

Absences Policy: Clinical

Effective September 11, 2012

An essential element of a medical student's professional development is the consistent demonstration of a mature sense of dependability and accountability. Therefore, students are expected to be present and on time for all scheduled examinations, clinical assignments, and mandatory academic activities (e.g. Didactics, Standardized Patient interactions, Grand Rounds, Journal Club, M&M, etc.) unless the responsible faculty/staff grants an excused absence. The “responsible faculty/staff” are the leaders of the clerkship (i.e. the clerkship director, the clerkship coordinator, and site supervisors).

Excused Absences—instructions for students and absence criteria:

1. Requests for an excused absence should be made in writing, via email, to the clerkship director/coordinator and copy (Cc) the Medical Student Affairs email account (medstuaf@louisville.edu) at the time of the request.
2. Anticipated absence requests related to University-sanctioned events must occur in writing at a minimum of one week prior to the event or activity. The faculty member will respond in writing (email) that approval has been granted. A university sanctioned event or activity shall be one in which a student represents the university to external constituencies in academic or extra-curricular activities.
 - o Examples include an authorized presentation of scholarly work at an academic conference, serving as an official representative of the university, or participating in university-sanctioned events. <http://louisville.edu/provost/what-we-do/classroom-policies/classroom-policies.html#excusedabsences>
3. Regarding other anticipated absence requests, not related to University-sanctioned events, must occur in writing at least 30 days prior to the absence. A decision will occur within 7 working days of receiving the request, and the student will be notified via email.
 - o Requests must fulfill one of the following criteria:
 - A medical illness with written documentation supporting the inability to attend required educational activities that accounts for each day missed.
 - An anticipated significant family event that **requires** the student’s attendance. (NOTE: Weddings are generally NOT an excused absence)
 - A family crisis that **requires** the student’s presence.
 - An anticipated religious ceremony or observation that is not an official University holiday (see U of L website for list of work-restricted religious holidays). <http://louisville.edu/diversity/resources/Work-Restricted%20HolyDays2011-2012.doc>
 - Unforeseen documentable extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control.
 - Absence for military service obligations.
4. Students requesting an absence must explain, in writing, the reason for the request (as well as cite one of the above circumstances in the written request). All requests will be centrally tracked by the Office of Medical Student Affairs via email communications between students and responsible faculty/staff. Proof of reason for absence (doctor note, meeting program, etc.) must be turned into the clerkship director / clinical coordinator.

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Responsible faculty/staff will judge all incurred absences or anticipated absence requests for graded learning activities. If an excused absence is granted by the clerkship director, the student is required to work out terms with the clerkship director and/or coordinator for rescheduling, make up, or waiving the missed assignments and points. When flexibility in scheduling within an existing block of time exists to accommodate the student's request (e.g. call night) the decision to reschedule the student (versus consider the missed date an absence and withhold credit) is at the discretion of the affected clerkship director, staff, and related facilities.

Unanticipated Absences

Absences or tardiness for a scheduled academic assignment (shelf exam, mandatory class/student assembly, small group session, SP exam, clinical assignment, etc.) due to a personal illness, or an unanticipated crisis, are to be reported as soon as possible to the responsible faculty or staff member—the course director(s) and coordinator, the site supervisors. **In case of emergency, with limited time for notification, the clinical site should be notified or you can call the Office of Medical Student Affairs at (502) 852-5192 or send a detailed e-mail to medstuaf@louisville.edu).** Any verbal communication must be followed up with written communication from the student to the clerkship director, coordinator, and Office of Medical Student Affairs staff explaining the reason for absence. Students missing more than 48 hours of school due to an illness will be required to have a doctor's statement. Students missing more than 48 hours of school must also notify the Office of Medical Student Affairs so that planning for a possible leave of absence can occur.

Unexcused Absences

Any student who is absent from an academic assignment, and has not been granted an excused absence by responsible faculty/staff, will receive an **unexcused absence**; and the student will receive a **ZERO** for any scheduled academic activity that is missed. The student may still be required to complete the scheduled learning activity (or an alternate learning activity) without receiving a grade, if deemed necessary by the clerkship director to proceed through the remainder of the clerkship. An example might include an important requirement that is required to ensure competent future practice or required to achieve the learning objectives for the clerkship.

Record Keeping

Absences (excused and unexcused) may be recorded on the final clerkship evaluation, which is submitted to the Office of Medical Student Affairs.

Students are required to sign an absence policy to attest to their understanding of the details. Each clerkship may request the students do this before beginning the rotation.