

POLICY TITLE: <i>Attendance and Absences Policy – M3/4</i>	APPROVAL DATE: <i>July 3, 2019</i> <i>Revised June 4, 2020</i> <i>Revised July 2, 2020</i>
RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT: <i>Office of Medical Education & Office of Student Affairs</i>	APPLIES TO: <i>M3 and M4 Students</i>

I. PREAMBLE

This policy applies to all M3/4 medical students while they are enrolled at the College of Medicine.

All absences for required activities for any reason must be documented with the Medical Student Status Form (MSSF) submitted online in MedOneStop. Students must receive approval for any absence.

Make-up assignments and repetition of coursework may be required for absences.

II. ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE POLICY

All M3 clerkship and M4 acting internship (AI)/elective activities are mandatory events and will comply with the Student Duty Hours Policy. Any planned/excused absence in the clinical years requires prior submission of an MSSF. In the instance of illness, accident, hospitalization, or major catastrophic event, the student will immediately notify the clerkship/elective/AI director and coordinator, as well as the clinical team with whom they are working.

The following details the number of absences that may be requested by course type and length. Note: Any absence allowances indicated below are NOT in addition to time allocated off on a rotation in accordance with duty hours.

Intersessions

Attendance is mandatory for all components of Intersession. Students must complete an MSSF for any absences during Intersession that will be routed to the Intersession Director.

M3 Students on Core Clerkships

Students who miss any days may be required to make up the work at the discretion of the course director. Attendance at all components of the clerkship is mandatory. Students must obtain permission from the clerkship director for any planned absences by submitting an MSSF.

Students may not exceed a TOTAL number of absences, including personal days (refer to the personal day policy), as follows:

- 2 absences in a 4 week third-year clerkship
- 3 absences in a 6 week third-year clerkship
- 3 absences in an 8 week third-year clerkship

Students should reference the Duty Hours Policy regarding expectations for workload.

M3 Students on Specialty Electives

Students may submit an MSSF for one day of planned absence that falls under one of the categories listed below for excused absences (see section III).

Some departments may allow you to miss additional time on a two week rotation, but the student will be required to make up the work. This needs to be discussed prior to the start of the clerkship.

M4 Students on Acting Internship (AI) Rotations

Students may submit an MSSF(s) for up to 2 days of planned absences that fall under one of the categories listed below for excused absences during AI rotations. Such planned absences may or may not be approved. Students are encouraged to avoid scheduling USMLE Step 2 examinations during an AI. If a student schedules a USMLE Step 2 examination during an AI, the student is limited to scheduling either Step 2CK OR Step 2CS but not both during an AI.

M4 Students on Electives

Four Week Rotations:

Students may submit an MSSF(s) for up to 2 days for planned excused absences on a four week rotation. Students may be required to make up the work at the discretion of the course director.

Some departments may allow you to miss two additional days on a four week rotation, but the student may be required to make up the work. This needs to be discussed prior to the start of the elective.

Two Week Rotations:

Students may submit an MSSF for one planned absence that falls under one of the categories listed below for excused absences.

Some departments may allow you to miss additional time on a two week rotation, but the student will be required to make up the work. This needs to be discussed prior to the start of the clerkship.

Tardiness

Students will contact their team and the coordinator if they will be tardy (will not arrive on time) to a required activity. After the second tardy, a Formative Feedback Form will be submitted.

III. EXCUSED ABSENCES

The following will be considered excused absences:

- Diagnostic, preventative, and therapeutic health services (e.g. physician appointments, physical therapy, counselling, prescription pick up etc).
- Personal illness, accident or a major catastrophic event
- Illness of a student's child (see Parental Leave/Accommodation Policy)
- Death or serious illness of family members and close non-family members as identified by the student
- Attendance at a meeting to present student's research or to attend a conference as the college's official representative. (see special requirements below)
- Taking USMLE Step 2 CK/CS in M4
- Interviews with residency training programs
 - Interviewing for a residency may be an excused absence, only if approved in advance by the clerkship/elective/AI director. If an absence is permitted, the clerkship/elective/AI director must receive as much advance notification as possible and proper documentation from the student. Make-up work may be required.
- Religious observances (see Religious Observance Policy)
- Jury duty (see special requirements below)
- Reasons requested other than those listed above will be considered on an individual basis.

*Please note, lack of transportation is not considered an excused absence.

IV. PROCESS OF SEEKING APPROVAL FOR ABSENCES

An excused absence for any reason must provide (a) proper notification, (b) acceptable documentation of the reason, and (c) appropriate approval (see below).

