



**Policy Title:**

Clerkship Absence and Attendance

**Policy Identifier:**

USCSOMC – UME – 1.01

<b>Prepared by:</b> M3/M4 Subcommittee	Creation Date:
<b>Reviewed by:</b> Curriculum Committee	Review Date: 10/15/24
<b>Approved by:</b> MD Program Policy and Procedures Committee	Effective Date: 11/21/24
<b>Category:</b> Undergraduate Medical Education	

**LCME Standards**

- 12.4 – Student Access to Health Care Services
- 12.8 – Student Exposure Policies and Procedures

**Scope**

University of South Carolina School of Medicine Columbia (USC SOMC) medical students and clinical faculty.

**Policy Statement**

Students enrolled in the undergraduate medical education program at USC SOMC are expected to complete all assigned coursework promptly and to attend mandatory classes and clinical activities punctually and for the complete duration. Absences, whether excused or unexcused, do not absolve the student of the responsibility to master the material in missed classes and complete all assigned coursework.

Clerkship directors must excuse absences as required by law (as listed in both the [Undergraduate](#) and [Graduate](#) Academic Bulletins), effects of infectious and/or environmental disease, and disability; they must provide appropriate make-up work, materials, evaluations, or activities for those excused absences. Otherwise, clerkship directors have purview over whether an absence is excused or unexcused and any appropriate make-up work, evaluations or activities if applicable. They may also establish whether lateness or leaving early will count as an absence in their syllabi. The clerkship director has the prerogative to exact a grade penalty for excessive absences and define excessive absences; the definition of excessive absences and any penalty must be clearly specified in the syllabus. Unsatisfactory class attendance may be considered adequate reason for the instructor to refer the student to the Associate Dean for Medical Education and/or the Assistant Dean for Clinical Curriculum and Assessment.

Any student who does not provide appropriate and adequate notification to the clerkship director and/or who does not provide written verification for the absence when requested to do so may forfeit the opportunity to make up missed work, examinations and/or other academic experiences. A request for an excused absence received after the absence has occurred will not be accepted unless it was not possible to present proper advance notification.



## Reason for Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish the expectations for attendance, notification of unavoidable absences, and the reasons for which an absence may be excused.

## Procedures

1. Clerkship directors are expected to provide clear expectations concerning absence requests and any grade penalties for excessive absences in their syllabi. They may also provide expectations for tardiness or leaving early and any penalties for such behavior. When a reason for an absence is not covered by law, the clerkship director shall let the student know whether the requested absence is excused or unexcused.
2. Any student who finds it necessary to be absent from a quiz, examination, or other required academic experience due to an emergency situation, illness, or hospitalization is required to notify the affected clerkship director of the absence prior to the absence or as soon as possible thereafter. Notification should be in the form of a phone call, voice message, or email.
3. When requested, the student will provide written verification of the reason for the absence from the treating physician or other professional to the clerkship director. Written verification from a treating physician or other professional should contain the date/time of the absence including both start and end date/times of the excused absence but should not include details of the reason for the absence to protect the student's privacy.
4. Absences across clerkships are recorded in the Office of Undergraduate Medical Education, and if any one student is noted to have excessive absences, he or she may be required to meet with the Assistant Dean for Clinical Curriculum and Assessment. More than five absences over the course of the M-III year, as well as ANY unreported absence will trigger an in-person meeting with the Assistant Dean for Clinical Curriculum and Assessment. Such cases may be subsequently referred to the Promotions Committee.
5. If a clerkship director does not accept a request to excuse an absence, late attendance, or early departure beyond those required by this policy (whether the excuse request is received before or after the absence has occurred), the student may appeal the decision to the Assistant Dean for Clinical Curriculum and Assessment in writing within five days of notification from the clerkship director. The Assistant Dean shall appoint an *ad hoc* faculty committee consisting of at least three faculty members who are not clerkship directors to review the appeal and confer with both the student and the clerkship director. That committee shall render a final decision on the matter within five working days of the receipt of the written appeal from the student. The decision shall be communicated to the clerkship director, the student, and the Assistant Dean of Pre-clerkship Curriculum in writing.
6. If excused absences from a clerkship are to the extent that the student's ability to continue their medical education has been significantly impaired, medically inadvisable, or impossible, they will be referred to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs to submit a petition for a leave of absence ([USCSOMC – STA – 1.09](#)).
7. Attendance policies specific to the M4 year:



- a. Except for the day prior to the Step 2 examination, students are not allowed to take time off from rotations to prepare for that examination.
- b. All M-IV students are excused from rotations on Match Day.
- c. Students may request no more than 3 days off for interviewing during any required four-week rotation and no more than 5 days off for any elective rotation. This includes absences for USMLE examination, residency interviews, and partial day absences of greater than four hours.
- d. All requests for time off for residency interviews must include notification by the student of the interview location and date, provided to the rotation director.

### **Contacts**

Office of Undergraduate Medical Education  
Office of Student Affairs and Career Advising

### **History**

<b>Date of Change</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>11-21-24</b>	Revised and updated procedures