# ATTENDANCE POLICY: PRECLINICAL EDUCATION

## Key Words

Class attendance; absenteeism

## LCME Standard

N/A

## Summary of Purpose

It is the responsibility of each medical student to view course work at the Geisel School of Medicine as a professional commitment. Failure to attend required classes will be considered evidence of a lack of such professional commitment.

This policy is intended to (1) establish and clarify expectations regarding attendance, promptness, and other aspects of professional student classroom behavior in the preclinical years; (2) provide a fair and consistent process to ensure that absenteeism does not have an adverse impact on learning and the learning environment; and, (3) provide guidelines for tardiness, and scheduled and unscheduled absences.

This policy shall be made explicit to the students by the course directors and will be published in the student handbook.

## Guideline

### SCOPE & APPLICABILITY

Medical students enrolled in Year 1 & 2

### DEFINITIONS

None

### POLICY STATEMENT

Class Attendance and Absenteeism

The expectations for class attendance are as follows:

1. Attendance is required at the following types of sessions in the Geisel curriculum: small-group conferences, hands-on laboratory sessions, interprofessional sessions that bring either health care professionals or health professions students together, and
session with patient participants.

2. Large group sessions may be given “required” status if pre-approved by Year 1 or Year 2 Dean.

3. Extenuating circumstances that might prevent a student from attending a lecture that uses a patient, or cause the student concern, should be discussed with the course director; these sessions are not recorded due to concerns about patient privacy.

4. Unless stated otherwise, attendance is not required at lectures, but is strongly encouraged.

5. There is an expectation that students will arrive at all scheduled class sessions they wish to attend on time, so as not to disturb the class already in progress. If a pattern of tardiness becomes evident, the student will be required to meet with the academic dean of their year. Subsequently, if the behavior persists, the student will be required to meet with the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education.

6. There is an expectation that students will be prepared to start all required assessment activities on time, e.g. quizzes, exams, OSCE, etc.
   a. Students should arrive a few minutes early to get seated comfortably, and have time to store personal belongings at the front of the room.
   b. Students who arrive late will not be given additional time to complete the exam or assessment.
   c. Students who arrive more than 15 minutes late will not be allowed to begin the exam or assessment on that day; subsequently, they will need to meet with the academic dean of their year to explain why they were late and to request the opportunity to take the assessment activity on an alternate date.

7. A medical student absent from a required class without a compelling reason, e.g., personal illness, will be counseled by the appropriate conference leader or course director.

8. After a second unexcused absence, the medical student will be counseled by the academic dean for Year 1 or Year 2.

9. If a pattern of unprofessional behavior becomes evident, e.g., three or more unexcused absences from required sessions, the medical student will be required to meet with the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education, and a letter of concern will be inserted into the student’s academic folder and forwarded to the Committee on Student Performance and Conduct.

Guidelines for Handling Absences
The medical school recognizes that there will be times when a family emergency, serious personal illness, or observance of a religious holiday will preclude a medical student from attending a required class or session. Handling such circumstances is as follows:

   a. The student should contact the appropriate faculty member involved and the course
director to inform him/her of the necessity and reason for the absence.
b. In circumstances where it is not feasible to contact the appropriate faculty member and
course director, the medical student may contact the academic dean of the appropriate year,
who will then notify the appropriate faculty member and course director with information
that the student will not be in class. In such cases, the purpose of this notification is to
facilitate communication between students and faculty, and it should not be construed as
authorization or validation of an absence.
c. In all cases of an excused absence from a required class, the student is responsible for
contacting the appropriate faculty member and course director to discuss making up the
work missed.

RESPONSIBILITY

Office of Medical Education

Contact Information

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Related Information

University Documents:
None.
Other Documents:
None.
Related Links:
None.

Policy Administration

Application: Medical students enrolled in Year 1 & Year 2
Date Created: May 19, 2009

Responsible Office: Office of Medical Education
Date Reviewed: July 21, 2015

Written By: Medical Education Committee
Date Revised: July 21, 2015

Authorized By: Medical Education Committee
Policy Number: