



MEDICAL SCHOOL POLICY

Attendance Requirements & Excused Absences

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Responsible University Officer: Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education

Policy Owner: Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, Central Campus in the Twin Cities

Associate Dean for Student Life and Academic Affairs, Regional Campus in Duluth

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POLICY STATEMENT

Medical students are expected to demonstrate professionalism, including through meeting all attendance requirements. The University of Minnesota Medical School (UMMS) strives to provide students and faculty with timely course schedules in advance of the start of the academic year that will specify required activities. Schedules for specific required sessions are subject to reasonable change and students are expected to keep themselves informed of changes and to adjust their attendance accordingly.

The UMMS acknowledges there are a variety of legitimate reasons students may need to be absent or miss coursework, and that make-up materials will need to be designed to allow students to meet the learning objectives for activities missed during excused absences. Excused absences may be granted for the following reasons:

- Religious or holiday observances
- Illness, physical or mental, of the student, student's dependent, or someone for whom the student is a caregiver
- Medical conditions related to pregnancy
- Subpoenas
- Jury duty
- Military Service
- Bereavement, including travel related to bereavement
- Personal or family crises
- Needed healthcare appointments
- Residency Interview Days (4th year students) *
- Scheduled NBME Step 1 and Step 2 Exams

The UMMS reserves the right to deny any requests for an excused absence if such requests:

- Are submitted with insufficient time for review
- Do not meet the criteria for an excused absence
- Place an unreasonable burden on the school with regard to make-up opportunities (eg. lab and clinical skills practicals)

Students need to meet the goals and objectives of each course. Excessive absences or lateness, even if excused, may have an impact on a student's final performance in a course or clerkship and overall academic standing. This policy articulates the expectations for attendance, the conditions under which students may be excused from a required activity, and the procedures for requesting such absences.

Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of an Excused Absence request may receive further review by the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs on the Twin Cities Campus or Associate Dean for Student Life and Academic Affairs on the Duluth Campus. The relevant Dean, in consultation with the Course Director, will make a final determination regarding the status of the Excused Absence request.

* **Residency Interview Days:** "Interview Days Off" must occur only during residency interview season. Any other days off required for interviews may be granted at the discretion of the Clerkship Director.

REASON FOR POLICY

An excellent and comprehensive medical education requires in-person, active engagement among students, patients and faculty. It is important to provide unambiguous expectations for active student participation in the educational program in a manner that is respectful of and adaptable to unexpected events and faculty responsibilities, and allows students to plan their schedules responsibly.

This policy also ensures the UMMS meets LCME Accreditation requirements as follows:

Element 12.4: STUDENT ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE SERVICES. "A medical school provides its medical students with timely access to needed diagnostic, preventive, and therapeutic health services at sites in reasonable proximity to the locations of their required educational experiences and has policies and procedures in place that permit students to be excused from these experiences to seek needed care."

PROCEDURES

I. Preclerkship Attendance

- Students who must miss a required preclerkship activity will evaluate whether the absence can be considered excused (see 'Attendance', above). A student who believes the reason for the absence meets the criteria for an excused absence must submit a request following their campus' procedures, as outlined below
- Requests for expected or anticipated excused absences (ie. upcoming observances) must be submitted a minimum of two weeks in advance.
- In cases of unexpected absences (e.g., illness or family crisis), the request for an excused absence must be submitted as soon as reasonably possible, preferably prior to the scheduled session.
- The medical school may, at its discretion, verify the reasons cited for any requests.
- Preclerkship students whose absence from a required activity is not excused will be responsible for meeting session objectives and preparing for any assessments through appropriate peer consultation or independent study. If points or credit were given during the missed session, the student will not receive those points. Course Directors, Course Managers, or course faculty will not be responsible for providing make-up opportunities, supplying materials, or offering alternative methods for meeting session objectives.
- Missed assessments for unexcused absences will result in a failing grade on the assessment
- Instances of unexcused absences, whether resulting from a failure to submit a request or denial of a request, will subject students to any and all academic repercussions, including course failure(s), placement on academic probation, and referral to the appropriate scholastic standing committee

I.a. Procedures for Requesting an Excused Absence: Twin Cities Preclerkship Phase

- Requests for an excused absence are submitted to the Office of Student Affairs via an online [Absence Request Form](#). This includes requests to miss/reschedule an assessment (ie, quizzes, practicals, and examinations)
- Students making a request the same day as a required session or assessment, in addition to submitting the required excused absence request form, must directly notify the

