



Max Rady College of Medicine

Undergraduate Medical Education

Policy

Policy Name:	Student Attendance
Application/Scope:	Undergraduate Medical Education (UGME) Students
Approved (Date):	August 2018
Review Date:	August 2023
Revised (Date):	August 2018
Approved By:	Curriculum Executive Committee [August 2018] College Executive Council [August 2018]

1. PURPOSE

To provide guidance and expectations for attendance; including the tracking, recording, reporting and evaluation of the student learner's professionalism.

Medicine is more than a collection of facts. It is a melding of art, science and humanity. Medicine is also a social profession, in which the physician must constantly be engaged, caring and professional. In order to become the best physician possible, much modeling occurs over the four (4) year curriculum. The Max Rady College of Medicine's Undergraduate Medical Education (UGME) program maintains pass/fail system in order to allow students to focus on communication, collaboration, compassion, altruism and professionalism. To end this, certain sessions will be mandatory, in order to show respect for patients (living, standardized and those who have donated their bodies to science) and instructor time.

2. DEFINITIONS

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

2.2 **Clerkship** – Year III and Year IV of the UGME program.

2.3 **Anticipated Absence** – An absence whereby the student has prior knowledge of an event or appointment that is happening in the future that the student wishes to attend.

Examples include:

- Personal: Examples include a student's own marriage, medical appointments, academic advising or counseling, representation at an elite level (provincial, national or international) of sports, arts or other activity.
- Family (relates to immediate family member): Examples include birth of a child, marriage, or illness.
- Professional: Examples include conference attendance, presentation of a paper, receipt of an award, or a national/international organization meeting for which the student is a voting/invited member.
- CaRMS Interviews: The National Interview Period is in January/February, but in some instances, there may be exceptions when attendance for an interview(s) is required during November/December.
- Observance of Religious Holy Days

2.4 **Unexpected Absence** – An absence that occurs where the student does not have prior knowledge of the event or appointment, which has occurred suddenly without notice.

Unexpected absences include but are not limited to, absences due to illness, accident, family emergencies or inclement weather. Unexpected absences must be reported by the student affected in a timely manner as required by this policy. Unexpected absences that are not reported as required may necessitate further review to ensure student wellness.

- 2.5 **Approved Absence** – An anticipated absence that has been approved by the Program Administrator, Pre-Clerkship/Clerkship, the Director, Pre-Clerkship Curriculum, the Director, Clerkship Clinical, Academic, or Electives and/or, the Director, Clerkship of the affected rotation.
- 2.6 **Unapproved Absence** – An anticipated absence or unexpected absence that is not approved and may include but not be limited to: over sleeping, forgetting a class, missing a ride, vehicle not starting, failure to make suitable travel arrangements precluding attendance in class, and attendance at a social event. Missing more than twenty (20) minutes of class also constitutes an unapproved absence. A student will also be recorded as absent if they electively switch out of their assigned small group session, as the absence from their original group is deemed unapproved.
- 2.7 **Rescinded Absence** – An absence which has been removed from the student's attendance record due to the absence not occurring or the absence being marked in error.
- 2.8 **Unapproved Absence Day (Pre-Clerkship only)** – Single or multiple unapproved absences within the same calendar day will constitute one (1) unapproved absence day in a student's attendance record. Unapproved absence days will be recorded for the Pre-Clerkship Module in which the absence date falls.
- 2.9 **Leave of Absence (LOA)** – A 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 **Maximum Allowable Unapproved Absence Days/Leave from a Rotation/Module** – Time allowed being absent from an individual module or rotation, regardless of the reason, without penalty of repeating the module/rotation in whole.
- 2.11 **Mandatory Session** – A session which includes one or more of the following elements:
- Patient (or Family) interaction (includes standardized patient);
 - Clinical Skills interaction(s);
 - Anatomy/Gross Lab;
 - Special educational session (includes off-site sessions, IPE sessions, any session which requires special resources or special set-up, guest lecturer, other) or,
 - Small group, interactive teaching session.
- The designation of mandatory sessions remains to the discretion of the Course Leader and will be indicated via the Curriculum Management System. All lectures, and other large-group sessions, are not considered mandatory except when otherwise specified by the respective Course/Clerkship Leader or Director, UGME Curriculum, and will be noted as such in the Curriculum Management System.
- 2.12 **Clinical Clerkship Rotations** – A hospital and/or medical based practicing clinic that involves patient care for which students participate for a specified time period during Clerkship. Clinical rotations also include clinical academic teaching sessions that are considered a mandatory part of the rotation.
- 2.13 **UGME Professional Development Course (PDC)** – Academic teaching sessions scheduled by UGME that occur in Year III on Thursday afternoons from 1300 hours to 1500 hours except for the last Thursday (5th Thursday within a six week period) prior to the sitting of NBME Examination.

