



Attendance and Absence Policy

Category:	2-Attendance and Absence
Curriculum Phase:	All Phases
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Summary

This policy establishes guidelines and procedures for attendance and absences for mandatory in-person sessions and clinical activities in the Preclerkship Phase, all clerkship experiences in the Clerkship Phase, and all activities identified for a course in the Transition to Residency Phase.

Related LCME Standard: 12.4 Student Access to Health Care Services

A medical school provides its medical students with timely access to needed diagnostic, preventive, and therapeutic health services at sites in reasonable proximity to the locations of their required educational experiences and has policies and procedures in place that permit students to be excused from these experiences to seek needed care.

Applicability & Scope

This policy applies to medical students across all phases of the curriculum.

Definitions

Preclerkship Phase – This curriculum phase of study is defined as the first 18-months of medical school with focus on the 8 basic sciences core courses, Doctor and Patient/Societies course, and the Clinical Reasoning course, including all Pathways to Health and Medicine curriculum sessions intertwined throughout the core courses.

Clerkship Phase – This curriculum phase of study is defined as the 12-months of 7 core clerkship courses, including Intersessions, Transition to Clerkships, and ambulatory medicine course.

Transition to Residency Phase – This curriculum phase of study is defined as the final 14-months of clinical curriculum, including core sub-internship, electives, surgical subspecialty, emergency medicine/critical care courses, Application of the Basic Sciences to Clinical Medicine course.

Extenuating Personal Circumstances – Extenuating personal circumstances may include, without limitation, significant family or personal events that acutely disrupt the student's ability to attend course or clinical responsibilities.

