

Policy Name:	Student Attendance
Application/ Scope:	UGME Students (MED I through MED IV)
Approved (Date):	10 December 2013
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Revised (Date):	
Approved By:	Faculty Executive Council

1. PURPOSE

To provide guidance and expectations for attendance including the tracking, recording, reporting and evaluation of the student learner's professionalism.

2. BACKGROUND

Medicine is more than a collection of facts. It is a melding of art, science and humanity. Medicine is also a social profession, in which the physician must constantly be engaged, caring and professional. In order to become the best physician possible, much modeling occurs over the four (4) year curriculum. The University of Manitoba has chosen to maintain a pass/fail system in order to allow students to focus on communication, collaboration, compassion, altruism and professionalism. In order to achieve these goals, the faculty has made a decision that certain sessions will be mandatory, in order to show respect for patients (living, standardized and those who have donated their bodies to science) and faculty time.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 Anticipated Absence – An absence whereby the student has prior knowledge of an event or appointment that is happening in the future that the student wishes to attend.
Examples include:

- Personal. Examples include a student's own marriage, medical appointments, academic advising or counseling, representation at an elite level (provincial, national or international) of sports, arts or other activity.
- Family (relates to immediate family member). Examples include birth of a child, marriage, or illness.
- Professional. Examples include conference attendance, presentation of a paper, receiving of an award, or a national/international organization meeting for which the student is a voting/invited member.
- CaRMS Interviews. The National Interview Period is in January/February, but in some instances, there may be exceptions when attendance for an interview(s) is required during November/December.
- Observance of Religious Holy Days

3.2 Unexpected Absence - An absence that occurs where the student does not have prior knowledge of the event or appointment, which has occurred suddenly without notice. Unexpected absences include but are not limited to, absences due to illness, accident, family emergencies or inclement weather.

3.3 Approved Absence – An Anticipated Absence that has been approved, in advance; or an Unexpected Absence that has been approved, post-absence by the Director, Clerkship

Curriculum, Director, Pre-Clerkship Curriculum, or Clerkship Director of the affected rotation.

- 3.4 Unapproved Absence - An Anticipated Absence or Unexpected Absence that is not approved and may include but not be limited to: over sleeping, forgetting a class, missing a ride, vehicle not starting, failure to make suitable travel arrangements precluding attendance in class, and attending a social event. Missing more than twenty (20) minutes of class also constitutes an Unapproved Absence. A student will also be recorded as absent if they electively switch out of their assigned small group session, as the absence from their original group is deemed unapproved.
- 3.5 Leave of Absence (LOA) - A leave which extends beyond the maximum allowable absence/leave from an individual block/module/rotation that will require the student to defer the full affected block/module/rotation to a later period in their medical education and may involve a delay in graduation.
- 3.6 Mandatory Session – A session which includes one or more of the following elements:
- Patient (or Family) interaction (includes standardized patient);
 - Clinical Skills interaction(s);
 - Anatomy/Gross Lab;
 - Special educational session (would include off-site sessions, IPE sessions, any session which requires special resources or special set-up, guest lecturer, other) or,
 - Small group, interactive teaching session.

Mandatory sessions also include scheduled examinations and/or assessments. The designation of mandatory sessions remains to the discretion of the course director and will be communicated in the respective course outline or syllabus. All lectures, and other large-group sessions, are considered optional except when otherwise specified by the respective Course Leader or Director of Curriculum.

- 3.7 Clinical Clerkship Rotations - A hospital and/or medical based practicing clinic that involves patient care for which students participate for a specified time period during their third and fourth year of undergraduate medical school.
- 3.8 Maximum Allowable Absence/Leave from a Block/Rotation/Module - Time allowed being absent from an individual block/module or rotation, regardless of the reason, without penalty of repeating the block/module/rotation in whole.
- 3.9 Working Day – Any day, other than a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday on which academic business may be conducted. Faculty of Medicine usual workday hours are Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- 3.10 MSPR – Medical Student Performance Report.
- 3.11 OPAL – Online Portal for Advance Learning (OPAL)

4. **POLICY STATEMENTS**

ATTENDANCE

- 4.1 Students are required to attend all sessions designated as mandatory in the respective course outline/syllabus. It is assessed as detrimental to a student's education to miss an excessive number of such sessions.
- 4.2 Sessions designated as Mandatory will have attendance monitored by the assigned instructor and/or supporting staff, at the beginning of each class.
- 4.3 Students are required to be on time for all sessions. Students arriving more than twenty (20) minutes late for a designated mandatory session will be recorded as absent.