- 2.14 **Immediate Family** – For the purpose of this policy "immediate family" means a spouse (including common law or same sex), child, brother, sister; parent, grandparent, grandchild, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, aunt, uncle, nephew, or niece.
- 2.15 **Working Day** – Any day, other than a Saturday, Sunday, or legal holiday on which academic business may be conducted. Max Rady College of Medicine usual workday hours are Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Clerkship rotation hours may vary from this and will be communicated to the student at the start of each rotation.
- 2.16 **Medical Student Performance Report (MSPR)** – An institutional assessment considered a component of a student's academic record 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. POLICY STATEMENTS

GENERAL – ATTENDANCE AND APPEAL

- 3.1 Students are required to attend all sessions designated as mandatory in the Curriculum Management System schedule. It is assessed as detrimental to a student's education to miss an excessive number of such sessions.
- 3.2 Sessions designated as mandatory will have attendance monitored at the beginning of or during the class.
- 3.3 Students are required to be on time for all sessions and to report any unexpected absences in a timely manner to an appropriate UGME representative. Students arriving more than twenty (20) minutes late for a designated mandatory session will be recorded as absent and their absence may necessitate further review to ensure student wellness.
- 3.4 A student may, at any time, consult with the Associate Dean, Student Affairs for guidance as it relates to absences from a Pre-Clerkship or Clerkship component of the UGME program.
- 3.5 All unapproved absences shall be recorded within the student's academic file while within the UGME program.
- 3.6 A student failing to maintain the requisite level of attendance in their respective curricular program will be reported to the Associate Dean, UGME. If the reason(s) for the absence(s) is not approved, the student's attendance record will be considered by the appropriate Student Evaluation Committee, and Progress Committee if required, and the student may be deemed to have failed the rotation or module as appropriate.
- 3.7 When a group of students express an interest in attending a national or regional meeting of a professional society or association, a representative of that group must first notify their respective Director, Pre-Clerkship/Clerkship and then the Associate Dean, Student Affairs who will subsequently discuss with the Associate Dean, UGME. The individual students who wish to attend must adhere to the following general guidelines:
- Ordinarily, only elected officers, students seeking or holding leadership positions in the organization hosting the conference or presenters may receive an approved absence in order to attend a conference.
 - An approved absence to attend a scientific conference or meeting for the purposes of presentation of a paper is usually limited to the day of the presentation and one day prior to and after the presentation date for travel.

- In Pre-Clerkship, the decision respecting an approved absence for scheduled conferences rests with the Associate Dean, UGME and is based on the student's academic record to date, attendance record to date, and an estimation of the importance of the specific course session(s) that would be missed.
- In Clerkship, the decision respecting an approved absence for scheduled conferences rests with the Director, Clerkship Clinical and the Director, Clerkship Rotation that would be affected by the absence. The decision is based on the student's attendance record to date and the student's role at the conference (i.e. presenting, residency interest, receiving an award, etc.). Normally only two weekdays will be approved in conjunction with a weekend.

- 3.8 All students will be required to review the policy on Student Attendance and participate in/complete any related orientation.
- 3.9 A student disagreeing with a decision related to the interpretation or execution of the Student Attendance policy has the right to appeal, in writing, to the Director, Pre-Clerkship, Director, Clerkship Clinical, Director Clerkship Academic and/or Associate Dean, UGME as appropriate.
- 3.10 Should the student not accept the final decision of an appeal, students have the right of appeal to the UGME Student Appeals Committee.

PRE-CLERKSHIP

- 3.11 During Pre-Clerkship, students are encouraged to be present for all classes. Attendance recording and the tracking of unapproved absences will only be conducted on curricular sessions designated as "Mandatory".
- 3.12 Where necessary, travel arrangements should not be made that conflict with the academic schedule.
- 3.13 Absences from mandatory course activities will be reported to the Associate Dean, UGME throughout the academic year. Absences from examinations are handled in accordance with the UGME Examination Conduct policy. Any unexpected absence that is not reported by the student in a timely manner to an appropriate UGME representative may be subject to further review to ensure student wellness.
- 3.14 Students who know they will be missing a session (either in advance or on the day of the session) should:
- Notify the Program Administrator, Pre-Clerkship. If the session(s) is part of a repeating series, request rescheduling to a future date;
 - Notify their session leader and/or other students in their group that they will not be attending.
- In cases of emergencies, students should notify UGME as soon as it is safe/reasonable to do so.
- 3.15 Failure to receive an approved absence from any mandatory Pre-Clerkship session will be considered an unapproved absence for the day in which the session was scheduled (unapproved absence day).
- 3.16 In Pre-Clerkship, students are permitted a maximum number of unapproved absence days per module without penalty:

