



Max Rady College of Medicine Undergraduate Medical Education Policy

Policy Name:	Pre-Clerkship Student Attendance Policy
Application/Scope:	Pre-Clerkship Students
Approved (Date):	November 2024
Review Date:	October 2029
Revised (Date):	October 2024
Approved By:	Pre-Clerkship Curriculum Committee [October 2024] Curriculum Executive Committee [October 2024] College Executive Committee [November 2024]

1.0 **PURPOSE**

In the Undergraduate Medical Education (UGME) program, students are encouraged to attend all learning events. Attendance at certain designated learning events is required in order to show adherence to professionalism and respect for both patients (actual, standardized and those who have donated their bodies to science) and instructor time.

This policy provides guidance and clarifies expectations for attendance at required learning events, describes procedures for tracking, recording and reporting student absences and outlines the consequences of non-adherence.

2.0 **DEFINITIONS**

2.1 **Pre-Clerkship** – Year I and Year II of the UGME program.

2.2 **Required Learning Events** – A learning event for which student attendance and/or completion is required and tracked. These learning events are denoted in the Curriculum Management System. Required learning events include one or more of the following elements:

- 2.2.1 Patient (or Family) involvement* (includes actual, standardized and those who have donated their bodies to science)
- 2.2.2 Small group or interactive teaching (that may include clinical educators*)
- 2.2.3 Clinical Skills*
- 2.2.4 Anatomy/Gross Lab*
- 2.2.5 Special educational learning events (includes off-site sessions*, orientations*, interprofessional collaboration sessions*, Service Learning, any learning event which requires special resources or set-up, guest lecturer, etc.)

** unique learning opportunities whereby absences will be subject to additional levels of review or approval*

2.3 **Absence** – nonattendance at a learning event, arriving more than 20 minutes late to a learning event, or failure to sign into a learning event. There are three types of absences: Flex Days, Sanctioned Leave and Unauthorized Absence. Absences may be anticipated or unanticipated.

2.4 **Flex Day** – A requested, discretionary, anticipated or unanticipated absence from a required learning event. Flex days may be taken as full or half days. Half days are considered as hours from 8:00 – 12:59 and 13:00 – 16:59. Examples include:

- 2.4.1 Personal, e.g., marriage, legal appointments, etc.

- 2.4.2 Health, e.g., illness, medical appointments, mental health days, counselling, etc.
 - 2.4.3 Family (relates to immediate e family member), e.g., birth of a child, marriage, illness, etc.
 - 2.4.4 Professional, e.g., unprotected conference attendance, academic advising, etc.
- 2.5 **Sanctioned Leave** – a requested anticipated or unanticipated absence from a required learning event that is authorized by the program. This includes:
- 2.5.1 Bereavement: in the case of first and second-degree family
 - 2.5.2 Medical or personal emergencies (including first-degree family)
 - 2.5.3 Religious observances
 - 2.5.4 Protected student government initiatives (e.g., CFMS AGM Conferences, Western Medical Schools Conference, governance committees)
 - 2.5.5 National and International Research Presentations
 - 2.5.6 Inter-university, provincial, inter-provincial, national and/or international athletic or artistic pursuits
- 2.6 **Anticipated Absence** – An absence whereby there is prior knowledge of an event or appointment. There are two types of anticipated absences:
- 2.6.1 Absences known three weeks prior (e.g., religious observances, student government initiatives, conferences, research presentations, athletic pursuits, medical appointments, planned family commitments);
 - 2.6.2 Absences known within three weeks (e.g., shorter notice appointments, planned study days).
- 2.7 **Unanticipated Absence** – An absence that occurs whereby there is no prior knowledge of an event or appointment.
- 2.8 **Unauthorized Absence** – An absence that is not reported by the student to the UGME office or is categorized as denied in the Curriculum Management System. Unauthorized absences are considered a failure of professional responsibility.
- 2.9 **Leave of Absence (LOA)** – A period of leave which extends beyond the maximum allowable absence/leave from an individual year/rotation that will require the student to defer the full affected module/rotation to a later period in their medical education and may involve a delay in graduation.
- 2.10 **Medical Student Performance Report (MSPR)** – An institutional assessment considered a component of a student's evaluation file and thus, will be made available for student review. Students will be permitted to correct factual errors on the MSPR. Students are encouraged, when required, to engage Student Affairs in supporting advocacy efforts in addressing perceived MSPR discrepancies.

