



Policy Title: Participation and Attendance Policy – Pre-clerkship

Approved By: WR2 Curriculum Committee

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Responsible Office or Committee: Curricular Affairs

LCME Affiliated Elements: 9.9

Policy Statement:

The participation and Attendance Policy at the CWRU SOM aims to uphold the principles of professionalism, active learning, and commitment to the education experience for all medical students. This policy sets forth guidelines for student attendance and active participation in various educational activities. It is designed to ensure that students not only excel academically but also demonstrate professionalism and responsibility in their medical training.

Purpose of Policy:

The purpose of this policy is to emphasize the importance of attendance and active participation in various educational activities and clinical experiences within the CWRU SOM. The policy is designed to promote professionalism, ensure students' commitment to their educational responsibilities, and enhance the learning experience of both individual students and the group.

Scope of Policy:

The policy applies to all enrolled students within the CWRU SOM. It applies to students participating in the medical curriculum, including pre-clerkship and research phases of their medical education.

Policy:

At the CWRU School of Medicine, students are considered junior colleagues. Here, student professionalism is valued equally as highly as mastery of the foundational sciences and clinical skills; therefore, participation and attendance in WR2 are fundamental to meeting these professional and curricular responsibilities.

When the SOM confers the MD degree, the faculty is attesting not only that the student has achieved a level of competency as measured by performance on tests, but that the student has shown a commitment to professional responsibility and also has participated in the entire educational experience that is defined by the curriculum, the LCME and the state of Ohio.

Attendance is required in all instances where students collaborate, or patients/panelists are involved. When students collaborate in the process of learning, the quality of what goes on depends on the contributions and interactions among the participants. Failure to attend and collaborate harms the



knowledge exchange for the individual student and the group. Because the group setting involves putting one's thoughts into words to teach others, students can advance their learning in a group setting in ways that are not possible when studying independently.

Attendance at patient-based activities is required out of respect for the individuals that allow us to learn from their lives. In all instances, students should be on time and well-prepared.

Foundations of Medicine and Health (Pre-Clerkship Curriculum)

OVERVIEW

On time attendance is required at:

- Classes and venues that require student collaboration:
IQ groups; Foundations of Clinical Medicine (Block 8) Tuesday Seminars; Team Based Learning (TBL) sessions/Medium Sized Groups/Active Learning in Teams (ALT); Research & Scholarship sessions; Anatomy Sessions with cadavers and GARLA sessions; IPE activities; other activities as indicated in the learning management system.
- Classes and other venues involving clinical skills training and patient participation:
Inpatient and outpatient sessions; Physical Diagnosis; Communication Workshops; Skill Development sessions; Clinical Reasoning sessions; Medical Interviewing Sessions; Clinical Skills Exams; Clinical Immersion - Attendance is required at all sessions during the week.

Consequences of failure to adhere to the Participation and Attendance Policy:

Failure to attend or repeated tardiness is a failure of professionalism. The Office of Curricular Affairs tracks attendance and tardiness for required learning experiences.

Attendance:

- Students who have any unapproved absences will receive a designation of **“Does Not Meet”** for that activity of the Block. A student who receives a **“Does Not Meet”** designation in any activity of a block will receive an overall Block decision of **“Does Not Meet Expectations.”**
- A student who **“Does Not Meet Expectations”** in any block due to a professionalism lapse, including unapproved absences, meets with their Society Dean and with a coach from the Professionalism Working Group who will work with the student to develop a remediation plan that may include subsequent meetings around professionalism, required research, writing, and reflection on professionalism and development of an educational contract. Upon successful completion of the remediation plan, the student's grade will convert to **“Meets Expectations.”**
A pattern of professionalism lapses can result in referral to the Committee on Medical Students.

Tardiness:

- Repeated instances of tardiness are considered a professionalism lapse and may result in



assignment of “**Does Not Meet Expectations**” for a block and referral to the Professionalism Working Group for coaching.

ABSENCE DETAILS

Student Managed Personal Days:

The attendance and participation policy respects individual student needs for some flexibility in scheduling academic and personal responsibilities. All students therefore have personal days that they may request at their discretion, with the exception of during black out dates. If there is a need for flexibility beyond the personal days, students can work with their Society Deans to find solutions that address their individual circumstances.

Students have the opportunity for up to **2 personal days** in year 1 (Blocks 1-4) and **2 personal days** in year 2 (Blocks 5-6). Examples of personal day absences include weddings, family occasions, social obligations, family illness, child’s school conference, etc. **No more than a single personal day may be taken in the same block.** Students need not provide a reason for requesting a personal day. Personal days do not carry over from year 1 to year 2. An excused absence from required curricular activities does not excuse students from the expected work. Particularly in team settings, students should alert their facilitators and peers that they will be absent and should seek ways to support the team.

Approval of Excused Absences:

All absences must be entered into the attendance system in Easel. Personal days will be automatically approved as long as they do not coincide with a black out date or a Block 8 activity (see below). Absences other than personal days must be approved to be considered excused. Some examples of other approved absences include personal illness, personal/family emergency, religious observance, presenting at a conference, and early career exploration. See Table 1 below. Absences other than for religious observance, illness, or personal/family emergency will generally not be approved during black out days, including clinical immersion week, on examination days, during the final week of IQ of a block, or to “bookend” any official school vacations or holidays, or any other blackout dates as assigned by the curriculum. Requests for exceptions must be made through the student’s society dean.

