

## Common Questions and Answers

# Clerkship Absences

**NOTE:** These common questions and answers are meant to help you navigate the sometimes complicated policies, but they may not apply to every situation. They are NOT a substitute for the official policy and procedures, which hold precedence and can be found here: <https://umanitoba.ca/health-sciences/rady-faculty-health-sciences-policies>. If you have any questions about details in the policy, please contact Student Affairs and/or the Policy Contact (listed at the bottom of each policy)

### 1. This 25% rule means I only need to attend clerkship 75% of the time, right?

No. The expectation for attendance in clerkship is very different from pre-clerkship. We expect attendance whenever possible, as you will be taking care of real patients and will have teams of health care professionals who have made schedules which include your input and attendance. In some rotations, the schedule is made of many smaller components (e.g. Pediatrics has outpatient, inpatient, and night float components) and it is important to attend to all these components in order to complete the rotation. In addition, you are expected to meet ECPs in each rotation which can be very difficult to do if you miss large portions of the rotation.

### 2. Does the answer to #1 mean I need to attend when ill, forgo my own medical or counselling appointments and miss important family events?

No. You can and should stay home when you are unwell. You can and should request absences for medical appointments, counselling or important personal events. What we do ask is that you plan for expected absences well in advance and inform the clerkship office and your team of unexpected absences. If you are absent for an extended period of time, cannot meet the ECPs of the rotation or exceed the 25% cap for attendance, you will have an incomplete rotation. If this happens you will have the opportunity to complete the rotation later on in clerkship (after core rotations are complete.) You may be asked to meet with Student Affairs if your absences are putting you in danger of an incomplete rotation.

### 3. I have a really important social event coming up (e.g. a friend's wedding) How can I make sure I get my absence approved?

The best way of getting the absence you need for a very important event is to ask well in advance (at least 6 weeks, preferably even longer). Schedules in clerkship can be very complex, so short notice can make it difficult or impossible to accommodate even important requests. So, if the date is very important to you, request it early. If you don't, it is likely that your request will be denied.

### 4. I have a religious observance coming up that conflicts with a mandatory session. Is this a valid reason for school absence?

Yes, religious observance is covered as a valid reason for absence from clerkship.

As with other absences it is the student's responsibility to inform UGME of the planned absence and we appreciate you doing so as far in advance as is possible. We are aware that some holidays follow a non-Gregorian calendar or that the exact date of observance may vary by a few days from the expected date (e.g. Eid-al-Fitr) For those holidays, please inform UGME as soon as possible that you will be observing the holiday, the expected date of observance, and the possibility that the date may change.

### 5. I'm involved in student government or student athletics and need time away to participate in an event. Those kinds of absences always get approved so there is no affect on clerkship, right?

No. Involvement in some high level athletics and some student government events are valid reasons for absence. However, as with

other absences, they are subject to the same attendance rules as the rest of clerkship.

It is our expectation that academic responsibilities take precedence over extracurricular activities. Therefore, absence requests for athletics or student government may be denied if a student is having significant academic difficulties.

Note: Student government related absences are usually restricted to large meetings, like Western Dean's or the CFMS Annual Meeting. When in doubt as to whether an event counts as student government or not, ask well in advance for clarification.

**6. I have a chronic medical condition, childcare issues or other special circumstances and I think I will need accommodations during clerkship. What do I do?**

If you feel that the schedule in clerkship will not work for your particular situation, you should speak with Student Affairs so that appropriate accommodations can be offered. Accommodations may include rest periods during call, working call schedules around custody arrangements, family medicine rotations in or within driving distance of Winnipeg etc. Many of these can be achieved within the regular rotation schedule; some may require an extended rotation.

For medical conditions, you may be asked to provide medical documentation from your treating physician with recommendations for extra absences. You can also discuss your health situation with Student Accessibility Services who can review what other accommodations may be appropriate for your situation.

**CONTACT US**

We welcome feedback. Please let us know if you find this document helpful and if you have tips you would like us to add! Contact us at [StudentAffairsmed@umanitoba.ca](mailto:StudentAffairsmed@umanitoba.ca).

**7. I really need to attend a conference to show that I am a good candidate for the residency position of my dreams. Will that conference leave be approved?**

Conference leave is generally approved when students are presenting at a conference, but not simply for those attending a conference. Attending a conference will not be make-it or break-it for your residency- there are many ways to show interest even if you can't attend. When in doubt, apply for the absence well in advance and state your reasons for wanting to attend- we will do what we can.

**8. I had a good reason to be away. Why am I still responsible to complete the whole rotation?**

Now that you are in clerkship, you are accruing knowledge and skills that will help you to be a safe and effective physician and participating in the medical system as a health professional. No part of the curriculum is optional or extraneous and all core rotations need to be completed to meet the academic requirements of the program. Therefore, absences may need to be made up with time later on in clerkship to achieve these academic requirements.