Absences

The education of a physician involves individual growth that requires students to work together and with fellow students, staff and faculty on a regular and regimented basis. 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. Students are strongly requested to be present for all educational activities. As stated above, for many of the educational sessions attendance is required. These required sessions are detailed 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 will need to 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 circumstances:

- Appointments for medical care that cannot be scheduled outside your MD program responsibilities
- Medical illness or family emergency
- Scholarly presentation at an academically relevant national meeting
- Running for or holding national office in a professionally relevant national organization
- Religious observances
- Residency interviews
- Participation in the MD or MD/PhD interview and tour guides related to the admissions process
- Participation in meetings of the EUSOM Executive Curriculum Committee and its subcommittees

Policy Details

Excused absences are granted by the Dean’s Office. Students should contact the Dean’s Office (Dr. Schwartz during the Foundations Phase; Drs. Felner or Heron during the Application, Translation, and Discovery Phases.) Note: Requests should be made to the appropriate Dean as far in advance as possible. For emergent absences, students should call the appropriate Dean by telephone. All other requests should be made in person or by email. The appropriate Dean will then notify the module or clerkship director of the student’s excused absence. 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.

Several of the categories of excused absence require additional information that is included below.

**Excused Absences for Personal Medical Care**

Medical students are strongly encouraged to promote and maintain their own 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 from the appropriate Dean (see above) to be excused. 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 significance of student 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 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; however, students may be required to attend patient care activities that cannot be reasonably re-scheduled, such as on-call time with a care team. As stated above, 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 absence for residency interviews per each two weeks of the clinical rotation. Prior to submitting such requests to the Dean, students should not schedule interviews during required clerkship events and should discuss any requests with the respective Clerkship Director. 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.

[View Absence Flow Chart (PDF)]

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