3.0 **POLICY STATEMENTS**

- 3.1 Students are required to be on time for all learning events and to report any delays or absences.
- 3.2 Students are required to sign in at required learning events to demonstrate attendance.
 - 3.2.1 Students arriving more than 20 minutes late for a required learning event will be considered absent, and the absence will be recorded as unauthorized.
 - 3.2.2 Students who fail or forget to sign attendance sheets will be considered absent, and the absence will be recorded as unauthorized.
 - 3.2.3 Students must remain within the group to which they are assigned. Students changing groups without prior approval from the UGME office will be marked as absent. This absence will be considered unauthorized.

- 3.3 Students may not sign attendance documents on behalf of their peers or misrepresent their attendance for a required learning event. Students who have forged attendance documents or misrepresented their full attendance will be found in violation of this policy and will be referred to the Associate Dean of Professionalism. The incident will be noted in the student's evaluation file.
- 3.4 Curricular absences must be requested through the Curriculum Management System to the UGME office. Absences from examinations are handled in accordance with the UGME Examination Conduct Policy.
- 3.5 Absences for required learning events will be tracked and categorized. Approved absences will be classified as either Flex Days or Sanctioned Leaves.
- 3.6 Flex Days can be requested for anticipated or unanticipated absences.
- 3.6.1 Pre-Clerkship students are permitted a maximum of five Flex Days per academic year, or 10 half days, or a combination of such.
- 3.6.2 Anticipated Flex Days from a unique learning opportunity will only be approved in extenuating circumstances with appropriate notice and where alternate arrangements cannot reasonably be made.
- 3.6.3 Anticipated Flex Days may not be requested to receive extensions for assignments, quizzes or other assessments. Requests for extensions will be subject to the deferral guidelines.
- 3.6.4 The maximum number of consecutive Flex Days that may be used is three. Durations of more than three consecutive days must be approved by the Associate Dean of UGME or the Associate Dean of Student Affairs.
- 3.7 Sanctioned Leave can be requested for anticipated or unanticipated absences.
- 3.7.1 Pre-Clerkship student requests for Sanctioned Leave are subject to review and may be based on the student's evaluation file to date, attendance record to date, and/or an estimation of the impact of missing the specific course learning event(s).
- 3.8 Students with extenuating circumstances or chronic illness should contact the Student Affairs office to discuss individual modifications to Flex Day or Sanctioned Leave limits.
- 3.9 A maximum of 10% of the class can request an anticipated absence (either a Flex Day or Sanctioned Leave) for the same day. Approval for planned absences will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis. Unanticipated absences in excess of the 10% maximum due to unforeseen health or personal circumstances (e.g., illness or emergency) can be approved, subject to review.
- 3.10 Anticipated absences must be reported to the UGME office three weeks in advance of the absence or promptly once an absence is foreseen, whichever comes first. Requests received fewer than three weeks in advance of a planned absence are less likely to be approved if reasonable notice is not provided. Requests received after the start of a required learning event will only be approved in cases of emergency where advance notice could not reasonably be provided.
- 3.11 An absence (anticipated or unanticipated) from a required learning event without any form of notice to the UGME office will be considered an unauthorized absence. Requested absences that are denied yet still taken will be considered an unauthorized absence. All unauthorized absences shall be recorded within the student's evaluation file.
- 3.12 The escalation process for absences is as follows:
- 3.12.1 Students will receive a notice when the maximum of Flex Days has been reached and will be asked to meet the Associate Dean of UGME and the Program Administrator, Pre-Clerkship, to discuss their attendance record.
- 3.12.2 Persistent disregard of this policy will result in a referral to meet with the Associate

Dean of Professionalism.

