UNIVERSITY OF
South Carolina
School of Medicine Greenville

Policy Title

Clerkship and Post-Clerkship Student Attendance

Identifier

USCSOMG – UME– 3.01

Prepared by: Assistant Dean for Clerkship and Post Clerkship Education	
Reviewed by: Clerkship and Post-Clerkship Subcommittee	Reviewed Date:
Approved by: Curriculum Committee	Approved Date:
	Effective Date: 03/01/2027

LCME Standards

12.3 - Student Access to Health Care Services

Scope

University of South Carolina (USC) School of Medicine Greenville students on clinical rotations (including PCAT clerkships), and faculty/staff

Policy Statement

Student attendance and engagement is expected at all times as deemed appropriate by the Clerkship/Course Directors and the supervising faculty. The goal of clinical experiences is to prepare the student for advanced training and requires a commitment to professionalism and the patient that supersedes personal convenience. Educational experiences (e.g. rounds, conferences, clinics, presentations, etc.) are not considered "optional" unless clearly statedas such. Students are expected to minimize absences.

Integrated Practice of Medicine (IPM) III and IV have specific attendance requirements that require in person attendance at all assigned sessions. Refer to the course syllabi for these specific requirements.

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 is excused.

Procedures

- General Expectations
  - Attendance during clinical rotations is mandatory.

- The CourseCoordinator, Course Director, and the Office of Medical Education will track attendance.
- Absence requests must be directed only to the Course Director and Coordinator, not to individual faculty members or residents.
- Students must include the appropriate Course Coordinator in all communications to the Course Director regarding absence requests.
- All requests for absences, regardless of the reason, must be made through the Smartsheet request form using the student's official school email address.
- Each absence request is tied to a specific course. If a student changes their schedule after receiving an approved absence, they must submit a new absence request for the new course.

- Excused Absence Policies
  - The following guidelines outline the maximum number of excused absences allowed before missed days must be made up:
    - 8-week clerkships (Internal Medicine, Psychiatry/Neurology, Surgery): 4 days
    - 6-week clerkships (Obstetrics-Gynecology, Pediatrics, Family Medicine): 3 days
    - 4-week electives, selectives, or required ICU experiences: 2 days
    - 2-week rotations (including Emergency Medicine Clerkship): 1 day
    - Components of courses may require make up work even if the total number of excused absences for the course has not been exceeded. Further guidelines for required make-up work are at the discretion of the Course Director and can be found in each course syllabus.
  - Absences will not be approved, except for extenuating circumstances, during the following times:
    - Acting Internships Emergency Medicine Clerkship final day (due to required presentations)
    - Integrated Practice of Medicine III or IV
    - NBME Shelf exam days
    - Orientation for the year or individual clerkships
    - End of clerkship clinical skills testing days
  - Additional Guidelines
    - Required class-wide class meetings/events and brief one-on-one meetings (with SOMG staff, Career Counselors, Specialty Advisors, or Research Mentors) do not require Smartsheet request form documentation and will not count as absences.
    - In cases of acute illness, a family emergency, inclement weather, or other emergencies, students must:
      - Notify the Course Coordinator and Director as soon as possible
      - Submit a Smartsheet request form as soon as possible
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    - Any excused absence requiring make-up time will be reviewed by the Assistant Dean of Clerkship and Post-Clerkship Education or the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education.

- Flex Day Policies
  - Flex days are designated days that students may take off for any reason, including vacation, personal events, or travel.
  - Flex day allowances:
    - Clerkship Students: 4 days
    - Post-Clerkship Students: 2 days
    - PCAT 1 & 2 (Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatric Clerkships): 2 days
    - PCAT 3 (Emergency Medicine, Surgery, Ob-Gyn, and Psych/Neuro Clerkships): 2 days
    - PCAT 4 (Selectives): 2 days

- Each Flex Day used will be recorded as an excused absence for the course and curriculum phase in which it is taken.
- Residency second looks will not count towards Flex Days.
- Requests for Flex Days must be submitted at least six weeks in advance of the rotation start date to allow for completion of the schedule in a timely manner.
- Half-day requests are allowed, but no smaller units can be taken.
- Additional interview dates must be approved by the Assistant Dean of Clerkship and Post-Clerkship Education or the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education.

