



Policy Title: Year 3 and 4 Attendance and Absence Policy	
Accountable Dean or Director: Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Senior Associate Dean for Curricular Affairs	
Approved By: Executive Oversight Committee (EOC)	
Approval Dates: August 4, 2023 (via email vote)	

RELEVANT LCME STANDARDS:

12.4 Student Access to Health Care Services

POLICY:

Active participation in the medical education program is a critical component of the professional development of a physician. Medical school is a full-time commitment, and it is expected that students prioritize their academic schedule and requirements.

In Year 3 and 4, students are required to attend all course and clerkship experiences including assessments, classroom-based sessions, course/clerkship meetings, and clinical experiences including night, holiday, and weekend duties.

For any absences that occur in the course or clerkship, the course or clerkship directors may offer make-up experiences, if available or possible. If make-up experiences are not possible, then at the discretion of the course or clerkship director, the student may need to reschedule the course or clerkship.

Students must request their planned absences one (1) month in advance. For unplanned absences (see list of approved reasons below), students must submit the request as soon as possible and prior to the start of the session. Students will not be approved for absences that exceed 50% of a course (e.g. for InFocus and Introduction to Internship courses).

Students who have questions or concerns about absences are encouraged to reach out to their course or clerkship director(s) to discuss.

PROCEDURE:

1. **Absence Requests:** To request an absence from a required Year 3 or 4 course or clerkship, students must fill out the [Year 3 and 4 Absence Request form](#). This form will notify the appropriate course or clerkship director(s) and the Office of Student Affairs. It is the student's responsibility to inform their team members (attending, resident, etc.) of their absence; these individuals are not notified via the form. Failure to complete the absence request form within the timeframe as outlined will result in an unexcused absence.

The following will be considered excused absences:

- Sitting for a USMLE Step exam
- Religious holiday observance
- Significant family event (e.g. wedding or religious ceremony)
- Interview for residency/job or scholarly year experience
- Presenting work at a regional, national or international conference (a maximum of three days will be approved)
- Attending a meeting of a national committee (e.g., AMSA, AMA, AAMC) of which student is a member with a leadership role (a maximum of three days will be approved)
- Attending an Executive Oversight Committee (EOC), Promotions Committee, or Mistreatment Committee meeting as a student member
- Jury Duty

Students must use the [Academic Calendar](#) on the Registrar's website when planning any advance travel.

2. For planned time off, the student must notify the course or clerkship director one (1) month in advance of the mandatory session using the Year 3 and 4 Absence Request form. Students who have questions or concerns about the timing of their absence and the request timeline are encouraged to reach out to the clerkship or course director(s) for guidance.
3. For unplanned time off, students must fill out the absence request form as soon as they know and prior to the start of the session. The student must indicate a reason for a last-minute request. Only the following reasons for unplanned time off will be reviewed for approval:
 - Acute illness
 - Urgent medical evaluation
 - Unexpected family/personal emergency* or caregiver obligation

** In the event of an emergent situation where a student cannot access the form, a student may email medstudentabsence@mssm.edu AND their Clerkship/Course Director for an immediate response prior to session start. The student must also fill out the absence form as soon as they are able to document their request.*

4. **NBME Clinical Sciences Subject Examinations (AKA “Shelf Exam”)**: To request to delay sitting for a shelf exam, students must submit the [NBME Postponement Request formstack](#).
5. **Electives**: Students who require an absence from an elective should not use the absence request form. Students should reach out directly to the electives director and coordinator one (1) month prior to their absence. Make-up of any missed activities is at the discretion of the electives director.
6. **Unexcused absences**: Unexcused absences are considered unprofessional behavior, will be recorded, and may have an adverse effect on a student’s course or clerkship grade including failure of the course or clerkship (as described in the Course/Clerkship Information Sheet). Unexcused absences will have the following additional consequences:
 - 1st unexcused absence: student placed into monitored academic status
 - 2nd unexcused absence: student placed into serious academic statusSee the [academic standing](#) policy for more detail.
7. **Monitoring**: Student attendance will be tracked and monitored for all required curricular activities. Requests for absences are reviewed by the relevant course or clerkship director(s) and monitored by the Office of Student Affairs. The Office of Student Affairs reserves the right to request a doctor’s note or other documentation in the event of a pattern of absences or any absences immediately preceding or following a holiday.

RELATED POLICIES:

Academic Standing Policy
Progression Policy
Leave of Absence Policy