Policy Statement

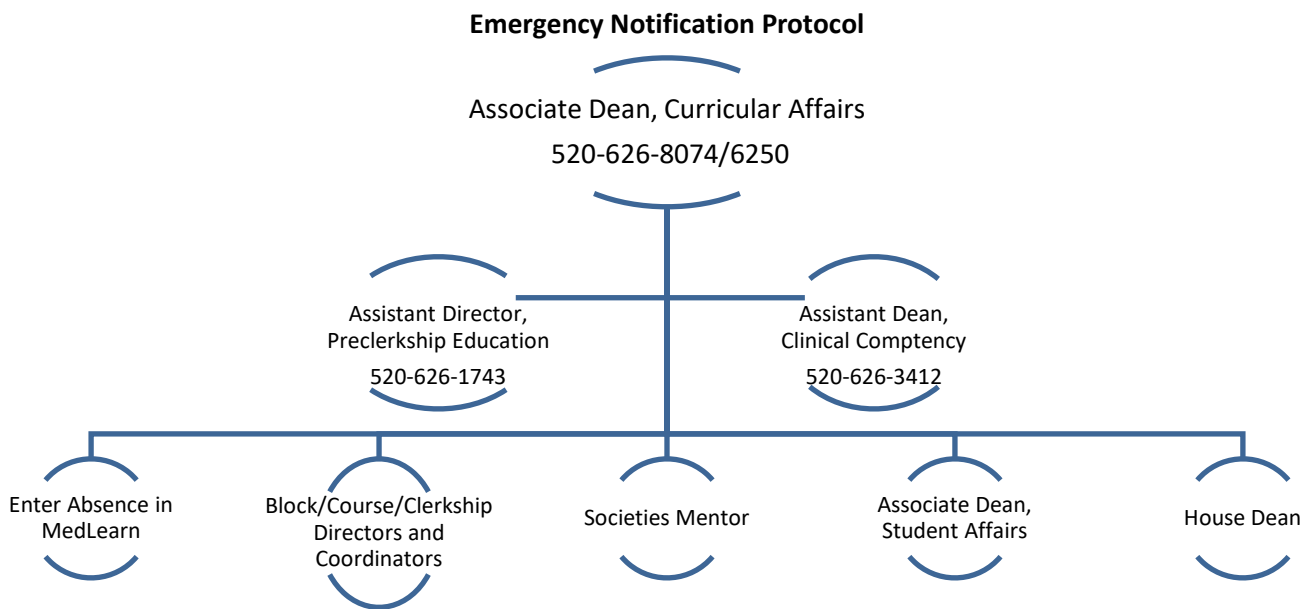
I. Excused Absences in All Phases

A. Absences may be excused for the following reasons:

- 1) **Illness:** An excused absence may be granted in the case of a student's own illness or injury or if they have to care for a sick dependent (including but not limited to children, spouses, domestic partners, elderly parents, or any individual whose care is the responsibility of the student).
 - a) **For Preclerkship:** It is the student's responsibility to submit an absence request via MedLearn before the start of the mandatory in-person session.
 - b) **For Clerkship:** It is the student's responsibility to submit an absence request via MedLearn and to notify the clerkship director and coordinator prior to the start of their clinical shift and/or classroom activity. It is also the student's responsibility to notify their clinical team of their absence prior to the start of their clinical shift. All absences must be logged by the student in MedLearn within 24 hours of occurring or the absence will be considered unexcused.
 - c) **For Transition to Residency:** It is the student's responsibility to ensure that an absence request is submitted to the course director and coordinator in a timely manner.
- 2) **Presentation at a Professional Conference:** An excused absence may be granted for a student to present at a professional conference. Conference attendance alone, without presentation responsibilities, does not meet the requirements for an excused absence. Proof of acceptance to the conference where the student is presenting must be provided.
 - a) **For Clerkships and Transition to Residency:** The number of days excused may not exceed those allowed in the absence policy for each clerkship/course.
- 3) **Leadership Activity:** An excused absence may be granted for a student to represent the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson in a leadership capacity at a professional conference or meeting (for example, as an elected representative of COM-T on an AMSA committee). Conference attendance alone, without leadership responsibilities, does not meet the requirements for an excused absence.
- 4) **Interviews for Residency:** It is expected that students use discretionary days to schedule interviews. An excused absence may be granted when circumstances require the student to attend an interview during a course (e.g., the months of November, December, and January).
- 5) **Religious Observance:** An excused absence may be granted for a student to observe a religious holiday, in accordance with University policy.
- 6) **Jury Duty:** An excused absence may be granted for a student to fulfill this civic responsibility.
- 7) **Bereavement:** An excused absence may be granted for up to three (3) days because of the death of the student's spouse, parent (natural parent, stepparent, adoptive parent), parent-in-law, sibling, child (natural child, adoptive child, foster-child, stepchild), grandparents, grandchildren, brother or sister-in-law, or any other person who is a

member of the student’s household. A student may be granted up to two (2) additional days in order to attend or arrange funeral services out-of-state.

- 8) **Pursuing a Leave of Absence:** If a student requires an excused absence for more than five (5) consecutive days, the student must request a leave of absence as per the [Leave of Absence Policy](#).
- 9) **Extenuating Personal Circumstances:** An excused absence may be granted if a student faces an unforeseen circumstance that is beyond their control.
 - a) **For Preclerkship:** It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that an absence request is submitted to the preclerkship director and coordinator before the start of the mandatory in-person session.
 - b) **For Clerkship:** It is the student’s responsibility to notify the clerkship director and coordinator prior to the start of their clinical shift and/or classroom activity. It is also the student’s responsibility to notify their clinical team of their absence prior to the start of their clinical shift.
 - c) **For Transition to Residency:** It is the student’s responsibility to notify the course director and coordinator. It is also the student’s responsibility to notify their clinical team of their absence prior to the start of their shift.



II. Attendance and Absence in the Preclerkship Phase

Participation in learning activities in the Preclerkship Phase is critical for students to develop into effective physicians. It is important for students to act in a professional manner and demonstrate a commitment to professional responsibilities.

A. Attendance and Absence Requests

- 1) Attendance is mandatory at all exams (course exams, retake exams, course remediation, OSCE, NBME, and other scheduled exams), small-group sessions, sessions in which patients are present, and interprofessional activities.
- 2) An absence request must be submitted via MedLearn for each missed mandatory event.