Proper Notification

- Planned absences should be requested with as much advance notice as possible (e.g. 4-6 weeks) prior to when the absence will occur. This enables the clerkship/elective/AI to help plan for educational event scheduling (e.g. a known appointment could be scheduled around with enough notice, and the student might not have any required coursework to make up).
- Students should also notify the clerkship director/coordinator of any planned absences when submitting the biosketch (for M3 core clerkships).
- Students should submit their request for **ANY** absence using the online MSSF.
- Submission of an MSSF does not guarantee automatic approval for an absence (even for absences that fall under the excused absences outlined in section III of this policy).
- Absences requested less than 1 week prior to the planned absence may not be considered for a possible excused absence unless extenuating circumstances prevented the student from providing timely notification per the policy.
- If a student experiences an unplanned absence from clinical activities, the student must immediately notify the clerkship/elective/AI director and coordinator, as well as the clinical team with whom they are working. The student needs to follow any additional instructions given during orientation.

Acceptable Documentation of the Reason

Any absence from clerkship/elective/AI will require the submission of a completed MSSF recording the absence, date, and reason and attaching documentation (conference acceptance, religious observance determination, copy of funeral program, etc).

- The College of Medicine/Department reserves the right to require additional specified documentation.

Failure to submit the MSSF and any additional documentation that is required may constitute unprofessional behavior and may be documented in the student file via a Formative Feedback Form.

Appropriate Approval

- The clerkship/elective/AI director will review absences and make a determination as to whether the absence is excused or unexcused.
- Absence from a course without written notification on an MSSF to the clerkship/elective/AI, in addition to notification to the clinical team, can result in a below passing grade (C or F) and possibly a professionalism report on the Formative Feedback form.
- In all cases of absence, a student is required to check with the clerkship/elective/AI director to establish the nature of the make-up work to fulfill course requirements as well as the time frame for completion of make-up work.

If an excused absence for any reason turns into a leave of absence, a student may not participate in any COM curriculum or extracurricular activities (assessments/examinations, mandatory sessions, organizational meetings, etc.) as referenced in the "Leave of Absence Policy". Exceptions to this policy, however, may be made under special circumstances, as determined by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and the clerkship/elective/AI director.

Special Requirements for Attending a Conference

- Students presenting at conferences or seminars or representing the COM at the conference who miss a required activity from the clerkship/elective/AI must submit an MSSF. If the student has received a Letter of Concern, the PAC chair will also be consulted on the decision.
- Notification of attendance at a conference or seminar through an MSSF must be submitted with as much advance notice as possible (e.g. 6 weeks) prior to the start of the clerkship in which the absence will occur.
- Students presenting posters or who are invited to present at a meeting must provide a copy of the invitation and seminar/conference agenda listing their participation.
- Absence from mandatory activities is limited to two academic days (including travel time).

- Refer to the pre-approval process if attending a conference during the COVID pandemic ([COVID-19 Medical Student Conference Attendance Approval Process](#)).

Special Requirements for Jury Duty

Students should notify the Registrar immediately upon receipt of a summons for jury duty. Students are encouraged to fulfill their obligation but should work with the COM to reschedule for a time that will allow for minimum negative impact on the educational experience. The COM will provide a statement documenting the student's situation and requesting relief or rescheduling. If you fulfill your jury duty obligation, you must submit documentation of jury duty attendance.

V. SCHEDULING MAKE-UP WORK FROM EXCUSED ABSENCES

In the event a student missed a final exam due to an excused absence, two make-up exam periods are specified annually for M3/4. One is during the Winter Holiday and the other is in June between the end of M3 and start of M4 coursework. The dates are set annually by M3/4 curriculum committee to assure a student adequate preparation time. Preparation for a make-up exam while completing subsequent clinical rotations can jeopardize a student's performance in both activities; therefore, all students must take a make-up examination on one of the two dates set by the M3/4 curriculum committee. Students can request an exception to the testing dates. Exceptions must be based on the student's academic best interest. Exceptions to this request should be directed to the M3/4 curriculum coordinator (Gina Burg). Exceptions requested will be reviewed by the M3/4 curriculum director, clerkship director, clerkship coordinator, assistant dean for student affairs, and OME director for consideration.

The clerkship/elective/AI director will specify the time and nature of make-up activities.

If a student fails to meet the make-up requirements, this can result in a below passing grade (C or F) and possibly a professionalism report on the Formative Feedback form.

Students who are absent more than five days during any given clerkship/elective/AI will be at risk of failing that experience. These students will be referred to the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) to seek guidance on whether to pursue a Leave of Absence (LOA). Students on a Leave of Absence may return to their studies at the discretion of the PAC. Upon re-entry, the student will need to contact the appropriate clerkship/elective/AI director(s) to determine if part or all of the clerkship/elective/AI will need to be made up/re-scheduled.

VI. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES - M3/4

An unexcused absence is one occurring for reasons other than those named above and/or one that lacks proper notification and/or documentation of the reasons for absence. When the absence occurs in a required and/or graded activity, a zero (no credit) is automatically given. No make-up is permitted. Any unexcused absence will lead to a Formative Feedback Form.