- 3.12.3 Any further breach in professionalism may result in a notation on the student's MSPR.
- 3.13 Absences may necessitate further review to ensure student wellness and/or progress within the UGME program.
- 3.14 A student disagreeing with a decision related to the interpretation or execution of this policy has the right to appeal, in writing, to the Associate Dean of UGME.
- 3.15 Students who do not accept the final decision of an appeal have the right of appeal to the UGME Student Appeals Committee.
- 3.16 This policy will be reviewed on the first anniversary of its original passage and every five years thereafter.

4.0 **PROCEDURES**

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENT

- 4.1 Attendance sign-in sheets are the primary record of student attendance at required learning events and it is incumbent upon all students to sign in individually to their assigned location. Students may be assigned to collect/return attendance sheets by the UGME Course Administrators. Students responsible for collecting/returning attendance sheets should ensure all present members of their group have signed in before submitting to the UGME office.
- 4.2 Students are encouraged to schedule appointments or meetings during times that do not interfere with required learning events. Students requesting the use of a Flex Day for a unique learning opportunity may be asked for supporting documentation.
- 4.3 Students must submit all absence requests through the Curriculum Management System. Submitted requests should include all of the relevant information required to make an informed decision. If requested by the UGME office, supporting documentation may be attached to the Curriculum Management System submission or submitted separately by email. Failure to provide clear and cogent reasoning will result in delays in having requests approved.
- 4.4 If absence approval is granted, students are responsible to ensure that relevant faculty members, including preceptors, are informed of their anticipated absence. Arrangements to cover any missed course work such as assignments or quizzes must be made with the respective Course Leader(s).
- 4.5 Anticipated absences must be reported to the UGME office three weeks in advance of the absence or promptly once an absence is foreseen, whichever comes first. If the learning event(s) is part of a recurring series (e.g., Clinical Skills sessions), a request to reschedule to a future date should be included in the absence report.
- 4.6 Students with unanticipated absences should notify the UGME office prior to the learning event start time. In cases of serious illness or emergency, students should notify the UGME office as soon as it is safe or reasonable to do so.
- 4.7 Students with unanticipated absences for required learning events involving patients or standardized patients must, in advance of the learning event, contact the appropriate department program assistant listed in the Curriculum Management System event details to inform them of the absence. Sufficient notice is necessary to allow for cancellation of the patient, standardized patient or instructor as necessary.

- 4.8 Students with extenuating circumstances or chronic illness should contact the Student Affairs office for attendance-related accommodations.
- 4.9 A student must make certain they have the financial resources for all anticipated conference and travel expenses before committing to any travel. Only after obtaining absence approval may students make arrangements for their travel (purchase tickets, secure accommodations, pay conference registration fees, etc.). No student should make any purchases until they have received approval from the UGME office to miss class to attend the conference.
- 4.10 A student disagreeing with a decision related to the interpretation or execution of this policy must appeal, in writing, within two business days of receiving the decision, to the Associate Dean of UGME.
- 4.11 Students are expected to monitor their own attendance throughout the academic year to ensure accurate records and personal compliance with this policy. If discrepancies are identified by students in their individual absence records, students must contact the UGME office in a timely fashion to address the concern.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE COURSE LEADER(S), UGME

- 4.12 The designation of required learning events remains at the discretion of the Course Leader(s) and will be indicated via the Curriculum Management System.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE UGME OFFICE

- 4.13 Members of the UGME office will denote required learning events within the Curriculum Management System.
- 4.14 Members of the UGME office will record attendance at the start of or during each required learning event and report attendance through the Curriculum Management System.
- 4.15 UGME Course Administrators will report the number of anticipated absences to Course Leaders and Session Leaders to make adjustments to patient or instructor resources as required.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CLINICAL SKILLS DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVES, PRE-CLERKSHIP