- a) Refer to the [Procedures for Requesting and Tracking Absences in the Preclerkship Phase](#).
- 3) Attendance will be taken at mandatory sessions. Students must submit the attendance code within the first 5 minutes of the session.
- 4) Attendance code submissions after the 5-minute deadline will be marked as tardy. Tardy students will receive a 5% deduction from their Professionalism grade.
- 5) If a student fails to report their attendance or submits the attendance code 10 minutes after the session has begun, an unexcused absence will be recorded, and 10% will be deducted from the student's Professionalism grade.
- 6) Students who experience technical difficulties when reporting their attendance must communicate with the block coordinator to verify attendance.
- 7) Forging attendance at mandatory events is unethical and an Honor Code violation. Students may only report their own attendance.

B. Excused Absences for Weekly Quiz Review Sessions

- 1) Block directors and coordinators notified of approved excused absences for the Weekly Quiz Review sessions may elect to allow students to watch recordings of these sessions for the educational benefit of students who miss these opportunities.
 - a) Students must make an appointment with a Learning Specialist to review the recording.
 - b) Students who miss the weekly quiz as part of an excused absence will not be able to retake these for a grade or self-directed learning exercise.
 - c) Students are prohibited from recording in any capacity the material they view with their learning specialist.

C. Personal Day Passes

- 1) Students are allowed up to three (3) Personal Day Passes during the Preclerkship Phase to attend to personal business, weddings, reunions, or other events that are not included on the list of recognized excused absences.
- 2) The course director may decline Personal Day Pass requests at their discretion.
- 3) Personal Day Passes may not be taken for the following:
 - a) Course exams
 - b) Retake exams
 - c) Exams for course remediation
 - d) OSCE
 - e) NBME exams
 - f) Other scheduled exams
 - g) Interprofessional activities
- 4) No half-days or hour counts are permitted.
- 5) Personal Day Passes are non-transferrable.
- 6) A specific reason for a Personal Day Pass is not required.
- 7) Approval is not guaranteed but will depend on the nature of the missed sessions and whether the sessions can be remediated, if deemed necessary, by the course director and/or societies mentor.

- 8) After the use of three (3) Personal Day Passes within the Preclerkship Phase, any additional absence that does not meet the criteria for an excused absence will be considered an unexcused absence.

D. Unexcused Absences and Consequences of Unexcused Absences

- 1) Any non-emergency absence that is taken without prior notification or permission of the course director is considered an unexcused absence and will be treated as an act of unprofessional behavior.
- 2) An unexcused absence will result in a score of zero on any graded activity (e.g., the IRAT and GRAT in a Team Learning session).
- 3) Each unexcused absence will result in a 10% deduction from the student's Professionalism grade for the course.

II. Attendance and Absence in the Clerkship Phase

Participation in learning activities in the Clerkship Phase is critical for students to develop into effective physicians. It is important for students to act in a professional manner and demonstrate a commitment to professional responsibilities.

A. Attendance and Absence Requests

- 1) All clerkship experiences are mandatory including NBME Shelf Exams, Transition to Clerkships and Intersessions 1 and 2.
- 2) Any absence must be recorded in MedLearn.
 - a) Refer to the [Procedures for Requesting and Tracking Absences in the Clerkship Phase](#).
- 3) Excused absences will be remediated as deemed appropriate by the clerkship director.
- 4) To demonstrate that a student has remediated an absence, students will be expected to know the information and follow the requirements found in each clerkship manual.
- 5) All absences must be requested a minimum of 30 days prior to the anticipated absence.
- 6) Attendance Sign-In Sheet/Form: Signing-in or submitting an attendance sheet/form for another student is unethical and considered an Honor Code Policy violation. Students may ONLY sign-in/submit attendance sheet/form for themselves and no other student.

B. Personal Day Passes

- 1) Students are allowed up to four (4) Personal Day Passes during the entire Clerkship Phase to attend to personal business, weddings, reunions, or other events that are not included on the list of recognized excused absences.
- 2) Students must submit a request for a Personal Day Pass a minimum of 30 days in advance to the clerkship director/coordinator and the request must be approved by the clerkship director/coordinator.
- 3) Personal Day Passes may be used only **once per clerkship rotation**. They may NOT be taken during the following:
 - a) Orientation
 - b) Last week of a clerkship rotation
 - c) Teaching/didactic days
 - d) OSCE
 - e) NBME exams
 - f) Other scheduled exams