Special Block 8 Considerations for Excused Absences:

There are important limitations to requesting absences. The curriculum contains several categories of unique small group sessions that are part of Block 8 and not feasible to recreate (clinical preceptorships, simulation sessions, communications workshops, physical diagnosis sessions, procedures workshops, etc.). Because these required sessions are so difficult to recreate, **it is likely that students will not be able to miss these sessions.** Where possible, student requests to reschedule may be supported, with **advance communication** initiated by the student that includes the society dean, faculty and staff leaders of the curricular program. Otherwise, such sessions are not eligible for personal days or absences due to conference presentation or early career exploration. Students should contact their society dean, faculty, and staff leadership early if they know they have an important and unavoidable conflict with a Block 8 activity! This is a student’s best opportunity to try to get rescheduled.



Procedure for Submitting a Request for Excused Absence

- The student should complete an Absence Request Form in Easel at least **one week** in advance for **early career exploration** activities and **thirty days** in advance for personal days and conference presentations. The student may wish to discuss the request with their Society Dean, particularly if the student is requesting absences outside of the allowable parameters.
- **Unexpected illness, personal/family emergencies, and religious observance** absences will be handled in a different time frame, but with the same process, i.e., using the Absence Request form and choosing the Request for Approved Absence option on the form. Students should submit for religious observance absence at least 3 days in advance and, if at all possible, submit for absence due to illness or personal/family emergency within 24 hours of the event. If a student is ill for three contiguous days, they must contact their society dean and University Health and Counseling Services for follow-up support. If a student is absent due to three occurrences of illness in an academic year, then they must contact their society dean.

Please note that individual faculty leaders for any Foundations of Medicine and Health (Blocks 1-8) activity are not authorized to approve absences.

Attendance in the curriculum is critical to learning the complex material needed to become a physician. **If a student has three or more absences of any type within the same block, they must meet with their society dean and a learning specialist** to receive additional support.

See Table 1 below for a complete summary of absence allowances.



Table 1: Summary of Absence Types, Timelines, and Required Follow-up

| Reason | Excused Absences | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|---|--|--|---|
| | Religious Holidays | Medical Needs/Sick Days | Personal/Family Emergency | Conference Presentation or Leadership Role in National/Regional Organization | Personal Days | Early Career Exploration (Shadowing, Conference Attendance) |
| Approved | Always approved per University policy | When ill for an extended time (more than 2 days), student must contact Society Dean and UHCS | Always approved | Up to 2 consecutive days per conference, total 4 days/year max | 2 days/year max (no more than one per block) | 2 days/year max |
| When to request absence | At least 3 business days in advance | Within 24 hours of sick day | Within 24 hours of emergency | At least 30 days in advance | | At least one week in advance |
| Black out Days | Not excluded | Not excluded | Not excluded | Excluded - black out days will not be approved | | |
| When student should contact their society dean | Not required | 3 illness days in a row or 3 illness occurrences in an academic year | Each time, within 24 hours of the emergency if feasible | Not required | | |
| When student meets with their society dean and learning specialist | Not needed | When student reaches 3 absence occurrences of any above type per block there will be required meetings with society dean and learning specialist to provide support and review plan for making up missed learning. | | | | |



Research Experience Weeks

Students will be permitted to schedule personal days during their 12 Research Experience Weeks according to the following guidelines:

- For 12 Research Experience Weeks, completed over the summer between M1 and M2 years: 5 personal days.
- For 8 Research Experience Weeks over the summer between M1 and M2 years: 5 personal days.
- For 4 Research Experience Weeks over the summer between M1 and M2 years: 2 personal days
- For each 4 Research Experience Weeks during M3 and/or M4 years: 1 personal day

These personal days should be scheduled with approval from the research mentor and **do not need to be entered/requested in the attendance system**. If an illness or emergency arises during any Research Experience Weeks students should promptly contact their research mentor; if the illness or emergency extends >3 days students should also notify their Society Dean and the Office of Medical Student Research. The Office of Medical Student Research may ask students to report their absence days thru an experience attestation form, generally distributed at the end of each month.

In addition to personal days, students may also take off official University holidays that fall during the summer between the M1 and M2 years.

Special Situations

Illness or Other Emergency on Summative Assessment Days

Students must follow the procedures outlined in the Policy on Test Administration which includes information about contacting their society dean and receiving approval to defer a summative assessment.

Life Events:

The medical school acknowledges that unpredictable events affecting attendance can and do occur. When these situations (such as medical emergencies, important changes in life circumstances, parenting issues, etc.) arise, the society deans will work with the student to find a solution. As soon as a student becomes aware of a situation that might affect fulfilling course obligations and attendance requirements, or influence the course of study, it is the responsibility of the student to consult promptly with their Society Dean.

Pregnancy and Parenting:

If a student is pregnant or parenting and needs accommodations, they must review the Policy on Pregnancy and Parenting Accommodations in the student handbook for guidance.



Disability services:

If a student has a condition that may require accommodations or impact their ability to attend to all required curricular activities, they must apply to the CWRU Disability Services for appropriate guidance and review the Policy on Disabilities and Accommodations in the student handbook.

Religious Practices:

The CWRU SOM policy on religious observations follows that of the University. The religious accommodation request procedure is managed through the Office of Equity. The school expects students to use careful discretion in judging the importance of a particular observance. It is the responsibility of the student to inform their Society Dean in advance as to whether or not they will be absent due to a particular religious observance.

Vacations:

Student vacations are limited to the periods specified by the official academic calendar.