

**DEPARTMENT OF MEDICAL EDUCATION**  
**Policy**



<b>Policy Title:</b> Year 1 and 2 Attendance and Absence Policy	
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<b>Accountable Dean or Director:</b>	Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Senior Associate Dean for Curricular Affairs
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<b>Approved By:</b>	Executive Oversight Committee (EOC)
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<b>Approval Dates:</b>	August 4, 2023 (via email vote)
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**RELEVANT LCME STANDARDS:**

12.4 Student Access to Health Care Services

**POLICY:**

Active participation in the medical education program is a critical component of the professional development of a physician. Medical school is a full-time commitment, and it is expected that students prioritize their academic schedule and requirements. Participation in mandatory sessions allows the school to monitor academic progress and competency, and engagement in academic activities counts towards an overall participation grade.

It is the expectation that students participate in all mandatory sessions, including, but not limited to, small group sessions, laboratories, Art and Science in Medicine (ASM) sessions, Frontiers in Science lectures, and any sessions or classes designated as "patient encounters" where patients or families are present. Mandatory sessions are marked as such on the course calendars. Students who are absent may miss graded classroom activities, team assessments or other participation opportunities that count towards overall participation grade. At the discretion of the course director(s), and if possible, make-up may be required depending on the nature of the activity or time missed.

Students are allowed up to five (5) personal days and two (2) unplanned days per semester (see definition of unplanned days below). Personal days must be requested one (1) month in advance of the absence. Students will not be approved for absences that exceed 50% of a course (e.g. for InFocus weeks).

Students with an acute illness, urgent medical evaluation or unexpected family/personal emergency may request an unplanned day off. The absence must be requested prior to the start of the mandatory session being missed. Unplanned absences that exceed two (2) days will count towards a student's total personal days.

Students who have questions or concerns about their attendance and absences are encouraged to reach out to [medstudentabsence@mssm.edu](mailto:medstudentabsence@mssm.edu) to discuss.

## PROCEDURE:

1. **Absence Requests:** To request an absence, students must fill out the class specific absence request form (the absence form can be found in each Course Information Sheet in Blackboard). This form will notify The Office of Student Affairs and the students' Course Director(s). Failure to complete the absence form within the timeframe as outlined will result in an unexcused absence.

Students must use the [Academic Calendar](#) on the Registrar's website when planning any advance travel, as the course calendars are not considered final until the *tentative* designation is removed from the calendar and may be changed without notice.

2. For planned time off, the student must notify the course director one (1) month in advance of the mandatory session using the class specific absence form. Students who have questions or concerns about the timing of their absence and the request timeline are encouraged to reach out to [medstudentabsence@mssm.edu](mailto:medstudentabsence@mssm.edu) for guidance.
3. We understand that there are times when a student may need an unplanned absence. For unplanned time off, please fill out the absence request form as soon as you know and prior to the start of the session. The student must indicate a reason for a last-minute request. Only the following reasons for unplanned time off will be reviewed for approval:
  - Acute illness
  - Urgent medical evaluation
  - Unexpected family/personal emergency\* or caregiver obligation

\* *In the event of an emergent situation where a student cannot access the form, a student may email [medstudentabsence@mssm.edu](mailto:medstudentabsence@mssm.edu) AND their Course Director for an immediate response prior to session start. The student must also fill out the absence form as soon as they are able to document their request.*

4. If a student has a personal emergency or falls ill during a testing window, please refer to the [Online Testing in Years 1 and 2](#) policy for full details and communication expectations.
5. **Extended and Frequent Absences:** Year 1 and 2 courses are only offered once per year and have prerequisites. Because of the schedule and volume of material, having to spend significant time away from studying and mandatory sessions may place a student at risk of poor academic performance.
  - 1) Students who require accommodation should reach out to the Office of Disability Services for guidance and support.

- 2) Students who miss *more than 3 consecutive days* that include mandatory sessions will be asked to provide additional documentation, such as doctor's note. Documentation must be sent within 10 business days of the request.
  - 3) Students who miss *more than* the allotted time allowed in the policy will be flagged for attendance monitoring. The student will be asked to meet with a representative of The Office of Student Affairs to discuss the pattern of absences.
  - 4) In extenuating circumstances, students who require time off to attend to a personal emergency or extended illness should reach out to the Office of Student Affairs ([medstudentabsence@mssm.edu](mailto:medstudentabsence@mssm.edu)) for support and guidance.
  - 5) *Timely attendance* is an expectation of professional performance for all School of Medicine students. This shows respect for peers, patients, faculty and staff. Students will be held accountable for adhering to their course schedule, including timely arrival for all learning activities and examinations.
  - 6) A pattern of absences and/or lateness during an academic year will be escalated to the Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs and the Senior Associate Dean for Curricular Affairs.
6. ***Unexcused absences:*** Unexcused absences are considered unprofessional behavior, will be recorded, and may have an adverse effect on a grade including failure of a component of a course or an entire course. Unexcused absences in a course or across the semester will have the following consequences:
- 1st unexcused absence: Report to The Office of Student Affairs;
  - 2nd unexcused absence: Placed on monitored academic status;
  - 3rd unexcused absence: Course failure if all occur during a single course; placed in serious academic status
- See the [academic standing](#) policy for more detail.
7. ***Monitoring:*** Student attendance will be tracked and monitored for all required curricular activities. Requests for absences are reviewed by the Office of Student Affairs and students will be notified of approval or non-approval within three (3) business days of sending in a request. The Office of Student Affairs reserves the right to request a doctor's note or other documentation in the event of a pattern of absences or any absences immediately preceding or following a holiday.

## RELATED POLICIES:

[Academic Standing Policy](#)  
[Progression Policy](#)  
[Leave of Absence Policy](#)  
[Online Testing in Years 1 and 2 Policy](#)