Absences

The practice of medicine is collaborative and collegial. Excellent patient care requires good communication and trust among and between colleagues. Medical education requires students to often be together, and to work with patients, fellow students, staff, and faculty in a regular and predictable manner.

The nature of our work as caregivers requires that we notify appropriate persons when we must be absent so that patient care is not compromised, and both clinical and educational responsibilities are fairly shared. Students are strongly requested to be present for ALL educational activities. And as stated above, for many of the educational sessions attendance is required. These required sessions are described above.

As a supportive community that values wellness and well-being, the School of Medicine faculty and administration realize that various circumstances--emergent or otherwise--will require that members of our community must occasionally be absent from required events. Furthermore, we must work together to support each other during circumstances that take us away from required events. This policy outlines a process by which students can be granted excused absences. Failure to comply with this policy will be considered unprofessional behavior.

Applicability

Excused absences will be considered for the following reasons:

- Appointments for medical care that cannot reasonably be scheduled outside your MD program responsibilities
- Acute medical illness or family emergency
- To give a scholarly presentation at an academically relevant national meeting
- Running for or holding national office in a relevant professional organization
- Religious observances
- Residency interviews
- Participation in the MD or MD/PhD interview as an invited tour guide related to the admissions process
- Participation in meetings of the EUSOM Executive Curriculum Committee and its subcommittees
- Required student meetings with deans and potential/actual Discovery mentors

Policy Details

Excused absences are granted only by the Dean’s Office.

During the Foundations Phase, students should contact Dr. Ira Schwartz. During the Application, Discovery, and Translation Phases, students should contact Drs. Joel Felner or Sheryl Heron.

Requests should be made to the appropriate Dean as far in advance as possible. For emergent absences, students should phone the appropriate Dean. All other requests should be made in person or by email.

If the requested absence is approved, the appropriate Dean will notify the module or clerkship director, and the student’s Small Group Advisor. Any required sessions, academic assignments, clinical work, etc. that are missed must be fulfilled to the
satisfaction of the supervising faculty and the appropriate Dean. Within reason, module and clerkship directors will assist students to complete all work missed during excused absences, as deemed necessary by the director of the module or clerkship. If an excused absence does not allow for the missed work to be made up before the end of the module, phase, or clerkship, the student may be assigned a grade of “Incomplete” until the work is completed. If the student is unable to complete the missed work in a timely manner, as determined by the module or clerkship director, the grade may be converted to “Withdrawal”. The designation of “Withdrawal” would require the student to repeat the module or clerkship.

Further information about common reasons for missing required educational events:

**Excused Absences for Personal Medical Care**

Medical students are strongly encouraged to maintain their own physical and mental health and well-being. Whenever possible, students should schedule non-emergent healthcare appointments during times that do not conflict with classroom and clinical activities. In the event an appointment must be scheduled during a required educational activity, students must request permission to be excused from the appropriate Dean (see above). The Dean who grants permission will notify the appropriate supervising faculty member as to the time and duration of the excused absence.

**Religious Observances**

The Emory School of Medicine recognizes and respects the importance of individual religious beliefs and practices. While the School of Medicine calendar includes only religious observances recognized as U.S. federal holidays, the school seeks to accommodate student religious needs reasonably and within the requirements of the academic schedule. There shall be no adverse or prejudicial effect resulting to any student requesting excused absences for religious observances. Students assigned to patient care educational activities may request assignments that allow the student to meet their religious needs; on occasion, students may be asked to attend patient care activities that cannot be reasonably re-scheduled, such as on-call time with a care team. Required academic work missed as part of an excused absence must be made up to the satisfaction of the supervising faculty member.

**Residency Interviews**

During clinical clerkships, students MAY be granted one-day excused absences for residency interviews per each two weeks of the clinical rotation. Students should discuss requests with the Clerkship Director and should submit requests for absence from clerkship responsibilities to the Deans Office PRIOR to making travel plans. Regardless of absences for interviews, students must complete the requirements of the rotation by the last day of the rotation. Any deviation from this policy must be approved by the Clerkship Director and the Associate Dean for Clinical Education.

**Participation in the MD or MD/PhD Admissions Process or Tour Guide**

Students actively participate in the MD and MD/PhD admissions process, serving as interviewers and tour guides. When asked to serve in this capacity, students
should seek permission by sending an email to their clerkship director and to the
Associate Dean for Clinical Education. Students will not be allowed to miss mandatory
components of any clerkship to serve as an interviewer and tour guide. Once a student
has been approved to be an interviewer or tour guide, the student should notify their
team members immediately. This ensures that clinical care will not be impacted.

**Participation in Meetings of the EUSOM Executive Curriculum Committee and its Subcommittees**

Students actively participate in the subcommittees of the EUSOM Executive Curriculum Committee. When students are scheduled to attend their respective subcommittee meetings, they must notify their team members and clerkship directors.

**Required Student Meetings with Deans and Potential/Actual Discovery Mentors**

During the required clerkships, students are required to meet with the Associate or Assistant Dean for Clinical Education. In addition, students need to meet with faculty members in order to select a mentor for their Discovery phase project. If possible, these meetings should be scheduled during a time that minimizes student disruptions in clinical care activities. As with the above circumstances, students must notify their team of their absence during the time of approved meetings and should only spend that amount of time away from their clinical duties.

[View Absence Flow Chart (PDF)](#)

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