


Name of Policy: <u>College of Medicine and Life Sciences: Excused Absences from Required Academic Activities in the MD Program</u>			
Policy Number: 3364-81-17		Revision date: 3/5/24	
Approving Officer: Dean, College of Medicine and Life Sciences		Original effective date: 8/21/17	
Responsible Agent: Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education			
Scope: Medical students in the pre-clerkship and clinical years, University of Toledo College of Medicine and Life Sciences			
<input type="checkbox"/>	New policy proposal	<input type="checkbox"/>	Minor/technical revision of existing policy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Major revision of existing policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	Reaffirmation of existing policy

(A) Policy statement

This policy addresses expectations and procedures for student attendance and requesting an excused absence.

(B) Purpose of policy

Developing competency within four years of the MD program to practice medicine requires reliable attendance and self-accountability for requesting and tracking the number of excused absences. Professionalism is a competency component of the Educational Program Objectives (see policy [3364-81-04-011-01](#)) and students are expected to adhere to the college’s policy for notification of anticipated and unanticipated absences.

Students are expected to be present for all required attendance sessions in the foundational science and clinical clerkships (see course/system/clerkship schedule). Attendance is required at exams, quizzes, patient presentations, and any other required activities as designated by a system/clerkship director. During the pre-clerkship curriculum, attendance is not required, but highly encouraged for lectures and other in-class sessions.

The administration understands that illnesses and significant extenuating circumstances may prohibit a student from attending one or more required sessions. *Within an academic year, a student is permitted no more than 5 days of excused absences.*

Excused absences will be reviewed, considered, and approved or denied based on the language of this policy by the Department of Medical Education in collaboration with course/system/clerkship directors as appropriate for the reasons described in section D.

Students are responsible for the delivered content of any missed session for any reason whether excused or unexcused.

Failure to follow the policy and appropriate procedures will result in an unexcused absence. In the event of unexcused absence, students will be given a grade of zero on any missed examinations, quizzes, assignments, or in-class learning experiences. In addition, unexcused absences will result in the filing of a Professionalism and Behavior Report and may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or dismissal (see policy 3364-81-04-017-02).

Serious breaches of this policy, patterns of unexcused absences and submitting false information will result in review by the Academic Progress Committee and a Professionalism Behavior Report and referral to the Medical Student Conduct and Ethics Committee.

Note: Excused absences do not include designated University holidays, winter break, or other scheduled breaks designated by the college.

(C) Scope

This policy applies to all students in the MD program at the UT College of Medicine and Life Sciences.

(D) Excused absences

All Requests for an excused absence must be submitted **30 days** prior to the scheduled curriculum event. Under these conditions, an explanation or documentation for the reason of the absence is **not** required.

The following reasons will be considered for an excused absence with **less than 30 days'** notice and require documentation and/or reason for the absence*:

- a. Illness or hospitalization.
- b. Medical or mental health appointment**
- c. Family emergency/crisis (including funeral)
- d. Authorized presentation or service at an academic conference or other professional meeting. (Refer to the travel policy 3364-81-04-015)
- e. Interviewing for residency positions.
- f. Religious accommodations***

* All absences with less than 30 days' notice must be communicated immediately. For unexpected events that lead to absence, students must notify the system director(s) and/or educational coordinator (by email or phone) within 1 hour of the start of scheduled session. Failure to comply with this deadline due to extenuating circumstances will be carefully evaluated on a case-by case basis.

**Recurring health appointments: Students requiring regular or multiple scheduled visits during a system or clerkship that will exceed the 5 days should seek guidance from the Office of Disability Services with final approval coming from the system or clerkship director. Upon

receipt of the accommodation approval, the student must forward the letter to the chair of the Academic Progress Committee.

***** Students must submit** all request for religious accommodations to the Office of the Provost for approval according to University policy ([3364-71-30 Religious accommodations.pdf \(utoledo.edu\)](https://utoledo.edu/3364-71-30-Religious-accommodations.pdf)). The COMLS is not responsible for receiving and approving these requests. If the Office of the Provost approves a request, the COMLS will be notified as appropriate.

