Dartmouth
GEISEL SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Pre-clerkship Attendance Policy

Summary of Purpose

This policy is intended to (1) establish and clarify expectation regarding attendance, (2) provide a consistent process to ensure absenteeism does not have an adverse impact on learning and the learning environment, and (3) provide guidelines for planned and unplanned absences.

Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to all Geisel medical students enrolled in Phase I.

Definitions

None.

Policy Statement

Session Categorization.

1. **Clinical Encounters.**

   The study of medicine requires immersion in clinical activities, acquisition and practice of skills, and interaction with members of health care teams. Accordingly, Geisel has designated specific learning sessions in the Pre-clerkship years as ***Clinical Encounters*** which include:
   - Sessions at which patients are present
   - Sessions labeled as On Doctoring
   - Clinical skills sessions and sessions in the simulation center, in the OSCE rooms, or with simulation exercises
   - Community preceptorships

   There may be rare sessions with invited visitors, such as patient's family members, community members, clergy or others wherein the sessions will also be designated as *Clinical Encounters*.

2. **Small Group Sessions.**

For some content, mastery of the learning objectives cannot be achieved or replicated in large group or self-directed learning, but mastery can be achieved through interactive problem solving and application of course content in facilitated ***Small Group Sessions***.

Examples of ***Small Group Sessions*** include (but are not limited to):

- Interactive Small Group Discussions (<20 learners)
- Problem-based Learning (PBL)
- Anatomy labs
- Small Group Coaching Sessions

Small Group Sessions are *not* intended to include lecture content from facilitators.

3. **Large Group Interactive Sessions.**

For some content, mastery may be best achieved through active learning, interactive problem solving, and/or panel discussions in the large group environment (typically considered to be >20 learners). Unless there are patient privacy concerns, these sessions will be recorded and posted for student viewing, although key elements of the educational experience may not be captured in the recordings. These ***Large Group Interactive Sessions*** include (but are not limited to):

- Team-based Learning (TBL)
- Case-based Learning (CBL)
- Laboratory Session (such as Pathology)
- Peer Teaching/Peer Assisted Learning
- Interactive Patient Presentations, including panel discussions
- Interactive Interprofessional Presentations, including panel discussions

4. **Large Group Teaching Sessions.**

For some content, mastery may be achieved through engagement with a didactic lecture in the setting of ***Large Group Teaching Sessions*** (>20 learners). With few exceptions, these sessions will be recorded and posted for student viewing.

Sessions consisting primarily of didactic lecture are *not* considered interactive (per Geisel's Principles of Pedagogy policy UME-CNTRL-0012), regardless of the inclusion of question/answer periods, in class polling, and/or pre- or post-session quizzes.

Attendance Policy by Session Categorization.

1. **Clinical Encounters.**

Recognizing the educational value, and out of respect for patients and faculty, and for our shared commitment to outstanding patient care, ***attendance is required*** **at any session designated as a *Clinical Encounter*.** In these sessions, it is essential that each student be prepared to engage and contribute to peer learning by acting as integral members of the learning team.

2. **Small Group Sessions.**

   Recognizing the educational value, ***attendance is required*** **at any designated *Small Group Session*.** In these sessions, it is essential that each student be prepared to engage and contribute to peer learning by acting as integral members of the learning team.

3. **Large Group Interactive Sessions.**

   Recognizing the educational value, **attendance <u>may</u> be required at Large Group Interactive Sessions.**

   If the session description submitted to the Pre-clerkship Office states that the session objectives are being achieved through an interactive active-learning pedagogy, and that subsequent asynchronous viewing of the session does not adequately facilitate effective learning or student mastery of objectives, *then attendance at these sessions will be required*.

   The Pre-clerkship Office, the Associate Dean for Pre-clerkship Education, and the Associate Dean for Medical Education may request session content and review the learning modality before making a final designation as required attendance.

   Otherwise, *Large Group Interactive Sessions are defaulted to non-required status.*

4. **Large Group Teaching Sessions.**

   Recognizing the educational value and faculty commitment to learning, Geisel encourages attendance at all sessions. However, as these sessions will usually be recorded, and the session objectives can be achieved through asynchronous viewing and self-directed learning, ***attendance is not required at any Large Group Teaching Session***.

<u>Labeling of Required Sessions</u>.

Sessions of all categories during which attendance is required will be labeled appropriately in OASIS at least 3 months before the start of the block (or start of the course, for longitudinal or mid-block courses). No required sessions will be added after the publication of the block schedule. Any changes to required sessions (such as changing from required to non-required) within the period of three months before the start of a block will be communicated to all students via email.

Mislabeled Sessions.

Geisel is committed is the delivery of high-quality educational sessions that are accurately categorized and labeled. Feedback on the sessions is welcome as always, through Geisel feedback processes. Any sessions that are believed to be miscategorized or mislabeled can be brought to the attention of the Pre-clerkship Office for review.

Categories of Absence.

1. Planned Absences.

Planned absences are those for which a student is aware, usually far in advance, that they will need the time off, including:

- Family and personal events
- Presentation of scholarly work at a conference
- Other anticipated or expected events or experiences

For all planned absences that impact attendance at any *required* session(s), students should be proactive in submitting a Notification of Absence form as soon as they are aware of their commitments.

Notification at least 15 business days in advance of the absence is *encouraged* (in keeping with the professional expectations of the clinical settings, and to allow faculty and staff to anticipate class attendance), and the Office of Student Life will maintain flexibility in the acceptance of pre-absence Notification forms for planned absences. For all planned absences that conflict with a scheduled assessment, advance notification (15 business days) and permission is *required*.

