

POLICY TITLE: <i>Attendance and Absences Policy – M1-M2</i>	APPROVAL DATE: <i>July 3, 2019</i> <i>Revised August 6, 2020</i>
RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT: <i>Office of Student Affairs & Office of Medical Education</i>	APPLIES TO: <i>M1 and M2 Students</i>

I. PREAMBLE

This policy applies to all M1/2 medical students while they are enrolled at the College of Medicine.

All absences for required activities for any reason should be documented with the Medical Student Status Form (MSSF) submitted online in MedOneStop and appropriate approval should be sought.

Students must be granted permission to attend medical (diagnostic, preventative, and therapeutic) health service appointments. Students do not have to disclose the type/reason of medical appointment.

Make up assignments may be required for absences.

II. ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE POLICY

Students are expected to document and request approval if they will not be present for any activities that require mandatory attendance. Planned absences should be requested with as much advance notice as possible (e.g. 4-6 weeks, see Scheduling Policy). If advance notice is possible prior to the publishing of the course schedule, the student should notify the course director directly of the planned absence. It is understood that advanced notice may not always be possible. Depending on the nature of the request, absences requested may not be granted.

Events marked as mandatory on Leo (formerly LCMS+) require submission of an MSSF if the student will not be in attendance. Examples of required learning events include:

- Team/small group based activities (including but not limited to team-based learning, small group case discussions, dissection laboratories, peer teaching, Learning Communities, class meetings)
- All sessions related to the Interprofessional Collaborative Practice courses, the Longitudinal Primary Care Clerkship
- Clinical Skills
- All Community Health and Service Learning modules of Physician & Society
- All assessments and examinations
- Any session that has a patient present or has a panel of presenters

Sessions identified on the schedule as involving the presence of a patient or a panel of patients as designated on the schedule of classes will not be recorded for live streaming or for later posting. Material covered in the sessions will be testable.

III. EXCUSED ABSENCES

The following will be considered excused absences:

- Diagnostic, preventative, and therapeutic health services that cannot be conveniently scheduled at any other time (e.g. physician appointments, physical therapy, counselling, etc).
- Personal illness, accident or 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 COM's official representative. (see special requirements below)
- Religious observances (see Religious Observation 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

- Students should submit their request for a planned absence using the online MSSF on MedOneStop. All absences in which any portion of required events will be missed for any reason should be documented on the MSSF.
- Planned absences should be requested as much in advance as possible (e.g. 4-6 weeks) in which the absence will occur. 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 activities, he/she should attempt to complete the MSSF form as soon as possible.
- If the student is part of a team (team teaching, dissection, etc.) it is the student's professional responsibility to also notify the team members.

Acceptable Documentation of the Reason

The College of Medicine reserves the right to require additional specified documentation (conference acceptance, religious observance determination, copy of funeral program, etc).

Failure to submit the MSSF and any additional documentation that is required will constitute unprofessional behavior and will be documented in the student file.

Appropriate Approval

Once the MSSF form and any other accompanying documentation are submitted, the MSSF will be routed to the appropriate course director(s).

- The M1/2 course director(s) will review absences from required/mandatory events (both exams and non-exam activities) and make a determination about whether the absence is excused or not. All communications with the Course Director and student will occur electronically.
- An MSSF Committee will be created comprised of the M1/2 Curriculum Director, a representative from the Office of Student Affairs, a representative from the Office of Medical Education, a longitudinal course director, and an organ systems block course director. The MSSF Committee will:
 - Review a monthly report on the number of absences, types of absences requested, and number of absences approved and denied by course.
 - Serve as a resource for course directors to consult with questions regarding the approval process of

MSSFs.

- Provide quarterly updates to the M1/2 Curriculum Committee regarding any patterns or concerns with MSSF submission and approval processes.

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 course director.

Special Requirements for Attending a Conference

- Students presenting at conferences or seminars or representing the COM at the conference who will miss a required activity must request permission from the course director to attend the conference. Notification of attendance at a conference or seminar must be received at least six weeks in advance of the start of the course 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, if possible, the 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.

V. SCHEDULING MAKE-UP WORK FROM EXCUSED ABSENCES

Faculty and staff will work with students to develop a plan for make-up work in cases where the absence was excused.

Short Absences (1-2 days)

Within 48 hours of return to coursework the student must contact the Office of Medical Education (OME) to schedule make-up examinations. The student should contact the Program Director, Academic in OME for such make-up exams. The course director should be contacted to schedule when missed assignments should be completed.

Mid Length Absences (3 days to 2 weeks)

It is anticipated that students who are absent from medical school for 3 days to 2 weeks will communicate with the OME and the course director. As a result of this communication, an individualized plan will be developed, outlining the timetable for making up missed activities, optimally prior to the start of the next course, while maintaining on-going work. Any changes to the plan are at the sole discretion of the course director and program director, academic. Time allotted for make-up instruction is permitted at the discretion of the course director and according to available resources.

Extended Absences (greater than 2 weeks)

Students who are absent for more than two weeks for any reason will be placed on a Leave of Absence (see Leave of Absence Policy). The student’s re-entry date will be determined by the PAC. In special circumstances, however, exceptions to this policy can be made on an individual basis, as determined by the course director and the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

VI. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

An unexcused absence is one occurring for reasons other than those named above and/or one that lacks proper notification, documentation and/or approval of the reasons for absence. An unexcused absence in a required activity will result in a Formative Feedback Form submitted to the Office of Medical Education for distribution to the Office of Student Affairs and the appropriate PAC. An unexcused absence in a graded activity will result in score of “zero” for the activity. Make-up for an unexcused absence in a required activity is permitted only at the discretion of the course director, but will not change the “zero” score for the activity.