Course Attendance Policy: Preclinical Education

Summary of Purpose

The medical student is responsible to view course work at the Geisel School of Medicine as a professional commitment. Therefore, 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.

Scope and Applicability

Policy applies to medical students enrolled in the preclinical curriculum.

Definitions

None.

Policy Statement

Class Attendance

The expectations for class attendance are as follows:

1. Attendance is required at all sessions that utilize teamwork and peer learning, including inter-professional sessions that bring either health care professionals or health professions students together. These sessions include small-group conferences, team- and case-based learning sessions, laboratory sessions, large-group discussion sessions, sessions with patient participants, etc., as defined by the individual courses.

   Attendance is required at all sessions that utilize teamwork and peer learning. These sessions include small-group conferences, team- and case-based learning sessions, laboratory sessions, large-group discussion sessions and inter-professional sessions that bring either health care professionals or health professions students together.

2. Variations in the policy for individual courses shall be made explicit to the students by course directors.

   Variations in the policy for individual courses shall be made explicit to the students by course directors.
3. Student concerns about attending sessions with patients should be discussed with the course director. These types of learning sessions are not recorded due to concerns about patient privacy.

   Sessions with patient participants are required. Student concerns about attending sessions with patients should be discussed with the course director. These types of learning 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 for Year 1 or Year 2. Subsequently, if the behavior persists, the student will be required to meet with the Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education.

**Absenteeism**

The medical school recognizes that there will be times when a family emergency, serious personal illness, observance of a religious holiday or other event will preclude a medical student from attending a required class or session. Each request to be excused from a required class will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, however the following table provides some general guidelines. These guidelines are not arbitrary, but based on expectations for professionals in the field of medicine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generally Approved</th>
<th>Generally Not Approved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Serious personal illness</td>
<td>• Court appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Family emergency (requiring an urgent home visit)</td>
<td>• Personal days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Death of a close friend or family member</td>
<td>• Non-urgent home visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Delay in arrival back to USA due to Visa or other</td>
<td>• Oversleeping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>related issue beyond the student's control</td>
<td>• Shadowing at DHMC or other institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Presentation at a national meeting</td>
<td>• Attending grand rounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attending a conference as a Geisel representative</td>
<td>• Attending a medical conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e.g. AAMC representative)</td>
<td>• Attending an athletic event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Religious holiday</td>
<td>• Attending a wedding (more than 2 days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attending a wedding (1-2 days)</td>
<td>• Extra time for international travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Geisel-sponsored trips (e.g. Rural Health or Urban</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Scholars, 1-2 days)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. To request an approved absence, the student should contact the appropriate academic dean (Year 1 or Year 2) in advance of the event to discuss the necessity and reason for the absence.

2. Each student may have **up to two approved absences per course**, when approved in advance by the Year 1 or Year 2 Dean. In rare circumstances, at the discretion of the academic dean, students
may be allowed more than two approved absences in a course (e.g. for serious prolonged hospitalization).

3. In all cases of an approved absence from a required class, the student is responsible for contacting the appropriate course director to discuss making up the work that will be missed.

4. A medical student absent from a required class without prior approval or a compelling reason, e.g., personal illness, will be contacted by their academic dean via email to inform them of the documented unapproved absence.

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

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

**Procedure**

None.

**Key Words**

Class attendance; absenteeism.

**LCME Standard**

None.

**Related Information**

**University Documents**

None.

**Other Documents**

None.

**Related Links**

None.
Policy Administration

Policy Number
Authorized By
Approved by
Date Reviewed
Responsible Office
Inform

UME-CURR.PCE-0004
Medical Education Committee
Medical Education Committee
January, 2018
Department of Medical Education: Office of Preclinical Education
Department of Medical Education chair, staff and faculty; Year 1 and 2 associate deans; Year 2 program directors; Year 1 and 2 course directors; Year 1 and 2 medical students

Effective
Written By
Date Approved
Date Revised
Responsible Administrator

July 21, 2015
Year 1 and 2 Deans
July 21, 2015
January, 2018
Director, Preclinical Education

Policy Contact Information

Director, Preclinical Education
Terri L. Eastman
Terri.L.Eastman@Dartmouth.edu
(603) 650-1797

History

May 19, 2009 – Policy originated.
July 16, 2013 – The Medical Education Committee approved revisions made to the policy.
July 21, 2015 – The Medical Education Committee approved revisions made to the policy.
January 16, 2018 – The Medical Education Committee approved revisions made to the policy.

Background

None.