Students will be granted two planned absences of up to 2 consecutive class days each, per curricular block, not to exceed 15 days total across Phase I. Planned absence requests beyond these limits will require the approval of the Associate Dean for Student Life.

2. Religious Holidays.

Geisel supports students, staff, and faculty in observing religious holidays of significance to them. Students who wish to participate in religious observances that conflict with a required activity should submit a Notification of Absence form at the start of each curricular block; these absences will not count towards the limit of planned absences.

To assist with calendar planning and awareness of our diverse religious and spiritual community, Dartmouth College maintains a calendar of holy days and religious observances at https://students.dartmouth.edu/tucker/spiritual-life/about-spiritual-life/holy-day-calendar.

3. Unplanned Absences.

Unplanned absences are those for which a student must miss required sessions, when the absence could not be anticipated in advance, including:

- Illness
- Personal or family emergencies
- Unanticipated healthcare appointments
- Immigration office appointments

In order for an unplanned absence to be considered excused, students should submit a Notification of Absence form for unplanned absences as soon as possible, preferably in advance of the absence. If the absence is not accounted for by a Notification of Absence form within 24 hours of the missed required session, the absence will be defaulted to unexcused.

Patterns of multiple excused absences will be brought to the attention of Student Life to ensure the wellbeing of the student and offer additional resources.

Patterns of multiple absences *could* include:

- Missing two consecutive *required* sessions from a single course
- Missing three consecutive weekdays of required sessions in any courses
- Missing three or more *required* sessions from a single course at any time during the block

Students with unusual life circumstances who may miss an extensive amount of class time must speak with the Associate Dean for Student Life about their circumstance.

4. Unexcused Absences.

Unexcused absences are those for which a student misses (a) required session(s) without submitting a Notification of Absence form within 24 hours after the missed session(s).

Students who demonstrate a pattern (as defined above) of *multiple unexcused absences* will be referred to meet with a trusted mentor of their choosing (e.g., an Associate Dean, an On Doctoring Facilitator, other approved school affiliate) to identify and discuss barriers and to receive support.

Any continuing pattern of multiple unexcused absences following the aforementioned meeting will be brought to the attention of the Associate Deans for Curriculum and Student Life and could lead to review by the Professional Standards and Conduct Board, aligned with Geisel policy. All communication from Geisel to students regarding absence patterns will be through the Office of Student Life, *not* Course Directors. If a student is referred to consult with a school affiliate multiple times as a result of unexcused absences in a specific course, the student will then be required to meet with the course director to evaluate the impact of missing coursework on the student's ability to meet the passing requirements for the course.

Remediation of Absences.

Course Leaders will be notified in advance of Planned Absences, and as soon as possible for Unplanned Absences. In both cases, students will be responsible for contacting course faculty to inquire about any work missed. Some sessions may have required assignments to complete to ensure that the student is able to meet the session learning objectives. Faculty will provide students with make-up work, when appropriate, and with the same expectations as for students who were in attendance. The reason for a student's absence will not be shared with faculty.

In most cases, faculty will *not* assign additional tasks that were not part of the session's original activities. However, in the event of an absence from a session that cannot be repeated and/or the work cannot be replicated (such as OSCEs), the faculty member will work with the students to create an appropriate remediation activity to approximate the original experience and meet the session learning objectives to the best extent possible. Remediation offered to the student will be the same, regardless of the reason of absence.

Tardiness.

There is an expectation that students will arrive at all scheduled class sessions they wish to attend on time, i.e., prior to the start of the session. Students should avoid tardiness, to minimize disruptions of the learning environment.

Additional Issues.

Every attempt has been made to compile a comprehensive policy, but there may be specific absence requests that fall outside of the situations listed above.

Students with questions or absence requests that may fall outside of the aforementioned policies are asked to email the Associate Dean for Student Life, to discuss their concerns. Students who require Accommodations from Geisel, to meet the expectations outlined above, should email the Assistant Dean of Academic Advising and Accessibility to discuss their unique needs.

Procedure

See above.

LCME Standard

None.

Related Information: Documents, Policies, Links, Etc.

None.

Policy Administration

Policy Number	UME-CURR.PCE-0004		
Reviewed By	Office of Pre-clerkship Education and Office of Student Life	**Effective**	July 30, 2021
Approved By	Medical Education Committee	**Last Date Approved**	June 21, 2023

Policy Contact Information

Office of Pre-clerkship Education
Preclinical.Office@Dartmouth.edu

History

Date	History
May 19, 2009	Policy was created.
July 16, 2013	Policy was reviewed and revised. Policy was approved by the Medical Education Committee.
July 21, 2015	Policy was reviewed and revised. Policy was approved by the Medical Education Committee.
January 16, 2018	Policy was reviewed and revised. Policy was approved by the Medical Education Committee.
February 20, 2018	Policy was reviewed and revised. Policy was approved by the Medical Education Committee.
June 18, 2019	Policy was revised to update language to reflect new curriculum nomenclature, added Associate Dean for Preclerkship Education, and aligned language with the Clinical Attendance Policy.
July 16, 2019	Policy was reviewed and revised. Policy was approved by the Medical Education Committee.
June 16, 2020	Policy was reviewed and revised. Policy was approved by the Medical Education Committee.
March 16, 2021	Policy was reviewed and revised. Policy was approved by the Medical Education Committee.
July 30, 2021	Policy was reviewed and revised. Policy was approved by the Medical Education Committee.
June 21, 2023	The policy was extensively revised and approved by the Medical Education Committee. The policy now outlines attendance by session categorizations along with revisions to categories of absences.
April 11, 2025	Updated to new policy template.

August 21, 2026	Revised “15 days” to “15 business days”.

Background

None.