- 4.4 A student may, at any time, consult with the Associate Dean, Students for guidance as it relates to absence from a Pre-Clerkship or Clerkship component of the Undergraduate Medical Education program.
- 4.5 Depending on the circumstances, a student may be required to make up missed time due to an absence.
- 4.6 All Unapproved Absences shall be recorded within the student's academic file while within the UGME program.
- 4.7 A student failing to maintain the requisite level of attendance in their respective curricular program will be reported to the Associate Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education. If the reason(s) for the absence(s) is not approved, the student's attendance record will be considered by the appropriate Student Evaluation Committee, and Progress Committee if required, and the student may be deemed to have failed the rotation or block/module as appropriate.
- 4.8 When a group of students expresses an interest in attending a national or regional meeting of a professional society or association, a representative of that group must first notify their respective Pre-Clerkship/Clerkship Director and then the Associate Dean, Students who will subsequently discuss with the Associate Dean, UGME. The individual students who wish to attend must adhere to the following general guidelines:
- Ordinarily, only elected officers, students seeking or holding leadership positions in the organization hosting the conference or presenters may receive an Approved Absence in order to attend a conference.
 - An Approved Absence to attend a scientific conference or meeting for the purposes of presentation of a paper is usually limited to the day of the presentation and one day prior to and after the presentation date for travel.
 - The decision respecting an Approved Absence for scheduled conferences rests with the course/clerkship director and the Associate Dean, Students and is based on the student's academic record to date, attendance record to date, and the course/clerkship director's estimation of the importance of the specific course session(s) that would be missed.
- 4.9 All students will be required to acknowledge their understanding of the Policy on Student Attendance, at the annual orientation period where student signatures will be obtained immediately after the review of this policy. Students will not be allowed to participate in classes, preclinical laboratories, or clinics until they have acknowledged their understanding in writing.

APPEAL

- 4.10 A student disagreeing with a decision related to the interpretation or execution of the attendance policy has the right to appeal, in writing, to the Director, Pre-Clerkship, Director, Clerkship and/or Associate Dean, UGME as appropriate.
- 4.11 Should the student not accept the final decision of an appeal, students have the right of appeal to the Undergraduate Medical Education Student Appeals Committee.

5. **POLICY STATEMENTS - PRE-CLERKSHIP SPECIFICS**

- 5.1 During Pre-Clerkship, students are encouraged to be present for all classes. Where necessary, travel arrangements should not be made that conflict with the academic schedule. Attendance recording and the tracking of unapproved absences will only be conducted on curricular sessions designated as "Mandatory".

- 5.2 Absences from mandatory course activities will be reported to the Associate Dean, UGME on a monthly basis. If a final exam is missed because of an unreported absence, the student may be assigned a failing grade for the course necessitating a period of remediation.
- 5.3 After receiving notice from a Course Leader that an absence meets the criteria for an Approved Absence, the student is required to report the absence to the following (in this general order depending on the circumstance):
- The Tutor/Preceptor or Site Director
 - The Administrator, Pre-Clerkship (for absences of more than one day)
 - The Director Pre-Clerkship (for absences of more than one day)
 - The Associate Dean, UGME Office (for absences of more than two days)
- 5.4 Failure to receive an Approved Absence from any required course or Pre-Clerkship session will be considered as an Unapproved Absence. Students accumulating greater than **five (5)** Unapproved Absences per block/module will be subject to review by the Office of Associate Dean, UGME with the expressed intention of discussing their performance, professionalism, and continued commitment to the MD program.
- 5.5 A student with **five (5)** or more Unapproved absences in any two blocks/modules shall be referred to the Associate Dean, Professionalism and the Associate Dean, Student Affairs such that a remediation program can be identified at the earliest opportunity.
- 5.6 A student with **five (5)** or more Unapproved absences in three or more blocks/modules shall have a notation made in their Medical Student Performance Record (MSPR) regardless of remediation undertaken or progress made.

6. **POLICY STATEMENTS - CLERKSHIP SPECIFICS**

- 6.1 No tolerance exists for Unapproved Absences during clinical clerkships and clinical electives. Failure to obtain an Approved Absence from any required clerkship session, didactic or clinical, will be considered as an Unapproved Absence and thereby constitute a failure of professional responsibility which would be subject to review.
- 6.2 Students must contact the Clinical Care Team, the Clerkship Director and, if during a clinical rotation, the respective Rotation Director to discuss any potential Anticipated Absences. This must, where possible, be conducted at least six (6) weeks prior to the Anticipated Absence. The respective course/clerkship director and the rotation director, when applicable, will determine if it is an Approved Absence and whether the amount of work missed can be made up during the course/clerkship or must be completed by repeating the course/clerkship.
- 6.3 Students who miss curricular time during this period as a result of an absence will be required to make up the work/learning. In any instance, a clerk may not be absent for any more than twenty-five percent (25%) of an individual clerkship rotation regardless of the reason, without penalty of repeating the rotation in whole.
- 6.4 A student with a scheduled appointment for preventive, diagnostic, therapeutic health services or academic support must have verbal approval from the preceptor of the affected rotation with follow-up written communication to the preceptor, copied to the affected Rotation Director.
- 6.5 A student with recurring scheduled appointments must submit a request for leave in accordance with the Leave of Absence policy and include supporting documentation.
- 6.6 A student who has been approved for a leave will be expected, in conjunction with the rotation affected by the leave, to make alternative arrangements to complete any

