



Policy Title:

Pre-Clerkship Attendance and Absence

Policy Identifier:

USCSOMC – UME – 1.19

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Category: Undergraduate Medical Education and Student Affairs	

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 teaching 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 activities punctually and for the complete duration of the course/block. 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. Note that M1/M2 students are expected to follow the University of South Carolina Columbia weather-related closings,

Course/block directors must excuse absences that are required by law, (as listed in both the [Undergraduate](#) and [Graduate](#) Academic Bulletins), are the effects of infectious and/or environmental disease, and the disability of the student; they must provide appropriate make-up work, materials, evaluations, or activities for those excused absences. Otherwise, course/block 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 course/block 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 Pre-clerkship Curriculum.

Any student who does not provide appropriate and adequate notification to the course/block 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, for notification of unavoidable absences, and the reasons for which an absence may be excused.

Procedures

1. Course/block 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 course/block 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 course/block 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 from the treating physician or other professional to the course/block director for the excused absence. 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 the details of the reason for the absence to protect the student's privacy.
4. Within a week of the end of each course/block, the director shall provide a list of students who have been absent from any mandatory sessions to the Assistant Dean of Pre-Clerkship Curriculum. If excessive absences are noted, the student will be required to meet with the Associate Dean for Medical Education and/or the Assistant Dean for Pre-clerkship Curriculum. In turn, they may refer the student to either the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or the Academic Review Committee for remediation or potential disciplinary action(s).
5. If a course/block 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 of Pre-clerkship Curriculum in writing within five days of notification from the course/block director. The Assistant Dean shall appoint an *ad hoc* faculty committee consisting of at least three faculty members who are not course/block directors to review the appeal and confer with both the student and the course/block director. That committee shall make a final decision on the matter within five days of the receipt of the written appeal from the student. The decision shall be communicated to the course/block director, the student, and the Assistant Dean of Pre-clerkship Curriculum in writing.
6. If excused absences from a course or block 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 in order to submit a petition for a leave of absence ([*USCSOMC – STA – 1.09 - Leave of Absence, Administrative Leave, and Withdrawal*](#)).

Contacts

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

History

Date of Change	Change
3-4-24	Transferred policy into current template format