Module	Allowed Unapproved Absence Days
0	2
1	6
2	6
3	2

- 3.17 A student exceeding the maximum allowable number of unapproved absence days in one module will be scheduled to meet with the Associate Dean, UGME or designate with the expressed intention of discussing their performance, professionalism, and continued commitment to the MD program.
- 3.18 A student exceeding the maximum allowable number of unapproved absence days in any two modules shall be referred to the Associate Dean, Professionalism and the Associate Dean, Student Affairs such that a remediation program can be identified at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.19 A student exceeding the maximum allowable number of unapproved absence days in three or more modules shall have a notation made in their Medical Student Performance Report (MSPR) regardless of remediation undertaken or progress made.

CLERKSHIP

- 3.20 No tolerance exists for unapproved absences during Clinical Clerkships and Clinical Electives/Selectives. Failure to obtain an approved absence from any required Clerkship session, didactic or clinical, will be considered as an unapproved absence and thereby constitute a failure of professional responsibility which would be subject to review.
- 3.21 Students with potential anticipated absences must contact the Director(s), Clerkship Clinical in writing at least six (6) weeks prior to the start date of the requested leave and it is highly recommended that where possible students submit requests six (6) weeks prior to the start date of the rotation in which the leave is being requested. The Director(s), Clerkship Clinical will then determine in consultation with the Director, Clerkship Rotation that is affected if it is an approved absence.
- 3.22 Students who miss curricular time during a rotation as a result of an absence will be required to make up the work/learning. In any instance, a clerk may not be absent for any more than twenty-five percent (25%) of an individual Clerkship rotation regardless of the reason, without penalty of repeating the rotation in whole.
- 3.23 A student with a scheduled appointment for preventive, diagnostic, therapeutic health services or academic support must have verbal approval from the preceptor of the affected rotation with follow-up written communication to the preceptor, copied to the affected Rotation Director.
- 3.24 A student with recurring scheduled appointments must submit a request for leave in accordance with the Leave of Absence policy and include supporting documentation.
- 3.25 A student who has been approved for a leave will be expected, in conjunction with the rotation affected by the leave, to make alternative arrangements to complete any necessary requirements for the rotation that were missed during the leave as determined by the Director, Clerkship Rotation and/or the Director, Clerkship Clinical.
- 3.26 A student is not permitted to make-up missed time during another subsequent Clerkship rotation and not usually during scheduled vacation time.
- 3.27 A student who has been approved for an approved absence is responsible for making alternate arrangements for examinations and/or on-call shifts that may be affected within the rotation.
- 3.28 After receiving notice from the Director, Clerkship Clinical and the Director, Clerkship Rotation that an anticipated absence meets the criteria for an approved absence, the student is responsible to ensure that the approved absence is communicated a minimum of one (1) week in advance to the following:
- The student's lead preceptor;
 - The relevant clinical care team (for Clerkships and clinical electives).

CLERKSHIP - UNEXPECTED ABSENCES

- 3.29 A student with an unexpected absence from a clinical rotation must follow-up in a timely manner with designated staff within the rotation, UGME Administrator, Clerkship and/or Student Affairs Office in order to apply to have the absence considered as approved. Any unexpected absence that is not reported by the student in a timely manner may be subject to further review to ensure student wellness.
- 3.30 Clinical rotation personnel are responsible for following up immediately with students who have not reported for clinical duties within one (1) hour. If Clinical rotation personnel are not successful, they shall contact the Administrator, Clerkship or Student Affairs as soon as practicable.
- 3.31 Unexpected absences exceeding two days within a six-week Clerkship rotation or in excess of six days throughout the Clerkship program shall be reported to the Director, Clerkship Curriculum, Associate Dean, Student Affairs, and Associate Dean, UGME.
- 3.32 Within the UGME PDC unexpected absences of 3 sessions within a 12 week block will be reported to the Director, Clerkship Academic.

RENEWAL PERIOD

- 3.33 This policy will be reviewed on the first anniversary of its original passage and every five years thereafter.