necessary requirements for the rotation that were missed during the leave as determined by the rotation Clerkship Director.

- 6.7 A student is not permitted to make-up missed time during another subsequent clerkship rotation and not usually during scheduled vacation time.
- 6.8 A student who has been approved for an Approved Absence is responsible for making alternate arrangements for examinations and/or on-call shifts that may be affected within the rotation.
- 6.9 After receiving notice from a course/clerkship director that an absence meets the criteria for an Approved Absence, the student is responsible to ensure that the Approved Absence is communicated a minimum of one (1) week in advance to the following (in this general order depending on the circumstance):
- The Rotation Director
 - The relevant clinical care team (for clerkships and clinical electives)
 - The Clerkship Director (for absences of more than one day)
 - The Clerkship Administrator, UGME (for absences of more than one day)

CLERKSHIP - UNEXPECTED ABSENCES

- 6.10 A student with an Unexpected Absence from a clinical rotation must follow-up in a timely manner with designated staff within the rotation, UGME Office and/or Student Affairs Office in order to apply to have the absence considered as Approved.
- 6.11 Clinical rotation personnel are responsible for following up immediately with students who have not reported for clinical duties within one (1) hour. If Clinical rotation personnel are not successful, they shall contact the Administrator, Clerkship or Student Affairs as soon as practicable.
- 6.12 Unexpected Absences exceeding two days within a six-week clerkship rotation or in excess of six days throughout the clerkship program shall be reported to the Director, Clerkship Curriculum, Associate Dean, Students, and Associate Dean, UGME.

7. **PROCEDURES**

STUDENTS - GENERAL

- 7.1 Students must request approval for absences in writing/email from the respective course/clerkship director(s). Approval will be granted only for those students who are performing well academically and who have an exemplary attendance record. If approval is granted, students are responsible to ensure that relevant faculty including tutors, attending physicians, and preceptors are informed of the planned absence.
- 7.2 Arrangements to cover any missed course work must be made with the respective course/clerkship director as required. In the event that the educational content in a core course/clerkship cannot be made up prior to the course end-date, the student will receive a grade of incomplete until the coursework is completed. Respective course/clerkship directors will determine the amount of material to be remediated or the requirement to repeat the course/Clerkship as required.
- 7.3 A student must make certain he/she has financial resources for all anticipated conference and travel expenses before committing to any travel. Only after obtaining permission may students make arrangements for their absence (purchase tickets, secure accommodations, pay conference registration fees, etc.). No student should make any purchases until he/she has received permission from the parties listed above to miss class to attend the conference.

- 7.4 When a student must miss a small group session, the student shall complete an absence form, accessible at the Dean's Office Reception. Completed forms shall be returned to the Deans Office receptionist.
- 7.5 For sessions, which involve patients or standardized patients, any student who will not be present must, in advance of the session, telephone the appropriate department program assistant listed in the OPAL session details to inform the department assistant of the absence. Students who develop an illness on the morning of a session should call as early as possible and leave a message on the departmental answering machine such that as much notice as possible is given to allow for cancellation of the patient, standardized patient or instructor as necessary.
- 7.6 Since attendance will also be taken by instructors of small group sessions, students must remain within the group to which they are assigned. Students changing groups will be marked as absent.

PRE-CLERKSHIP

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- 7.7 For a scheduled appointment, seek approval from the session instructor/tutorial leader. Follow up with written communication to the preceptor, copied to the affected rotation Director.
- 7.8 For recurring scheduled appointments, submit a written request for leave including supporting documentation as soon as feasibly possible to the UGME Pre-Clerkship Administrator.
- 7.9 For anticipated absences, submit a written request for leave including supporting documentation at least two (2) weeks prior to the start date of the requested leave to the UGME Pre-Clerkship Administrator.
- 7.10 Ensure all written requests include all of the relevant information required to make an informed decision. Failure to provide a clear and cogent reasoning will result in delays in having requests approved.
- 7.11 Appeal in writing within two (2) working days of receiving an unfavorable decision to the Director, Pre-Clerkship Curriculum.

