



Policy Title: Excused Absences

Accountable Dean(s), Director(s), or Office(s):

Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs

Associate Dean for Medical Education and Academic Affairs

Reviewed By:

Assistant Dean for Basic Science Education

Assistant Dean for Clinical Education

Approval Body:

Professionalism & Promotions Committee

RELEVANT LCME STANDARD:

12.4: Student Access to Health Care Services

POLICY STATEMENT AND PURPOSE:

The LCME states: 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.

POLICY GUIDELINES:

Students are expected to attend all required sessions and fully engage in their coursework. A key aspect of professional development is learning to think beyond oneself, striving for the betterment of both the medical profession and patient care. We recognize, however, that certain life events, such as medical appointments, religious observances, illness, or family emergencies may occasionally require students to miss class or patient care activities.

To request an excused absence from a required session or activity, students should follow the guidelines below.

Pre-Clinical Absences: General Guidelines

- To request an absence, students must submit an Absence Request form in a timely fashion. Generally, this is at least 30 days before an anticipated life event, and as soon as possible (no later than 24 hours) following an illness or emergency.
- The absence request form is located in [eMedley](#) under the 'Other' tab, Absence Requests. Approvals are made by the Office of Admissions and Student Affairs.
- Separately from submitting the Absence Request form, students must notify their lab instructors and course directors, as an excused absence does not obviate the need to make up work missed. Make-up processes are determined by course directors.

- Students are expected to take all preclinical examinations as scheduled. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of exam expectations, including consequences for missing or delaying an exam, and to follow the school's [Preclinical Curriculum Exam policy](#) for notification of anticipated and unanticipated exam absences.
- Students are not allowed to extend breaks or holidays with an absence request. For example, travel costs to or from a Thanksgiving destination are not considered legitimate reasons for excused absence requests; these requests are routinely denied.
- Absences should not be viewed as an opportunity for a personal day off. Any absence not approved/excused will be considered unexcused.

Clinical Absences

During the clinical years, students have responsibilities to their patients and team, and reliable attendance is a significant component of professionalism. Therefore, attendance expectations are high.

Students are required to attend the following activities:

- T3 orientation
- Mandatory Clerkship/rotation orientation days
- NBME Subject Examinations (shelf exams)
- Clinical skills exams

In addition, students may have clinical care responsibilities on the following holidays:

- MLK Jr.
- The Saturday and Sunday before and the Wednesday after Mardi Gras
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- The Wednesday before and the Monday after Thanksgiving break

General Policy Guidelines:

- To request an absence, students must submit an Absence Request form in a timely fashion. Generally, this is at least 30 days before an anticipated life event, and as soon as possible (no later than 24 hours) following an illness or emergency.
- The absence request form is located in [eMedley](#) under the 'Other' tab, Absence Requests. Approvals are coordinated through the Office of Admissions and Student Affairs.
- Separately from submitting the absence request form, students must notify their clerkship director, attending physicians, and/or house officers of any excused absences, as an excused absence does not obviate the need to make up work missed. Make-up processes are determined by clerkship directors and may include additional shifts during the current or a later block.
- Students can receive a maximum of three days excused absence for any 6- or 8-week rotation, a maximum of two days for any 4-week rotations, and one day for 2-week rotations. The only exceptions are for the Step 2 exam and interviews (see below).

- Students are expected to take all clinical examinations as scheduled. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of exam expectations, including consequences for missing or delaying an exam, and to follow the school's [Clinical Curriculum Exam policy](#) for notification of anticipated and unanticipated exam absences.
- Students are not allowed to extend breaks or holidays with an absence request. For example, travel costs to or from a Thanksgiving destination are not considered legitimate reasons for excused absence requests; these requests are routinely denied.
- Absences should not be viewed as an opportunity for a personal day off. Any absence not approved/excused will be considered unexcused.

Guidelines for Interview season (October - January):

- To avoid missing rotation time during interview season, students are encouraged to use discretionary time and/or enroll in an online elective.
- Whenever possible, students should not schedule required rotations during interview season. This includes the Acting Internship and the two-week required rotations: MED4212, RADS3020, and EMER4020. Students who schedule required rotations during interview season should be prepared to schedule interviews around required rotation responsibilities.
- The School of Medicine understands that interviews are a priority and students may have minimal control over scheduling. However, it is expected that students will take the necessary steps to avoid conflict as much as possible by:
 - a) Scheduling required rotations outside of the heaviest part of interview season. These months are generally October, November, December, and January.
 - b) Notifying the course/clerkship director as soon as possible of the interview and what days are to be missed, as well as determining what make-up work will be required. This is in addition to submitting an eMedley Absence Request.
 - c) If the situation arises in which a student must schedule an interview during a 2- or 4-week rotation that would put the student above the allotted excused absence cap for that rotation, the student must communicate the situation to the appropriate course/clerkship director as soon as possible.
 - d) Given that interview slots can fill up in a matter of minutes, it is assumed that the student will schedule the interview and formulate a plan with the course/clerkship director AFTER scheduling the interview.
 - e) The course/clerkship director may require that the student make up the lost time, and the student must make up missed days either during the current block or a later block. Alternatively, the course/clerkship director may determine that the student has missed too many days to make up, and the student will need to be dropped from the rotation.
 - f) Students who request absences for interviews should not request absences for other reasons during the same block.

Guidelines for USMLE Step 2 examination:

- Students must submit an Absence Request form for Step 2 related absences at least 14 days before the absence.
- Students are allowed two days off from an elective rotation to complete the USMLE Step 2 examination.

- Students are discouraged from scheduling their Step 2 exam during a block when they have a required rotation scheduled, especially a two-week rotation (RADS3020, MED4212, and EMER4020).
- Students who request absences for Step 2 should not request Excused Absences for other reasons during the same block.

LAST REVIEW DATE/APPROVAL:

Professionalism & Promotions Committee: 04/01/25

REVIEW CYCLE:

Every 3 years