4. PROCEDURES

GENERAL

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENT

- 4.1 Students must request approval for absences in writing from the UGME office. Approval will be granted only for those students who are performing well academically and who have an exemplary attendance record. If approval is granted, students are responsible to ensure that relevant faculty including tutors, attending physicians, and preceptors are informed of the planned absence.
- 4.2 Arrangements to cover any missed course work must be made with the respective Course Leader or Clerkship Director.
- 4.3 A student must make certain he/she has financial resources for all anticipated conference and travel expenses before committing to any travel. Only after obtaining permission may students make arrangements for their absence (purchase tickets, secure accommodations, pay conference registration fees, etc.). No student should make any purchases until he/she has received permission from the parties listed above to miss class to attend the conference.
- 4.4 For sessions which involve patients or standardized patients, any student who will not be present must, in advance of the session, telephone the appropriate department program assistant listed in the Curriculum Management System session details to inform the department assistant of the absence. Students who develop an illness on the morning of a session should contact the department as early as possible, such that sufficient notice is given to allow for cancellation of the patient, standardized patient or instructor as necessary.
- 4.5 Students must remain within the group to which they are assigned. Students changing groups will be marked as absent.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE UGME ADMINISTRATION TEAM

- 4.6 When required, members of the UGME Administration Team will take attendance at the start of or during each mandatory Whole Group or Inter-Professional session.
- 4.7 Unexpected student absences that have not been reported as required may be subject to further review to ensure student wellness.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF DIRECTORS, PRE-CLERKSHIP/CLERKSHIP CURRICULUM

- 4.8 Review and approve or deny student requests for absence based on submitted information within one week of receiving the request.
- 4.9 Review each appeal and issue a final decision within two (2) working days of receiving the student's request appealing the initial decision.
- 4.10 Submit a copy of any decisions to the UGME Program Administrator, Pre-Clerkship/Clerkship and the Director, Clerkship Rotation if applicable.

PRE-CLERKSHIP

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENT

- 4.11 For anticipated absences, submit an absence notification at least two (2) weeks prior to the start date of the requested leave to the Program Administrator, Pre-Clerkship. Supporting documentation may be submitted separately to the UGME office by email if required.
- Students in the Class of 2021 can submit an absence notification via the OPAL Pre-Clerkship Attendance Portal.
 - Students in the Class of 2022 and onward can notify the Program Administrator, Pre-Clerkship via the "Report an Absence" form in Entrada..
- 4.12 For unexpected absences, submit an absence notification as soon as reasonable. Submissions should be made prior to the session start time whenever possible to ensure accurate records. A student who fails to report an unexpected absence in a timely manner may be subject to further review to ensure student wellness.
- Students in the Class of 2021 can submit an absence notification via the OPAL Pre-Clerkship Attendance Portal.
 - Students in the Class of 2022 and onward can notify the Program Administrator, Pre-Clerkship via the "Report an Absence" form in Entrada.
- 4.13 Ensure submitted requests include all of the relevant information required to make an informed decision. Failure to provide a clear and cogent reasoning will result in delays in having requests approved.
- 4.14 Appeal in writing within two (2) working days of receiving an unfavorable decision to the Director, Pre-Clerkship Curriculum.
- 4.15 Monitor attendance throughout the module/year within the appropriate curriculum management system to ensure accurate records and personal compliance with the Student Attendance policy. If discrepancies are identified by students in their individual absence record, students are expected to contact the Program Administrator, Pre-Clerkship in a timely fashion to address the concern.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

- 4.16 Ensure Pre-Clerkship students receive an orientation to the UGME Student Attendance policy and the method for reporting absences from mandatory classes to the UGME Office.

- 4.17 Review each absence notification submission for completeness and inform the student if additional information or clarity is required.
- 4.18 Advise the Director, Pre-Clerkship Curriculum as appropriate of the student's request, including the total number of days absent.
- 4.19 Update the status of student absence submissions within the Pre-Clerkship Attendance Portal (approved, unapproved, rescinded) and communicate this decision to students.
- Students in the Class of 2021 will receive this via OPAL Pre-Clerkship Attendance Portal.
 - Students in the Class of 2022 and onward will receive this via email.
- 4.20 Submit appeal documentation as required to the Director, Pre-Clerkship Curriculum, as appropriate, for review.
- 4.21 Provide attendance statistics to Associate Dean, UGME or Associate Dean, Student Affairs as required throughout the academic year. Ensure student evaluation files contain appropriate documentation related to attendance.
- 4.22 Refer students to Associate Dean, UGME, Associate Dean, Student Affairs and/or Associate Dean, Professionalism as required.