CLINICAL SKILLS, PROBLEM SOLVING, ANATOMY, LABORATORY MEDICINE, MINI HOSPITAL SESSIONS

- 7.12 Each department shall provide each tutor/instructor with a list of students in specific groups.
- 7.13 Each tutor/instructor shall take attendance at each session.
- 7.14 Each tutor/instructor shall complete an attendance sheet and return it to their respective department or enter the attendance within OPAL. For attendance sheets returned to Departments, Departmental Coordinators are responsible for entering attendance data into OPAL.

LARGE GROUP SESSIONS / INTER-PROFESSIONAL SESSIONS

- 7.15 When required, members of the UGME Administration Team will take attendance prior to the start of each session.

CLERKSHIP**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 7.16 For a scheduled appointment, seek verbal approval from the preceptor of the affected rotation. Follow up with written communication to the preceptor, copied to the affected rotation Director.
- 7.17 For reoccurring scheduled appointments, submit a written request for leave including supporting documentation as soon as feasibly possible to the UGME Clerkship Administrator.
- 7.18 For anticipated absences, submit a written request for leave including supporting documentation at least six (6) weeks prior to the start date of the requested leave to the UGME Clerkship Administrator.
- 7.19 Ensure all written requests include all of the relevant information required to make an informed decision. Failure to provide a clear and cogent reasoning will result in delays in having requests approved.
- 7.20 Appeal in writing within two (2) working days of receiving an unfavorable decision to the Director, Clerkship Curriculum.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF UGME PRE-CLERKSHIP/CLERKSHIP ADMINISTRATORS

- 7.21 Record each request for leave upon receipt and record in respective tracking database.
- 7.22 Review each request for leave for completeness and inform the student if additional information or clarity is required.
- 7.23 Advise the Director, Pre-Clerkship/Clerkship Curriculum as appropriate of the student's request, including the total number of days absent for which the student has already received approval.
- 7.24 Inform the affected department/rotation if the Director, Clerkship Curriculum approves the student's request for absence to determine if the department can accommodate the approved request.
- 7.25 Notify the student by email of the decision(s) and record the outcome on tracking database. Ensure that affected Department/Rotation administrator is informed.
- 7.26 Submit appeal documentation as required to the Director, Pre-Clerkship/Clerkship Curriculum, as appropriate, for review.
- 7.27 File all written requests for leave from a Clerkship Rotation forms whether approved or denied, in the student's academic file.

REPORTING/ANALYSIS OF ATTENDANCE

- 7.28 In instances where students are identified as reaching the maximum number of inexcusable absences per block/module, a formal letter will be drafted outlining the student's status. This letter will be signed by the Associate Dean and emailed to the student in addition to a copy being placed within the student's evaluation file.
- 7.29 For students who exceed the maximum number of inexcusable absences per block/module/rotation, a formal letter notifying the student that they are in contravention of the attendance policy along with establishing an appointment with the Associate Dean, UGME, or designate to discuss this issue will be issued. This letter will be signed by the Associate Dean and emailed to the student in addition to a copy being placed within the student's evaluation file.

- 7.30 Where required, a letter of referral to the Associate Dean Professionalism and/or the Assistant Dean, Students for each student who has reached the maximum number of inexcusable absences in any two blocks/modules will be drafted. This letter, signed by the Associate Dean, UGME will be emailed to the student with a copy placed in the student's evaluation file.
- 7.31 A letter of notification will be dispatched by the Associate Dean UGME, for each student who has exceeded the maximal number of inexcusable absences in three or more blocks/modules. This letter will inform the student that the attendance issue has been noted in their Medical Student Performance Record (MSPR). This letter will be emailed to the student and a copy sent to the appropriate Administrator, Evaluations. A copy will also be placed in the student's evaluation file.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF DIRECTORS, PRE-CLERKSHIP/CLERKSHIP CURRICULUM:

- 7.32 Review and approve or deny the student's request for absence based on submitted information within one week of receiving the request.
- 7.33 Review each appeal and issue a final decision within two (2) working days of receiving the student's request appealing the initial decision.
- 7.34 Submit a copy of the decision to the UGME Pre-Clerkship/Clerkship Administrator and the Pre-Clerkship/Clerkship Director of the affected rotation.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEPARTMENT/ROTATION PRE-CLERKSHIP/CLERKSHIP DIRECTOR:

- 7.35 Inform the appropriate UGME Administrator of the rotation's ability to accommodate each approved request.

8. **POLICY CONTACT**

Administrator, Pre-Clerkship/Clerkship