

USA COM ATTENDANCE POLICY



Students in the USA College of Medicine are encouraged to realize that as future young professionals, they have an obligation to the fellow members of their cohort class, their instructors, their clinical teams and patients to be in attendance for all activities that the COM outlines as necessary to meet curricular and clinical objectives for learning. In some cases, the student is expected to assume some respects of a role of a physician, and in so doing to recognize the needs of patients and the need of the service for coverage, regardless of weekends and holidays.

I. PRECLINICAL COURSES

Although lecture attendance is not required unless otherwise specified by the module director, regular attendance at lectures is strongly encouraged and expected.

Attendance is required for all of the following: in-class sessions which are team-based which includes team-based learning (TBL) sessions, Flip Class sessions, instructional sessions or assessments conducted in the gross anatomy laboratory which includes ultrasound sessions, team-based laboratory instructional sessions, other team-based type instructional sessions, Clinical skills sessions, and assigned CLINIC days.

A. ABSENCES

Absences will be excused in the following circumstances: serious illness, family illness, birth of a child, jury duty, presentations at professional meetings, and personal emergencies. The student must notify the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or designee and the module director with as much advance notice as possible for the absence. In the case of illness, the student will be required to present a provider's excuse if absence due to the illness lasts more than 24 hours.

Makeup quizzes for active learning exercises, including simulations, are not given. Likewise, Review and Assessment quizzes cannot be made up, but a student may arrange with the module director to review the questions after the regularly scheduled quiz time. Independent learning assessments (ILAs) have a deadline of the next biweekly exam start time. If the assessment is not submitted by the deadline, the student will be non-compliant and given a U (unsatisfactory) on mid-and/or final module reports. A module director may specify a shorter deadline for a specific ILA so the schedule should be read carefully. Missed quizzes for excused absences will not be counted toward the student's grade.

Absences will be tracked over the course of the M1 and M2 years. Noted patterns of absences, either excused or unexcused, (should we have a number), or failure to notify both the module director and the Associate Dean for Student Affairs as outlined above in the request for excused absence status, are considered lapses in professionalism and could result in the student receiving a Physician Early Concern (PEC) note, being counseled or being referred to the Student Promotions and Evaluation Committee.

B. VACATION

Students receive the holidays posted in the College of Medicine Academic Calendar.

II. M3 CLINICAL ROTATIONS: Attendance is required for all clinical experiences (inpatient and outpatient) during the M3 clinical rotations. Therefore, all absences must be excused in advance, and at the discretion of the clerkship director, all excused absences may necessitate make up time in order to meet the objectives of the clerkship. Make-up assignments could include making up clinical time during evening shifts and/or on weekends for clerkships and must be completed prior to the end date for the clerkship. Unexcused absences are viewed as a lack of professionalism and will be reported through the Physicianship Early Concern note mechanism.

A. ABSENCES

ABSENCES: Excused absences will be granted in the following circumstances: serious illness, family illness, birth of a child, jury duty, presentations at professional meetings, and personal emergencies. In the case of illness, the student will be required to present a provider's excuse if absence due to the illness lasts more than 24 hours. In the case of an absence, the student should notify the clerkship director, clerkship coordinator, and the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or designee, in a timely fashion and with advance notice when possible. For certain clerkships, clinical assignments for students are made four (4) weeks in advance of the start date. For these clerkships, students are notified by the clerkship coordinator to submit requested dates. Once the schedules for these clerkships are prepared, changes cannot usually be accommodated, and any time off will necessitate the use of a life event day in order to be excused. To summarize, all time missed during the clerkship year, regardless of being excused, will warrant a meeting between the clerkship director and the student to plan for make-up activities.

PROFESSIONAL MEETING TIME: Students are encouraged to participate in research endeavors and to submit their work to scientific meetings. If a student is invited to present their unique scientific work at a meeting, the student is excused from the clerkship for three days. In this scenario, two of these three days will require make up time. A student cannot attend two meetings during the same clerkship.

Making up credit for individual student assessments (including shelf exams) missed due to an excused absence will be done in collaboration with the clerkship director and if necessary the staff in the Division of Medical Education. All absences will be tracked over the M3 year, inclusive of all clerkships. Multiple absences over a given academic year or over a given clerkship which impact the student's ability to meet the curricular objectives or failure to work through the outlined channels in requesting approval, are behaviors which suggest a student's lapse in professionalism and may be documented by a Physicianship Early Concern (PEC) note. Should a student continue to accrue absences, a second PEC note will be issued and the student will be referred to the Student Promotion and Evaluation Committee.

B. VACATION

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III. M4 CLINICAL ROTATIONS

Holidays and vacation

All blocks begin on Monday and end on Friday. Time off for M4s during holidays is at the discretion of the supervisor/course director of the course, or may be delegated to the responsible Resident on the service. For fourth year senior students, "official university holidays" such as July 4, Thanksgiving, New Year's Day, Mardi Gras Day are given at the discretion of each course director. The student must communicate with the director before the holiday and adhere to his/her requests. The student is expected to assume in many respects the role of a physician, and in so doing to recognize the needs of patients and the need of the service for coverage, regardless of weekends and holidays. Senior students can assign vacation time to any block date of their choice, keeping in mind that vacation should be used during interview season.

Time Off

M4 medical students are allowed to miss a total of five (5) days off during a four (4) week rotation in order to interview for residency or if time is needed to take Step 2 CK. The five (5) days off cannot be taken during an AI (Acting Internship) rotation. The five (5) days off cannot be taken all in a row causing the student to miss an entire week unless this has previously been approved by the course director. Students must request the time off by contacting the Course Director with as much advance notice as possible. The course director may require make-up work for the time missed or suggest, in consultation with the Associate Deans for Medical Education and Student Affairs, that the student drop the rotation and place vacation in the block instead.