Course Director and Course Manager as well as the Assessment Team (med-doa@umn.edu) if there is an assessment (quizzes and exams)

- The appropriate Course Manager and Course Director will be notified for all absences and the final determination of whether the absence was excused or unexcused (health and other private information is not shared; only the outcome of the request)
- Students will receive written notification on the outcome of their request from the Director of Student Affairs or designee. If approved, and depending on the nature of the missed activity, the student will be directed to:
 - Work with the Course Director and appropriate course personnel to determine alternatives that allow for the make-up of missed work, lab or clinical skills assessments, and meet the session objectives. Course Directors reserve the right to determine the nature of the make-up work and adjust any credits that can be earned from such work
 - Work with the Assessment team for written or online assessments
- In cases of rescheduled assessments, students will be scheduled to sit for the assessment on an approved reschedule date, within 7 subsequent days of the originally scheduled assessment date. Students must submit a second, separate request to the Director of Student Affairs or designee should they need to reschedule a second time. A maximum of two reschedule requests may be permitted and the reason for the second request must also meet the criteria for an excused absence
- Course Directors and/or Assessment personnel reserve the right to modify or replace assessments as deemed necessary to ensure assessment security
- Students unable to adhere to the outcome of any reschedule requests are subject to any and all academic repercussions, including course failure(s), placement on academic probation, and referral to the appropriate scholastic standing committee

I.b. Procedures for Requesting an Excused Absence: Duluth Preclerkship Phase

- Requests for an excused absence are submitted directly to the Course Director. This includes requests to miss/reschedule an assessment (ie, quizzes, practicals, and examinations)
- In consultation with the Associate Dean of Student Life and Academic Affairs, the Course Director will review the request to determine if the reason for the absence meets the criteria for an excused absence
- The Course Director will be responsible for alerting appropriate course personnel regarding any accommodations for an excused absence
- Students will receive notification from the Course Director on the outcome of their request. If approved as an excused absence, and depending on the nature of the missed activity, the student will be directed to:
 - Work with the Course Director and appropriate course personnel to determine alternatives that allow for the make-up of missed work, lab or clinical skills assessments, and meet the session objectives. Course Directors reserve the right to determine the nature of the make-up work and adjust any credits that can be earned from such work
 - Work with the Course Director and appropriate personnel to coordinate rescheduling written or online assessments
- In cases of rescheduled assessments, students will be scheduled to sit for the assessment on an approved reschedule date, within 7 days of the originally scheduled assessment date. Students must submit a separate request to the Course Director should they need to reschedule a second time. A maximum of two reschedule requests may be permitted and the reason for the second request must also meet the criteria for an excused absence
- Course Directors and/or Assessment personnel reserve the right to modify or replace assessments as deemed necessary to ensure assessment security
- Students unable to adhere to the outcome of any reschedule requests are subject to any and all academic repercussions, including course failure(s), placement on academic probation, and referral to the appropriate scholastic standing committee

II. Clerkship Attendance

The assumption of responsibility for patient care should be of paramount importance to students during their clinical rotations, required or elective. An essential component of such responsibility is being available when on duty. As such, students are expected to be in full attendance for all scheduled clinical activities, including clerkship orientations and assessments. Students can refer to the UMMS' *Policy on Duty Hours, Years 3 and 4*, which provides details on clerkship scheduling requirements during rotations (see "*Related Information*").

- Requests for an excused absence should be submitted a minimum of three weeks in advance of the start of the rotation, except in cases of unexpected illness or emergencies (e.g., family or personal crises). Requests for excused absences are submitted directly to the Clerkship Director and Clerkship Coordinator
- In cases of unexpected illness or emergencies, the request for an excused absence should be submitted as soon as reasonably possible, preferably prior to the indicated shift. In addition, the student should make every effort to contact all individuals who may be impacted by their absence (e.g., Site Director, Supervisor)
- The medical school may, at its discretion, verify the reasons cited for the request.
- Excused absences during clerkships may be taken up to one full day for every two weeks within a given clerkship (i.e., two days allowed within a four week clerkship)
 - MS4 students are granted an *additional* excused one-half day off per week for residency interviews
- Clerkship Directors reserve the right to deny requests for absences that exceed the limit of one full day for every two weeks
- If the Clerkship Director considers a request for an excused absence that exceeds the limit of one full day for every two weeks within a given clerkship, regardless of the reason for the absence, the Clerkship Director must determine whether the student is meeting (or can meet) the minimum standards of knowledge and performance for that clerkship. If the student has not met the minimum standards, or would be unable to do so in the time remaining in the clerkship, the student must make up the time missed in a manner deemed necessary by the Clerkship Director. Note: In these decisions, the students must meet the requirements of the clerkship and must demonstrate the expected levels of responsibility.
- Students requesting an excused absence for a Shelf Exam or other clerkship assessment will work with the Clerkship Director to determine the soonest, reasonable date by which the assessment must be taken
- Students who have not completed any approved make-up work, including clerkship assessments, by the scheduled end date of the rotation may receive an "Incomplete" for the clerkship until completing any outstanding requirements, as per the UMMS' *Medical Student Grading Policy* (see "*Related Information*")
- When a student is absent and has neither obtained permission nor called in to explain the absence, that student will be subject to any and all academic repercussions, including, but not limited to, course failure(s), placement on academic probation, and referral to the appropriate scholastic standing committee