- Absences that do not count towards flex days
  - These absences may be excused by the course director / coordinator if they fall within the course's allowable absences:
    - Acute Illness (physician's note required for absences of three or more days)
    - Scheduled healthcare appointments
    - Presentation of original work at regional or national meetings (must include acceptance on request including date you were notified and date of presentation)
    - Serving as an official school representative at a regional or national meeting
    - Attendance at a regional or national meeting as an officer of a national organization
    - Religious holidays
    - Death in the family or immediate family serious illness
    - Make-up exam date as scheduled through the Office of Medical Education
    - Required court appearances
    - Military service obligations
    - Residency Interviews

- Second Look Guidelines
  - Requests should be submitted via the Smartsheet request form as soon as possible after receiving the invitation
  - Absence requests must be submitted at least 24 hours before the second look for approval.
  - A copy of the invitation email must be included in the Smartsheet request form submission.
  - A student is allowed a maximum of two absences for second looks per academic year.
  - Missed days for second looks may need to be made up according to the excused absence portion of this policy.

- Travel guidelines
  - Students must obtain approval from the appropriate Clerkship Director or Coordinator before booking any non-refundable travel, except for second look requests submitted within 48 hours.
  - Time requested should be minimized and should include only necessary travel days.
    - Travel should be booked the evening prior to or morning of an event, with return travel on the final event day or the following morning
    - Booking travel more than two days in advance (resulting in missed clinical time) is not permitted.
    - Excessive travel time will be deducted from a student's Flex Day allowance

- Excessive absence policies
  - Unexcused absences will result in a referral to the Honor and Professionalism Council (HPC) and will be brought to the attention of Assistant Dean of Clerkship and Post-Clerkship Education and the

Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education. This includes any absence not documented in a Smartsheet request form.
    - If a student exceeds the permitted absence limits or noted to have habitual absences, they will need to:
        - Meet with the Assistant Dean of Clerkship and Post-Clerkship Education.
        - Make up missed time or repeat the course
    - A leave of absence may be an option for students needing more time off (see "Leave of Absence and Withdrawal Policy, USCSOMG – ACAF – 4.02").

- Holiday Policy
    - Inpatient Responsibilities:
        - Students on inpatient rotations are expected to participate in patient care activities on all holidays unless using a Flex Day.
    - Outpatient Responsibilities:
        - Students on outpatient rotations follow the holiday schedule of their assigned clinic or practice.
        - These days off will not count towards a student's Flex Day allowance.
    - For the Thanksgiving holiday (inpatient and outpatient):
        - Students receive Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday off.
        - Students on call the Wednesday night before Thanksgiving must complete their shift duties before leaving, unless using Flex Days.

Sanctions

Students that do not follow this policy are referred to the Honor and Professionalism Council (HPC) or Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee (SEPC).

Additional Contacts

Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education
Course Director(s) and Coordinator(s)

Related Information

USC School of Medicine Greenville Student Handbook
USCSOMG – HR – 2.00 – Inclement Weather
USCSOMG – STAF – 5.03 – Honor & Professionalism System
USCSOMG – STAF – 5.01 – Expectation of Personal & Professional Conduct

History

Date of Change	Change
March 2027	Split policy into Clerkship and Post Clerkship Phase. Updated identifier
April 2025	Strengthen language in response to the policy audit.
August 2024	Updated to include expectations for PCAT clerkships and minor clarifications to procedure section.
March 2024	Minor clarifications to the procedures section, formal approval not needed
March 2023	Clarifications made to the procedures section
October 2021	Added role of Director in the approval process, added Formstack request to the procedures, and added make-up exams to the list of excused absences.

April 2019	Editorial changes made due to branding updates and titles; formal approval not required.
July 2018	Policy formalized into standardized template, LCME CQI