



Medical School Policy

Attendance Requirements & Excused Absences

Senior Leader: Medical School Dean

Responsible University Officer: Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education

Policy Owner: Assistant Dean for Student Affairs - Twin Cities
Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Medical Education - Duluth
Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Medical Education - St. Cloud

Policy Contact: Manager of Student Affairs, Twin Cities

Policy Statement

Medical students are expected to demonstrate professionalism, including through meeting all attendance requirements. The University of Minnesota Medical School (UMMS) strives to provide students and faculty with timely course schedules in advance of the start of the academic year that will specify scheduled activities. Schedules are subject to reasonable change and students are expected to keep themselves informed of changes and to adjust their attendance accordingly.

The UMMS acknowledges there are a variety of legitimate reasons students may need to be absent or miss coursework, and that make-up materials will be designed to allow students to meet the learning objectives for activities missed during approved absences. Approved absences may be granted for the following reasons:

- Religious or holiday observances
- Illness, physical or mental, of the student, student's dependent, or someone for whom the student is a caregiver
- Pregnancy, childbirth, lactation, and/or related medical conditions of the student or student's birthing partner
- Subpoenas, jury duty, and/or mandatory court appearances
- Military service
- Bereavement, including travel related to bereavement
- Personal or family crises
- Needed healthcare appointments
- Residency Interview Days (4th year students) *
- NBME Step 1 and Step 2 Exams
- Reasonable time to travel to and present a poster, platform, or workshop at a conference
- Participation in formal University system governance, including the University Senate, Student Senate, and Board of Regents meetings, by students selected as representatives to those bodies

The UMMS reserves the right to deny any requests for an approved absence if such requests:

- Are submitted with insufficient time for review (described below)
- Do not meet the criteria for an approved absence
- Place an unreasonable burden on the school with regard to make-up opportunities (e.g., lab and clinical skills practicals)

Attendance Requirements & Excused Absences

Students need to meet the goals and objectives of each course. Excessive absences or lateness, even if approved, may have an impact on a student's final performance in a course or clerkship and overall academic standing. This policy articulates the expectations for attendance, the conditions under which students may be absent from a required activity, and the procedures for requesting such absences.

Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of an Approved Absence may submit a request for further review to the Manager of Student Affairs who will process the request; the relevant Dean, in consultation with the Course Director, will make a final determination regarding the status of the Approved Absence request.

*** Residency Interview Days:** "Interview Days Off" must occur only during residency interview season. Any other days off required for interviews are granted at the discretion of the Clerkship Director.

Procedures

I. Foundations Phase Attendance

- If a student does not attend any session of the Foundations Phase, an absence request form must be submitted, whether or not that absence meets the criteria for an excused absence.
- Requests for planned or anticipated excused absences (e.g., upcoming observances, conference travel) must be submitted a minimum of two weeks in advance.
- In cases of unexpected absences (e.g., illness or family crisis), requests for an excused absence must be submitted within three business days of the absence. Extenuating circumstances that delay submission will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The medical school may, at its discretion, verify the reasons cited for any requests.
- Regardless of whether a request is approved or denied, students are responsible for completing any work assigned by their Course Directors, Course Managers, and/or other faculty.
- Course syllabi may contain more information about consequences of absences and students are responsible for complying with these.
- Foundations students whose absence from a required activity is not approved will be responsible for meeting session objectives and preparing for any assessments through appropriate peer consultation or independent study. If points or credit were given during the missed session, the student will not receive those points. Course Directors, Course Managers, or course faculty are not responsible for providing make-up opportunities, supplying materials, or offering alternative methods for meeting session objectives.
- Missed assessments for unapproved absences will result in a failing grade on the assessment.
- Unapproved absences may subject students to academic repercussions, including course failure(s), placement on academic probation, and/or referral to the Peer Review Committee (PRC) or scholastic standing committee (COSSS)