- g) Transition to Clerkships
- h) Intersessions 1 & 2
- 4) No half-day or hour counts are permitted.
- 5) Personal Day Passes are non-transferrable.
- 6) A specific reason for a Personal Day Pass is not required.
- 7) Approval is not guaranteed but will depend on the nature of the missed sessions and whether the sessions can be remediated, if deemed necessary, by the clerkship director.
- 8) Absences may not exceed the maximum number of days allowed in a clerkship (see Procedure for Requesting and Tracking Absences).
- 9) Personal Day Passes are not applicable to the Transition to Residency Phase.
- 10) After the use of a Personal Day Pass during a clerkship, or after use of four (4) Personal Day Passes within the Clerkship Phase, any additional absence that does not meet criteria for an excused absence will be considered an unexcused absence.
- 11) If there are extenuating circumstances, please refer to the policy for excused absences ([Section I. Excused Absences in All Phases](#)). Students are encouraged to talk with their clerkship director regarding any concerns or special situations.

C. Remediation of Excused Absences

- 1) The clerkship directors will create a remediation plan that is specific to the unique requirements of their clerkship and that will apply to students at all sites within that clerkship.
- 2) In the event that: (1) an absence is requested 30 days in advance; and (2) the clerkship director is unable to arrange a remediation plan because of the student's prolonged absence or the clerkship director's inability to recreate the needed clinical or didactic material, the clerkship director may deny approval for the requested absence.
- 3) In the event that: (1) an absence due to illness or unanticipated events (i.e., 30 days advance notice is impossible); and (2) the clerkship director is unable to arrange a remediation plan because of a student's prolonged absence, or the clerkship director is unable to recreate the needed clinical or didactic material, the clerkship director, in consultation with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, may require the student to repeat the entire clerkship

D. Unexcused Absences and Consequences of Unexcused Absences

- 1) Any non-emergency absence that is taken without prior notification or permission of the clerkship director is considered an unexcused absence. This will be treated as an act of unprofessional behavior which will be included in the student's final assessment.
- 2) An unexcused absence from clerkship didactics may be noted in the final assessment and may affect the student's final grade.
- 3) Students who do not appear for a regularly scheduled NBME Shelf Exam because of an unexcused absence will not be allowed to reschedule the exam resulting in a grade of zero for the NBME Shelf Exam grade, which may lead to failure of the clerkship.

E. Holidays

- 1) Clerkship sites will observe the [holiday schedule of the University of Arizona](#).
- 2) A student may request to work on a day designated as a holiday by the University of Arizona. Upon approval by the clerkship director in advance, the holiday day may be substituted for a regular non-holiday work day. Clarify with the clerkship coordinator or

director if it is required to report for weekend service following a holiday at the end of the week.

III. Attendance and Absence in the Transition to Residency Phase

Attendance is required at all activities identified for a course in the Transition to Residency Phase. The student must complete the amount of work in the course that matches the number of credit hours established for the course.

A. Remediation of Excused or Unexcused Absence

- 1) If a student has an excused or unexcused absence, the student must arrange with the course director to complete an equivalent amount of work at an alternative time.

B. Unexcused Absences and Consequences of Unexcused Absences

- 1) Unexcused absence(s) may result in a failure of the course at the discretion of the course director. The criteria for failure due to unexcused absence(s) will be communicated to students and written in course materials.

C. Holidays

- 1) Students participating in courses in the Transition to Residency Phase will observe the holiday schedule of the institution of their course or rotation.

Procedures

I. Procedures for Requesting and Tracking Absences in the Preclerkship Phase

A. Requesting An Absence

- 1) The student must enter all absence requests in MedLearn. This applies to excused absences, unexcused absences, and Personal Day Passes.
- 2) A student who misses any small-group activity for any reason is responsible for notifying the student's facilitator/mentor and small-group members in advance of the absence.
- 3) In the event of long-term, serious medical or personal issues, the student must request a leave of absence as per the [Leave of Absence Policy](#).

B. Tracking Absences

- 1) The Associate Dean for Student Affairs will review the student absence reports, and if a student has a pattern of frequent absences from mandatory sessions, the student will be required to meet with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs to explain the reasons and discuss a plan for improvement in attendance.
- 2) The Associate Dean for Student Affairs shall present the data from student absence reports to the Tucson Curriculum Management Subcommittee (TCMS) on an annual basis so that trends in the data can be noted and discussed.