- 4.16 Report student attendance for offsite learning events to the UGME office within five business days.
- 4.17 Inform the appropriate Pre-Clerkship UGME Administrator of the department's ability to accommodate each approved request for rescheduling.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRE-CLERKSHIP PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

- 4.18 Ensure students receive an orientation to the UGME Pre-Clerkship Student Attendance policy and the method for reporting absences from required classes.
- 4.19 Review each absence notification submission for completeness and inform the student if additional information or clarity is required.
- 4.20 Advise the Associate Dean of UGME of student requests as appropriate, including the total number of days absent.

- 4.21 Approve or deny absence submissions within the online Attendance Portal. Requests will typically be reviewed within one week of submission.
- 4.22 Meet with students identified as reaching the maximum number of Flex Days to review and discuss their attendance.
- 4.23 Refer students to the Associate Dean of UGME and/or the Associate Dean of Professionalism for review or meetings as required:
 - 4.23.1 When the maximum number of allowed Flex Days has been reached in an academic year, the Curriculum Management System will notify students, and they will be scheduled for a check-in meeting with the Associate Dean of UGME.
 - 4.23.2 For students requiring referral to the Associate Dean of Professionalism, a letter will be emailed to the student and a copy sent to the Associate Dean of UGME, and the Associate Dean of Student Affairs. A copy will be placed within the student's evaluation file.
 - 4.23.3 Any other professional concerns that arise.
- 4.24 Submit appeal documentation to the Associate Dean of UGME for review as required.
- 4.25 Ensure student evaluation files contain appropriate documentation related to attendance.
- 4.26 Provide attendance statistics (including unauthorized absences) to the Associate Dean of UGME or the Associate Dean of Student Affairs throughout the academic year as required.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ASSOCIATE DEAN OF UGME

- 4.27 Review and approve or deny complex student absence requests as requested by the Pre-Clerkship Program Administrator within one week of receiving the request.
- 4.28 Meet with students identified as reaching the maximum number of Flex Days to review and discuss their attendance.
- 4.29 Review each appeal and issue a final decision within two working days of receiving the student's request appealing the initial decision.
- 4.30 In consultation with the Associate Dean of Professionalism, provide a directive for a professionalism notation on the MSPR and notify the student. A letter of notification will be dispatched informing the student that the attendance issue has been noted in their Medical Student Performance Report (MSPR). This letter will be emailed to the student and a copy sent to the appropriate Administrator, Evaluations and the Associate Dean of Student Affairs. A copy will also be placed in the student's evaluation file.
- 4.31 Submit a copy of any decisions to the Program Administrator, Pre-Clerkship.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ASSOCIATE DEAN OF PROFESSIONALISM

- 4.32 Meet with students identified as exceeding the maximum number of Flex Days and/or who have unauthorized absences to review and discuss their attendance.
- 4.33 Report any required student remediation in writing to the Associate Dean of UGME for inclusion in the student's evaluation file.
- 4.34 In consultation with the Associate Dean of UGME, provide a recommendation for a professionalism notation on the MSPR.

5.0 STUDENT WELLNESS CHECK

- 5.1 A UGME Administrator may, at their discretion, refer any student wellness concerns to the Student Support Coordinator at Bannatyne Campus (with notification provided to the Associate Dean of UGME and the Associate Dean of Student Affairs).
- 5.2 The Student Support Coordinator may reach out to any student for whom wellness concerns are present and ask for a response by a certain time. If a response is not received, the Student Support Coordinator shall contact the Associate Dean of UGME and the Associate Dean of Student Affairs immediately for further direction.

6.0 POLICY CONTACT

Policy: The Associate Dean of UGME or the Director of Pre-Clerkship
Procedures: The Pre-Clerkship Administrators