Credit cannot be awarded to a student who exceeds five (5) days off in any given M4 rotation which last four (4) weeks. In order for a student to receive credit for the M4 rotation, at least 75% of the clinical activities must be satisfactorily performed with the course director's approval. As with all other M4 absences, these absences must be approved by the course director prior to the absence. Make-up assignments if necessary are at the discretion of the course director. Including the acting internship rotations, each M4 student should have at least an average of one day in seven free from all required clinical duties over the four (4) week rotation. In the event of urgency, if the M4 student needs to exceed the time off for any given M4 rotation, the student must contact the Associate Dean of Student Affairs prior to the beginning of that rotation with sufficient time for a plan to be implanted with the Course Director. If a plan cannot be implemented with the Course Director to ensure that the curricular objectives of the course will be satisfactorily met, a vacation block may need to be placed in the schedule as an alternative

IV. APPOINTMENTS FOR MAINTAINING STUDENT HEALTH AND WELL BEING

The USA College of Medicine recognizes and supports the critical need for students to maintain their individual health and wellbeing. To that end, during the M1 – M4 years, students will be granted excused absences to attend necessary physical and mental health appointments. Such appointments include those to address preventive health care, acute illnesses, chronic illnesses, physical therapy, and counseling/psychological services. Students who are parents are excused to attend their children's appointments that fall under these categories as well. With the approval of the module, clerkship or course director and the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, a student may attend the appointment of a family member for which they are considered the caregiver.

The following steps apply in this circumstance:

1. Every effort should be made to schedule appointments during less active days and time periods for the module or clerkship.
2. As much advance notice as possible should be provided by the student to the appropriate supervisory individuals (module director or, director,) regarding the date/time of the appointment and what time the student anticipates leaving and returning.
3. Documentation of the appointment by the provider should be able to be provided if necessary to the module director or clerkship/site director. (NOTE: Personal information regarding the nature of the appointment is not necessary. The only documentation required is the date/time of the appointment and that the student was in attendance)
4. Make-up activities will be assigned at the discretion of the module, clerkship, or course director.

V. TRAVEL

Pending availability of funds and advance approval of the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or designee, the College or other organizations will support travel for students in good standing as follows:

A. AAMC Organization of Student Representatives (OSR)

1. Sophomore Member: The sophomore may attend the regional spring meeting after finishing his/her sophomore year. The previous fall meeting may be attended when financially feasible and approved by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or designee.
2. Junior Member: The junior member may attend both the fall national and spring regional meetings.
3. Senior Member: The senior member may attend the fall national meeting, the last time to serve as a voting member. If he/she holds a national or regional elected office, the senior should plan to attend both the fall and spring meetings. The spring regional meeting may be attended when financially feasible and approved by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or designee.

B. AMA

Medical Student Section Travel and expenses for one or two students to attend each of two meetings (annual meeting in June and interim meeting in December) will be paid by the College

(1/2 of total) and the Medical Association of the State of Alabama (1/2 of total) provided the student(s) is presenting or is on the program in some capacity. The student will be excused for one day of travel to the meeting, attendance at the meeting on the day of presentation or scheduled participation, and one day for return travel.

C. Students with Presentations at Professional Meetings within the continental United States

1. If a student has submitted academic work to a Professional Society which has been accepted for presentation, the student may request time off and assistance with funding from the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. Note: The submitted work must have been started or completed after the Student's date of matriculation at the USA COM in order to ask for funding. Requests for funding for work performed at another institution or to be presented at meetings or publication after graduation will not be considered. Requests for time off to attend professional meetings where academic work will be presented which was performed at another institution will be considered.
2. The student will be excused for one day of travel to the meeting, attendance at the meeting on the day of presentation or scheduled participation, and one day for return travel. If the location of the meeting necessitates more than the three allotted days, the student may need to use a life event day(s).
3. The student must approach the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, module director, clerkship director, and/or course director for approval and provide as much advance notice as possible about the dates the student anticipates being absent.
4. Make-up work may be required and is at the discretion of said curricular director.

D. Students Participating in Professional Meetings for Other Reasons

1. The student is responsible for seeking the approval of the Associate Dean for Student Affairs to attend the meeting.
2. The student must approach the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, module director, clerkship director, and/or course director for approval and provide as much advance notice as possible about the dates the student anticipates being absent.
3. Make-up work may be required and is at the discretion of said director.

VI. Life Event Days

In order to allow for other important planned events in a student's life (i.e. family events such as weddings, graduations, funerals of friends or non-first degree relatives, major religious holidays, participation in professional meetings, etc.) students may be granted up to 3 full days per each academic year. If possible, these days are not to be taken in succession so as to be absent a week from the learning environment. Additionally, these days are not considered personal days or time off to use otherwise.

Students are responsible for notifying the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, the module director, clerkship director, and/or course director for approval. Since this is time away from either curricular or clinical duties for a planned event for which schedules may be impacted, students are strongly encouraged to request this time off at least two (2) weeks prior to the event. Students are encouraged to plan these days outside of major exam and quiz dates if at all possible. Every effort will be made to reschedule an exam, if the ability of the student to plan an absence around an exam proves impossible. However, since this is not guaranteed, students are strongly encouraged to consult with the directors of the module, clerkship, or course prior to finalizing travel plans, such as purchasing plane tickets, etc.

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