II. Procedures for Requesting and Tracking Absences in the Clerkship Phase

A. Requesting an Excused Absence

- 1) To request an excused absence, except in cases of personal illness, injury, or emergency, students must send an email to the clerkship director/clerkship coordinator no less than **30 days in advance** of the anticipated absence. The reason for the absence (except for Personal Day Pass) and the date(s) of the absence must be included in the request.

- 2) If a student requests an excused absence due to illness or injury, he/she will contact the clerkship director/clerkship coordinator as soon as possible.
- 3) The student must enter all absences in MedLearn. This applies to excused and unexcused absences (including Personal Day Pass).
- 4) The clerkship director or coordinator will inform the student of his or her decision regarding the request for an excused absence by email.
- 5) In the event of long term, serious medical or personal issues, the student should contact the Associate Dean for Student Affairs to request a leave of absence as per the [Leave of Absence Policy](#).

B. Tracking Absences

- 1) The following indicates the maximum number of absences for clerkships of various lengths:

Length of Course	Maximum Allowed Absences
1 week	.5 days
2 weeks	1 day
3 weeks	1.5 days
4 weeks	2 days
6 weeks	3 days
8 weeks	4 days
12 weeks	6 days

- 2) If the number of absences exceeds the maximum allowed, the student will be required to repeat the clerkship.
- 3) The Associate Dean for Student Affairs will review the student absence reports, and if a student exhibits a pattern of excessive absences, the student will be required to meet with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs to explain the reasons and discuss a plan for improvement in attendance.
- 4) The Associate Dean for Student Affairs shall present the data from student absence reports to the Tucson Clinical Curriculum Subcommittee (TCCS) on an annual basis so that trends in the data can be noted and discussed.

III. Procedures for Requesting and Tracking Absences in the Transition to Residency Phase

A. Requesting an Excused Absence

- 1) To request an excused absence, except in cases of personal illness, injury, or emergency, students must contact the course director no less than 30 days in advance of the anticipated absence. The reason for the absence and the date(s) of the absence must be included in the request.
- 2) The course director must approve an absence. The student should contact the course director in advance of the absence whenever possible.
- 3) Even if a request is made in advance, approval of an absence is not guaranteed. The course director may refuse to excuse an absence in the case where alternative experiences/work cannot be arranged such that the student cannot accomplish the course objectives.

B. Tracking Absences

- 1) The following indicates the maximum number of absences for Transition to Residency courses of various lengths:

Length of Course	Maximum Allowed Absences
1 week	.5 days
2 weeks	1 day
3 weeks	1.5 days
4 weeks	2 days
6 weeks	3 days
8 weeks	4 days
12 weeks	6 days

- 2) If the number of absences exceeds the maximum allowed, the student will be required to repeat the course.

Related Information

Policies

[COM-T Policy 2-102: Leave of Absence Policy](#)

Websites

<http://www.arizona.edu/calendars-events>

Revision History

- 5/8/2024:** The TEPC voted to approve revisions to the policy to clarify excused absences in all phases, attendance and absence requests and personal day passes in the Preclerkship Phase, and procedures for requesting and tracking absences in the Preclerkship Phase; and to integrate the policy on Excused Absences for Weekly Quiz Review Sessions in the Preclerkship Phase into this document.
- 11/29/2023:** The TEPC voted to approve revisions to increase Personal Day Passes during the Clerkship Phase.
- 1/15/2020:** The TEPC voted to approve revisions to the policy, including adding a definition and details for extenuating personal circumstances, emergency notification protocol, and other minor clarifications.
- 5/15/2019:** The Tucson Educational Policy Committee voted to approve revisions to the policy, including adding definitions, increased number of personal day passes in the Preclerkship Phase, details on unexcused absences for NBME Shelf Exams, expanded policy on Transition to Residency Phase, and other minor clarifications.
- 4/17/2019:** Policy revised.
- 6/7/2017:** Policy revised.

7/4/2016: Policy revised.

5/4/2016: Policy revised.

12/14/2011: Policy revised.

9/12/2011: Policy revised.

7/8/2009: Policy adopted.