of an Excused Absence Request in Year 4:

- a. Appeal of a denial of a non-emergency excused absence request submitted more than 15 days in advance of requested absence date may be made only if “unforeseen” new information becomes available or “extraordinary circumstances” occur following denial of the absence request.
- b. Excused absence appeals must be submitted in writing to the senior Student Affairs personnel on the student’s “home” clinical campus with specific notation of the grounds for appealing the denial.
- c. Excused absence appeals will be reviewed and dispositioned by the senior Student Affairs personnel on the student’s “home” campus in consultation with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. This decision is final with no further right of appeal.

Unexcused Absences:

Unexcused absences are not permitted in Year 4 and may result in disciplinary action by the Student Conduct Administrator and/or the student’s “home” clinical campus Year 3/Year 4 Student Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee.

5. Illness or Personal Emergency on Exam Days.

If the student is unable to participate in a required learning activity/clinical experience or take an exam at the scheduled time due to illness or a personal emergency, the student must contact the appropriate Course Director, Clerkship Director, or the student’s “home” Office of Student Affairs prior to the start of the scheduled activity. Email is acceptable. If extreme circumstances (e.g., severe illness, need to leave town immediately, etc.) prevent the student from contacting SOM personnel prior to the start of an exam, a classmate or immediate family member may call on the student’s behalf as soon as is realistically possible. In either case, it is necessary to leave a phone number where the student can be contacted.

If the absence from the scheduled exam is due to illness and the student has not yet seen a licensed health care provider, the student will be directed to proceed to a licensed health care provider to ensure that appropriate health care is delivered and to provide documentation regarding physical health or wellbeing issue as the basis for the missed exam.

No credit will be given for any graded activity missed without a valid excused absence as described within this policy. If a student believes this consequence is not appropriate to the particular situation, he/she may appeal this action in writing to the Academic Dean responsible for Student Affairs on the student’s home campus, who will consult with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, and the Course Director responsible for the graded activity to determine if the prescribed course of action is appropriate. In the event a second graded activity is missed and again the designated procedures are not followed, the student will meet with the Academic Dean responsible for Student Affairs on the student’s home campus and the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs to discuss any further administrative action that may be warranted.

6. Absence Due to Bereavement.

Students requesting excused absence(s) due to bereavement are expected to notify the home campus Office of Student Affairs as soon as it is known an absence is necessary. If a required curricular activity (e.g., an exam, required learning activity, clerkship or elective days) will be missed due to a bereavement absence, the student is expected to provide the Office of Student Affairs with record of the individual's death (e.g., obituary, in memoriam listing, etc.).

Excessively late or "after the fact" notification of a bereavement absence and/or inability to provide external supporting documentation will be referred to the Student Conduct Administrator for review of possible disciplinary action.

7. Code of Conduct for Student Attendance and Absences.

Any student submitting an excused absence request for any reason is expected to abide by the following:

- a. To represent any and all information contained in, or related to, the absence request completely and truthfully. If it is determined a student has engaged in intentional deception or misrepresentation of information as part of his/her excused absence request process, this will be considered a breach of professional conduct and the student will be subject to review and disciplinary action by the Student Conduct Administrator and/or the Student Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee.
- b. Any attempt to influence a SAC member as part of the excused absence request process will also be considered a breach of professional conduct and the student(s) involved will be subject to review and disciplinary action by the Student Conduct Administrator and/or the Student Promotions and Professional Conduct