



## Policy Title

Clerkship and Post-Clerkship Student Attendance

## Identifier

USCSOMG – ACAF – 1.01

<b>Prepared by:</b> Office for Academic Affairs	
<b>Reviewed by:</b> Curriculum Committee	<b>Review Date:</b> 04/10/2025
<b>Approved by:</b> USCSOMG Policy Committee	<b>Approval Date:</b> 04/21/2025
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## LCME Standards

12.4- 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 stated. Students are expected to minimize absences.

Integrated Practice of Medicine (IPM) III and IV have specific attendance requirements. 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 Clerkship Coordinator, Clerkship Director, and the Office of Medical Education will track attendance.
- Absence requests must be directed only to the Clerkship Director and Coordinator, not to individual faculty members or residents.
- Students must include the appropriate Clerkship Coordinator in all communications to the Clerkship 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
    - Further guidelines for required make-up work are at the discretion of the Clerkship Director and can be found in each clerkship syllabus.
  - Absences will not be approved, except for extenuating circumstances, during the following times:
    - Acting Internships (outside of the allotted time off requirement)
    - 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
    - OSCE 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 Clerkship Coordinator and Director as soon as possible
      - Submit a Smartsheet request form as soon as possible
    - Questions regarding make-up time should be directed to the Assistant Dean of Clerkship and Post-Clerkship Education or the Associate Dean for Medical Education.
    - Any excused absence requiring make-up time will be reviewed by the Assistant Dean of Clerkship and Post-Clerkship 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:
    - M3 Students: 4 days
    - M4 Students: 2 personal days and 5 residency interview days
    - PCAT 1 & 2 (Family Medicine, Surgery, Pediatric Clerkships): 2 days
    - PCAT 3 (Emergency Medicine, Internal Medicine, 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 academic year and clerkship 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 Medical Education.
- Absences that do not count towards flex days
  - These absences may be excused if they fall within the clerkship'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
    - Serving as an official school representative at a regional or national meeting
    - Attendance 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
- Second Look Guidelines
  - Requests should be submitted via a [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 second looks per academic year.
  - Depending on the clerkship's absence policy or at the discretion of the Clerkship/Course coordinator, missed days for second looks may need to be made up.
- 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 absences policies
  - Unexcused absences will result in a referral to the Honor and Professionalism Council (HPC) and brought to the attention of Assistant Dean of Clerkship and Post-Clerkship Education and the Associate Dean for 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, repeat the course, or take a leave of absence.
  - A personal 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 will be referred to the Honor and Professionalism Council (HPC) or Student Evaluation and Promotion Committee (SEPC)

## Additional Contacts

Associate Dean for Medical Education  
Clerkship Director(s) and Coordinator(s)

## Related Information

USC School of Medicine Greenville Student Handbook  
USCSOMG – ACAF – 1.03 – Integrated Practice of Medicine Attendance  
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
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