M1-M2 students: Absences from **required sessions** in the foundational sciences that exceed the allotted 5 days within one academic year will be subject to a professionalism behavior report from the Chair of the Academic Progress Committee followed by a review by the Medical Student Conduct and Ethics Committee.

Students may take no more than the following number of days off per system.

- i. 2 days for a system that is 5 or fewer weeks.
- ii. 3 days for a system that is 6 or more weeks.

M3-M4 students: may be absent for up to the following number of days per clerkship (not to exceed 5 days in the academic year).

- i. 1 day for a 2-week clinical rotation
- ii. 2 days for 4-week clinical rotations
- iii. 3 days for a clinical rotation that is 6 or more weeks.

Note: If a student will miss more than 1 day of a 2-week elective rotation or 2 days of a 4-week elective rotation for residency interviews, the student must drop the elective rotation and register for flex time.

The above does not apply to Bridge, Intersession, or Advanced Clinical Care. Preplanned excused absences are not available for these courses.

(E) Procedure

An excused absence request form must be completed and submitted by the student (**M1-M4**) to the course/system/clerkship coordinator and director. This form is found on the Office of Student Affairs website, and blackboard for the courses/systems/clerkships.

If a request is submitted more than 30 calendar days from the requested day, no explanation for the request will be required. Absence requests will be approved except in circumstances involving assessments or scheduled events which cannot be reproduced.

If a request is submitted less than 30 days of the scheduled event, the final determination will be made by the system or clerkship director with the option for consultation from the appropriate Associate Dean.

Students are responsible for tracking the number of their accumulated excused absences in any academic year. If approval is received to be absent and the student will exceed 5 absences, the student must send a letter to the chair of the Academic Progress Committee explaining why the absence is necessary. Failure to do so will result in a Professionalism Behavior Report from the chair of the Academic Progress Committee.

If the number of absences exceeds the number allotted for each medical school year, this behavior will result in a Professionalism Behavior Report unless the student has received prior approval from the chair of the academic progress committee (e.g.: for excessive absence for illness or recurrent medical needs). The student will have a mandatory meeting with the Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions.

(F) Make-up activities

Educational activities missed due to an excused absence in most circumstances are required to be made up. The course/system/clerkship director will determine the details of the make-up work. For system/clerkship coursework for which a make-up activity is not an option (e.g., lab sessions, quizzes, intersessions), the student's request for an excused absence can be denied. In all cases, it is the student's responsibility to verify the status of their excused absence request, and to contact the system/course/clerkship director about their make-up policies for excused absences.

M1-M2 Years: When an excused absence has been granted for a written or practical examination, the system director, in conjunction with the system faculty, and the Academic Test Center or the Clinical Skills Center will determine when the make-up examination will be administered.

M3-M4 Years: Once an absence or accommodation has been approved, the clerkship director or coordinator will notify the involved parties, including the faculty and/or residents with whom the student is rotating, and the clerkship/educational coordinator at the assigned clinical site.

The clerkship director will decide if a make-up experience or assignment is required, even when an absence is excused. If the clerkship director decides that a make-up experience is required, the make-up may involve additional clinical hours or an alternative assignment.

If a student needs time for participation in SOAP, they should notify their clerkship director and coordinator. The procedure described above does not apply. An excused absence request form is not necessary.

NOTE: At the discretion of the course/system/clerkship director, students (**M1-M4**) may still be required to complete the scheduled learning activity or alternate activity without receiving a grade if deemed necessary in order to proceed through the remainder of the course.

<p>Approved by:</p> <p>/s/ Christopher Cooper, M.D., College of Medicine and Life Sciences</p> <p><u>March 5, 2024</u> Date</p> <p><i>Review/Revision Completed by:</i></p> <p><i>Assistant/Associate Deans for Medical Education, Office of Student Affairs</i></p>	<p>Policies Superseded by This Policy: 3364-81-04-032-00 3364-81-04-014-03 3364-81-04-014-04 3364-81-04-014-05</p> <p>Initial effective date: 8/21/17</p> <p>Review/Revision Date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 01/03/2020 review• 02/24/2020 revision• 01/20/2023 revision• 06/15/2023 revision• 03/05/2024 revision <p>Next review date: 03/08/27</p>
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