III. Lateness

- Students are expected to be present at the start of all required preclerkship sessions, assessments, and clinical activities
- Unexpected latenesses due to poor planning or organization (ie. oversleeping) will not be considered valid reasons and students arriving late, irrespective of reason, will not be given additional time to complete preclerkship activities or preclerkship assessments
- Students arriving more than 5 minutes after a required preclerkship activity or preclerkship assessment has started must follow the procedures outlined below, based on campus, as follows:
 - Twin Cities Students: Submit an Excused Absence Request to the Director of Student Affairs as soon as is reasonably possible. Ideally by the conclusion of the session. The Excused Absence Request will be reviewed as per the standard processes outlined under subsection 1.a, above

- Duluth Students: Email the Course Director with an explanation for the late arrival, as soon as is reasonably possible. Ideally by the conclusion of the session. The Request will be reviewed as per the standard processes outlined under subsection 1.b, above
- If the lateness is not approved as an excused absence, the lateness will be considered an absence, and the policy described herein will apply
- At the time of late arrival, instructors, Course Directors, and/or Course Managers have sole discretion in determining whether there is sufficient time remaining for late arriving students to satisfactorily complete the objectives of a required preclerkship activity or preclerkship assessment. In cases where it is determined there is not sufficient time, students may be asked to leave. An absence request will need to be submitted and the policy described herein will apply.

IV. Regular Monitoring

The Offices of Student Affairs, in collaboration with the Offices of Assessment, Evaluation, and Curriculum on both campuses will review excused absences data, at minimum, annually to evaluate the effectiveness of, and compliance with, the excused absence process.

FORMS/INSTRUCTIONS

Absence Request form: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/648add83ffd045489c6ad2a508911bf8>

APPENDICES

There are no appendices associated with this policy.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

There is no FAQ associated with this policy.

ADDITIONAL CONTACTS

Subject	Contact	Phone	Fax/Email
Primary Contact	Name	Phone	Fax/Email
Director for Integrated Education - Clinical Sciences - TC	Jessamina Blum	612-625-2621	jblum@umn.edu
Director for Integrated Education - Preclinical Sciences - TC	Kelaine Haas	612-624-6996	khaas@umn.edu
Director of Education - DU	Amy Seip	218-726-6908	amyseip@d.umn.edu

DEFINITIONS

Attendance: Presence (whether in person or online) during an entire scheduled activity as noted in the course calendar, or until the student has completed a quiz or examination.

Assessment: Any activity (formative or summative) within a course or clerkship for purposes of assessing performance, knowledge, and/or skills. This includes quizzes, examinations (ie. midterm, final), or practicals.

RESPONSIBILITIES

There are no responsibilities associated with this policy.

RELATED INFORMATION

Medical Student Grading Policy:

https://med.umn.edu/sites/med.umn.edu/files/medical_student_grading_policy.pdf

Duty Hours, Year 3 and 4:

https://med.umn.edu/sites/med.umn.edu/files/policy_on_duty_hours.pdf

Student Examination Security Policy:

https://med.umn.edu/sites/med.umn.edu/files/student_examination_security.pdf

Twin Cities Absence Request Form

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/648add83ffd045489c6ad2a508911bf8>

HISTORY

Amended: June 2014

Updated for formatting: September, 2019

Revised: March 2021

Approved: Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education, Twin Cities
Associate Dean for Student Life and Academic Affairs, Duluth

Approval Date: May 2021

Amended: October 2021