I.a. Procedures for Requesting an Approved Absence

- Requests for an approved absence are submitted to the Office of Student Affairs via an online [Absence Request Form](#). This includes requests to miss/reschedule an assessment (e.g., quizzes, practicals, and examinations)
- Students making a request the same day as a required session or assessment, in addition to submitting the required approved absence request form, must directly notify the Course Director and Course Manager as well as the Assessment Team (med-doa@umn.edu) if there is a summative assessment (quizzes and exams)

Attendance Requirements & Excused Absences

- The appropriate Course Manager and Course Director will be notified for all absences and the final determination of whether the absence was approved or unapproved (health and other private information is not shared; only the outcome of the request)
- Students will receive written notification on the outcome of their request from the Manager of Student Affairs or designee. If approved, and depending on the nature of the missed activity, the student will be directed to:
 - Work with the Course Director and appropriate course personnel to determine alternatives that allow for the make-up of missed work, lab or clinical skills assessments, and meet the session objectives. Course Directors reserve the right to determine the nature of the make-up work and adjust any credits that can be earned from such work
 - Work with the Assessment team for written or online assessments
- In cases of rescheduled assessments, students must reschedule assessments within the 7 subsequent days following the original assessment date. Assessments may not be rescheduled for dates/times before the original posted assessment date/time. Work with the assessment team (med-doa@umn.edu) to schedule as soon as possible, subject to the Assessment Team's availability.
- Students must submit a second, separate request to the Manager of Student Affairs or designee should they need to reschedule a second time. A maximum of two reschedule requests may be permitted and the reason for the second request must also meet the criteria for an approved absence. If approved, the second reschedule request must be completed within the 7 subsequent days following the date of the original reschedule. Work with the assessment team (med-doa@umn.edu) to schedule as soon as possible, subject to the Assessment Team's availability.
- All assessments must be completed within the posted assessment times. Unless a student has received prior approval or has an accommodation on file to do otherwise, students are required to:
 - Start all synchronous assessments at the posted start time
 - Complete all assessments within the posted end times
- Exams and quizzes will only be scored up to the posted submission deadline. Any assessment that is submitted after the posted end time will be graded, however, any points earned after the posted submission deadline will not be granted
- Course Directors and/or Assessment personnel reserve the right to modify or replace assessments as deemed necessary to ensure assessment security
- Students unable to adhere to the outcome of any reschedule requests may be subject to academic repercussions, including course failure(s), placement on academic probation, and/or referral to the Peer Review Committee (PRC) or scholastic standing committee (COSS)

II. Clerkship Attendance

The assumption of responsibility for patient care should be of paramount importance to students during their clinical rotations, required or elective. An essential component of such responsibility is being available when on duty. As such, students are expected to be in full attendance for all scheduled clinical activities, including clerkship orientations and assessments. Students can refer to the UMMS' *Duty Hours, Years 3 and 4* policy, which provides details on clerkship scheduling requirements during rotations (see "*Related Information*"). In addition, students are expected to participate in required instructional sessions and activities in each clerkship.

- Requests for an approved absence should be submitted a minimum of three weeks in advance of the start of the rotation, except in cases of unexpected illness or emergencies

Attendance Requirements & Excused Absences

(e.g., family or personal crises). Requests for approved absences are submitted directly to the Clerkship Director and Clerkship Coordinator

