



Policy Title

Exam Tardiness and Unscheduled Absence

Identifier

USCSOMG – ACAF– 7.08

Prepared by: Office for Academic Affairs	
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LCME Standards

3.5 – Learning Environment/Professionalism

Scope

University of South Carolina (USC) School of Medicine Greenville students, module/clerkship directors, and exam proctors.

Policy Statement

In keeping with the USC School of Medicine Greenville expectation of professionalism, all students are expected to be present and prepared to begin testing at the start of all required summative assessments including multiple-choice summative module exams, lab practicals, NBME exams, ASK quizzes, iRAT/tRAT, OSCEs/OSATs, CBSE, and CPX. This policy provides a standard process for recording tardiness and unscheduled exam absences.

Definitions

Exam Arrival Time

The Exam Arrival Time is the time that all students are notified to arrive at the exam. This time is communicated by the Course Coordinator. The arrival time includes pre-exam preparation: student check-in; seat assignment; and distribution of standard exam materials.

Exam Start Time

The exam start time is the time that formal assessment is scheduled to start and will be communicated by the curriculum coordinator. Given the short duration of ASK quizzes and iRAT/tRAT, students who arrive after the start time will not be permitted to sit for the assessment and will receive a score of 0 for that assessment.

Tardiness

Pre-clerkship students arriving at a multiple-choice summative module exam, after *Exam Start Time* and up to 15 minutes after are considered tardy and can sit for the exam. Clerkship students arriving at a NBME Shelf after *Exam Arrival Time* and up to 15 minutes after are considered tardy and can sit for the exam.

Unscheduled Exam Absence

Pre-clerkship students arriving at a multiple-choice summative module exam more than 15 minutes after the *Exam Start Time* will receive an *Unscheduled Exam Absence* and will be unable to sit for the exam. Pre-

clerkship students arriving at an OSCE or laboratory practical assessment after the *Exam Start Time* will receive an *Unscheduled Exam Absence* and will be unable to sit for the exam. Clerkship and Post-clerkship students arriving after the *Exam Start Time* for an OSCE, OSAT, or Shelf Exam will receive an *Unscheduled Exam Absence* and will be unable to sit for the exam.

Reason for Policy

To provide USC School of Medicine Greenville students, module/course directors, and exam proctors further clarity on institutional expectations of exam timeliness and professionalism, and to maintain an exam environment free of disruption.

Procedures

Pre-clerkship, Clerkship and Post-clerkship Tardiness

The procedures for recording and reporting tardiness for multiple-choice summative module exams for pre-clerkship students and NBME Shelf exams for Clerkship students are as follows:

1. The Chief Exam Proctor (CEP) will complete the [Incident Report Form](#) indicating “Late Arrival” under the *Incident Type* and explain the student’s late arrival and subsequent tardy categorization.
2. Assessment Personnel are responsible for tracking tardiness through the Incident Report Forms.
3. Any student who is recorded as being tardy for two or more exams within the same academic year will be referred to the Honor and Professionalism Council (HPC) for unprofessional behavior.
4. The HPC will determine if a student is responsible for a professionalism violation and recommend sanctions in accordance with protocols outlined in the USC School of Medicine Greenville Honor and Professionalism System policy

Pre-clerkship Unscheduled Exam Absence

If a pre-clerkship student receives an Unscheduled Exam Absence or does not attend the exam without prior approval from the Assistant Dean, the CEP is responsible for the following:

1. Contacting the Manager of Student Affairs, the relevant Module Director(s), the Assistant Dean for Pre-Clerkship Education, and the Manager of Pre-Clerkship Education to report student absence.
2. Completing the [Incident Report Form](#) indicating “Unscheduled Exam Absence” under the *Incident Type* and explaining the student’s late arrival and subsequent absence categorization.
3. Completing the Honor Code & Professionalism Violation Report Form for a professionalism violation.

Clerkship and Post-clerkship Unscheduled Exam Absence

If a clerkship or post-clerkship student receives an Unscheduled Exam Absence or does not attend the exam without prior approval from the Course/Clerkship Director, the CEP is responsible for the following:

1. Contacting the Manager of Student Affairs, the relevant Clerkship/Course Director(s), the Assistant Dean for Clerkship and Post Clerkship Education, and the Manager of Clerkship and Post-Clerkship Education to report student absence.
2. Completing the [Incident Report Form](#) indicating “Unscheduled Exam Absence” under the *Incident Type* and explaining the student’s late arrival and subsequent absence categorization.
3. Completing the Honor Code & Professionalism Violation Report Form for a professionalism violation.

The aforementioned processes do not need to be completed if a student has received prior approval for the absence from the Module/Course Director as stated in the relevant attendance policy

Emergency situations on the day of the exam:

1. Pre-clerkship students must notify the affected module director and course coordinator. Students must fill out the absence form as soon as feasible (within 24 hours). The course coordinator will notify the Assistant Dean for Pre-clerkship Education, Manager of Student Affairs, and Manager of Pre-clerkship Education of the absence by email. Once the absence form is filled out, it is routed to the Assistant Dean for Pre-clerkship Education to determine whether an absence is excused as described in the Attendance policy. Make up exams will be scheduled through the Office for Medical Education.

2. Clerkship and post-clerkship students must notify the affected clerkship/course director and course coordinator. Students must fill out the absence form as soon as feasible (within 24 hours). The course coordinator will notify the Assistant Dean for Clerkship and Post Clerkship Education, Manager of Student Affairs, and Manager of Clerkship and Post Clerkship Education of the absence by email. Once the absence form is filled out, it is routed to the Assistant Dean for Clerkship and Post Clerkship Education to determine whether an absence is excused as described in the Attendance policy. Make up exams will be scheduled through the Office for Medical Education.

Sanctions

Two or more instances of tardiness and/or one unscheduled exam absence throughout their academic experience will result in referral to the [Honor and Professionalism Council](#) and could result in disciplinary action. Council and could result in disciplinary action.

Pre-clerkship students receiving an Unscheduled Exam Absence will not be allowed to make up the exam until the remediation dates stated in the syllabus.

Clerkship and Post-clerkship students receiving an Unscheduled Exam Absence will not be allowed to make up the exam until a time when other proctored exams are occurring and will be scheduled through the Office for Medical Education.

Additional Contacts

Office for Student Affairs

Office for Medical Education

Related Information

[USC School of Medicine Greenville Student Handbook](#)

[USCSOMG – STAF – 5.03 Honor and Professionalism System](#)

USCSOMG – ACAF – 1.00 M1 and M2 Student Attendance

USCSOMG – ACAF – 1.01 M3 and M4 Student Attendance

USCSOMG – ACAF – 1.03 IPM Attendance

History

Date of Change	Change
March 2025	Strengthen language in response to policy audit. Streamlined emergency notification procedures. Changed allowable tardies from three to two within an academic year.
July 2024	Updated to include expectations for ASK quizzes and iRAT/tRAT.
Dec 2021	Clerkship and Post-clerkship students arriving to exams after the Exam Start Time will be considered as an unscheduled exam absence and will not be allowed to sit for the exam. Pre-clerkship students arriving to OSCEs or lab practicals after the Exam Start Time will be considered an unscheduled exam absence and will not be allowed to sit for the exam.
July 2019	Clarified communication, editorial changes made due to branding updates and titles.

Oct 2018	Policy formalized into standardized template, LCME CQI
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