Attendance Policy – Clinical (Years 3 and 4)

Summary of Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish and clarify expectations regarding attendance during clinical rotations and to provide a fair and consistent process to ensure that absenteeism does not have an adverse impact on student learning or patient care.

This policy was prepared with the recognition that Geisel medical students are hard-working, developing professionals with a strong vested interest in their own learning, the clinical teams they work with and the clinical outcomes of their patients. As such, the policy closely approximates the professional expectations of a current practicing physician.

Scope and Applicability

Geisel medical students and clinical course directors.

Policy Statement

Attendance

- Attendance is required for all scheduled activities, clinical and non-clinical, during required and elective clinical rotations. This includes orientations and wrap up activities.

Absenteeism

- The medical school recognizes that there will be times when a family emergency, serious personal illness, residency interview, presentation at a national conference, observance of a religious holiday or other event will preclude a medical student from attending scheduled clinical or non-clinical activities. In these situations, students are expected to give their course directors as much advanced notice as possible so that schedules may be changed and clinics/teams/providers notified to help minimize disruption to learning and patient care.

- Due to the intensity of the learning experiences on clinical rotations, only so much time may be missed without adversely impacting a student’s experience, learning and performance. As such a maximum number of days missed has been set for each rotation duration. Additional missed time, approved or unapproved, will require remediation at the discretion of the course director to ensure optimal learning. It is the student’s responsibility to work with the course director to plan any necessary make-up time.

- In 6 or 8 week clerkships this would be a maximum of 2 days during the clerkship before make-up or
remediation is required.

- In 4 week clerkships this would be a maximum of 1 day before make-up or remediation is required.
- Of note, these are not considered “sick days” that can be taken off without being sick. Students do not have “2 days” to take off at their scheduling; rather these are only to be used if absolutely necessary.
- Absences are discouraged whenever attendance can be possible as creating make-up experiences if often extremely challenging.

It may not be possible to have absences without repercussions. Missing more than the allowed time on any particular rotation without ability to remediate may result in a lower grade, an incomplete grade or a course withdrawal. This threshold is determined by the clerkship directors and clinical education department.

Approval for missed time will not necessarily equate to approval for late assignments, presentations or projects. Approval for the latter must be discussed separately with the course director.

Unapproved absences will require remediation, and in addition, depending on the circumstances, have the potential for being regarded as a breach of professionalism, which could be referred to in grade narratives and could affect a student’s overall grade. In each case, these circumstances will be discussed clearly and directly with the student.

Each request to miss scheduled activities 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. The table below describes the more common events in which absences are considered to be approved or not approved, as well as the necessary make-up time for each specific event. While the guidance contained in this policy covers a large majority of reasons for student absences it is not meant to be all-inclusive.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Approved Absence?</th>
<th>Make Up Time Needed?</th>
<th>6 or 8 week clerkship (in total)</th>
<th>2-4 week rotation (in total)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student illnesses, including infections that could put patients or other staff at risk. This includes urgent medical appointments if it will lead to missing a half day or more.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>If &gt; 2 days missed</td>
<td>If &gt; 1 day missed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serious illness or death of a close family member or close friend</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>If &gt; 2 days missed</td>
<td>If &gt; 1 day missed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth or adoption of a child</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>If &gt; 2 days missed</td>
<td>If &gt; 1 day missed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation at a medical conference or Representation of Geisel at a medical conference</td>
<td>Yes, if notified &gt;2 weeks ahead of the rotation start</td>
<td>If &gt; 2 days missed</td>
<td>If &gt; 1 day missed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious holidays</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>If &gt; 2 days missed</td>
<td>If &gt; 1 day missed</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Procedure

1. Students will notify the course director(s) AND the Associate Dean for Clinical Education via electronic communication of their requests for time off with as much advanced notice as possible. (Ideally this would occur at least 1 month ahead of the rotation start date so that clinical schedules can be appropriately modified.)

2. The appropriate directors and the Associate Dean for Clinical Education will discuss the request and notify the student of the determination.

3. The student will be responsible for contacting the course director to discuss make up work that will be missed.

4. The student will be responsible for notifying their clinical team of their missed time.

5. A student absent from a required activity 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.

6. After a second unapproved absence without prior approval or a compelling reason, the medical student will be counseled by the academic dean.

7. If a pattern of unprofessional behavior becomes evident, e.g., three or more unapproved absences without prior approval or compelling reason 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.

Key Words

Attendance; absenteeism.

LCME Standard

None.
Related Information

University Documents
None.

Other Documents
None.

Related Links
None.

Policy Administration

Policy Number UME-CURR.CE-0003
Effective

Authorized By Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education
Written By John F. Dick, III, MD, Associate Dean for Clinical Education

Approved by Senior Associate Dean for Medical Education
Date Approved N/A

Date Reviewed June 30, 2017
Date Revised N/A

Responsible Office Department of Medical Education – Office of Clinical Education
Responsible Administrator Director, Clinical Curriculum

Inform Clerkship Directors; medical students

Policy Contact Information

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Policy reviewed on June 30, 2017. No revisions were made.

Background

None.