- In cases of unexpected illness or emergencies, the request for an approved absence should be submitted as soon as reasonably possible, preferably prior to the indicated shift. In addition, the student should make every effort to contact all individuals who may be impacted by their absence (e.g., Site Director, Supervisor)
- The medical school may, at its discretion, verify the reasons cited for the request.
- Approved absences during clerkships may be taken up to one full day for every two weeks within a given clerkship (i.e., two days allowed within a four week clerkship)
 - Students in Year 4 who are participating in residency interviews are permitted an *additional* approved one-half day off per week
- Clerkship Directors reserve the right to deny requests for absences that exceed the limit of one full day for every two weeks
- If the Clerkship Director considers a request for an approved absence that exceeds the limit of one full day for every two weeks within a given clerkship, regardless of the reason for the absence, the Clerkship Director must determine whether the student is meeting (or can meet) the minimum standards of knowledge and performance for that clerkship. If the student has not met the minimum standards, or would be unable to do so in the time remaining in the clerkship, the student must make up the time missed in a manner deemed necessary by the Clerkship Director. Note: In these decisions, the students must meet the requirements of the clerkship and must demonstrate the expected levels of responsibility
- Students requesting an approved absence for a Shelf Exam or other clerkship assessment will work with the Clerkship Director to determine the soonest, reasonable date by which the assessment must be taken
- Students who have not completed any approved make-up work, including clerkship assessments, by the scheduled end date of the rotation may receive an “Incomplete” for the clerkship until completing any outstanding requirements, as per the UMMS’ *Medical Student Grading Policy* (see “Related Information”)
- When a student is absent and has neither obtained permission nor called in to explain the absence, that student will be subject to any and all academic repercussions, including, but not limited to, course failure(s), placement on academic probation, and referral to the scholastic standing committee

III. Lateness

- Students are expected to be present at the start of all required Foundations phase sessions, assessments, and clinical activities
- Unexpected latenesses due to poor planning or organization (e.g., oversleeping) will not be considered valid reasons and students arriving late, irrespective of reason, will not be given additional time to complete preclerkship activities or preclerkship assessments
- Students arriving more than 5 minutes after the posted start time to a required Foundations phase activity or assessment has started must follow the procedures outlined below:
 - Submit an Approved Absence Request to the Manager of Student Affairs as soon as is reasonably possible ideally by the conclusion of the session. The Approved Absence Request will be reviewed as per the standard processes outlined under subsection 1.a, above
 -
- If the lateness is not approved as an approved absence, the lateness will be considered an absence, and the policy described herein will apply

Attendance Requirements & Excused Absences

- At the time of late arrival, instructors, Course Directors, and/or Course Managers have sole discretion in determining whether there is sufficient time remaining for late arriving students to satisfactorily complete the objectives of a required preclerkship activity or preclerkship assessment. In cases where it is determined there is not sufficient time, students may be asked to leave. An absence request will need to be submitted and the policy described herein will apply.

IV. Regular Monitoring

The Offices of Student Affairs, in collaboration with the Offices of Assessment & Evaluation, and Curriculum will review approved absences data, at minimum, annually to evaluate the effectiveness of, and compliance with, the approved absence process.

Additional Contacts

Title	Contact	Email
Curriculum Manager, Twin Cities	Elle Fasteland	efastela@umn.edu
Curriculum Manager, Duluth	Steph Appleby	sappleby@d.umn.edu
Manager of Student Affairs - TC	Tommy Van Norman	tvannorm@umn.edu
St. Cloud Manager	Adam Maier	maier144@umn.edu

Definitions

Attendance: Presence (whether in person or virtual) during an entire scheduled activity as noted in the course calendar, or until the student has completed a quiz or examination.

Assessment: Any activity (formative or summative) within a course or clerkship for purposes of assessing performance, knowledge, and/or skills. This includes quizzes, examinations (ie. midterm, final), or practicals.

Related Information

Visit the [Medical Student Policies](#) webpage to review the following related policies:

- Medical Student Grading Policy
- Duty Hours, Year 3 and 4
- Student Assessment Security Policy

LCME Accreditation Relevance

This policy also ensures the UMMS meets LCME Accreditation requirements as follows:

Element 12.4: STUDENT ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE SERVICES. “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.”

History

Attendance Requirements & Excused Absences

Amended: June 2014

Updated for formatting: September, 2019

Revised: March 2021

Approved: Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education, Twin Cities
Associate Dean for Student Life and Academic Affairs, Duluth

Approval Date: May 2021

Amended: October 2021

Reviewed and Approved: Associate Dean, UME, July 2022

Reviewed and Approved: Senior Associate Dean, UME, February 2023

Amended: June 2023

Reviewed and Approved: Senior Associate Dean, UME, March 2025