RESPONSIBILITY OF CLINICAL SKILLS DEPARTMENT REPRESENTATIVE, PRE-CLERKSHIP

- 4.23 Inform the appropriate Pre-Clerkship UGME Administrator of the department's ability to accommodate each approved request for rescheduling (as per Policy Statement 3.14: Students who know they will be missing a session should notify the Program Administrator, Pre-Clerkship. If the session(s) is part of a repeating series, request rescheduling to a future date).

REPORTING/ANALYSIS OF ATTENDANCE

- 4.24 In instances where students are identified as reaching the maximum number of unapproved absence days in one (1) module, a formal letter will be drafted outlining the student's status. In Pre-Clerkship, this letter is generated via the curriculum management system Pre-Clerkship Attendance Portal and sent to the student with the Program Administrator, Pre-Clerkship copied. A copy is sent to the Associate Dean, Student Affairs and a copy will be placed within the student's evaluation file.
- 4.25 For students who exceed the maximum number of unapproved absence days in one (1) module, a formal letter notifying the student that they are in contravention of the Student Attendance policy along with establishing an appointment with the Associate Dean, UGME, or designate to discuss this issue will be issued. This letter will be emailed to the student and a copy sent to the Associate Dean, UGME, and the Associate Dean, Student Affairs. A copy will be placed within the student's evaluation file.
- 4.26 For students who exceed the maximum number of unapproved absence days in two (2) modules, a letter of referral to the Associate Dean Professionalism and/or the Associate Dean, Student Affairs will be drafted. This letter will be emailed to the student and a copy sent to the Associate Dean, UGME, and the Associate Dean, Student Affairs. A copy will be placed within the student's evaluation file.
- 4.27 For students who exceed the maximum number of unapproved absence days in three (3) modules, a letter of notification will be dispatched by the Associate Dean UGME 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, Student Affairs. A copy will also be placed in the student's evaluation file.

CLERKSHIP

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENT

- 4.28 In the event that the educational content in a rotation cannot be made up prior to the rotation end-date, the student will receive a grade of incomplete until the outstanding work is completed. Respective Clerkship Directors will determine the amount of material to be remediated or the requirement to repeat the rotation as required.
- 4.29 For a scheduled appointment, seek verbal approval from the preceptor of the affected rotation. Follow up with written communication to the preceptor, copied to the affected Rotation Administrator and the Director, Clerkship Rotation.
- 4.30 For reoccurring scheduled appointments, submit a written request for leave including supporting documentation as soon as feasibly possible to the UGME Administrator, Clerkship. For an unexpected absence, notify the UGME Administrator, Clerkship, in a timely manner or be subject to further review to ensure student wellness.
- 4.31 For anticipated absences, students must submit a written request for leave including supporting documentation at least six (6) weeks prior to the start date of the requested leave to the UGME Administrator, Clerkship. It is highly recommended that where possible students submit requests six (6) weeks prior to the start date of the rotation in which the leave is being requested. The norm for leave is one working day plus travel time where required when a student is presenting at a conference. It is expected that students will try to arrange leave requests adjacent to weekends. Students attending a conference for interest will generally only be granted leave for a weekend.
- 4.32 Ensure all written requests include all of the relevant information required to make an informed decision. Failure to provide a clear and cogent reasoning will result in delays in having requests approved.
- 4.33 Appeal in writing within two (2) working days of receiving an unfavorable decision to the Director, Clerkship Curriculum.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

- 4.34 Record each request for leave upon receipt in respective tracking database.
- 4.35 Review each request for leave for completeness and inform the student if additional information or clarity is required.
- 4.36 Advise the Director, Clerkship Curriculum as appropriate of the student's request, including the total number of days absent for which the student has already received approval.
- 4.37 Inform the affected department/rotation if the Director, Clerkship Curriculum approves the student's request for absence to determine if the department can accommodate the approved request.
- 4.38 Notify the student and affected Department/Rotation administrator by email of the decision(s) and record the outcome on tracking database.
- 4.39 Submit appeal documentation as required to the Director, Clerkship Curriculum for review.
- 4.40 File all written requests for leave from a Clerkship Rotation whether approved or denied, in the student's academic file.

RESPONSIBILITY OF DEPARTMENT/ROTATION DIRECTOR, CLERKSHIP

- 4.41 Inform the appropriate UGME Administrator of the rotation's ability to accommodate each approved request.

REPORTING/ANALYSIS OF ATTENDANCE

- 4.42 In accordance with section 3.31; unexpected absences exceeding two days within a six week Clerkship Rotation or in excess of six days throughout the Clerkship program shall be reported to the Director, Clerkship Curriculum, Associate Dean, Student Affairs, and Associate Dean, UGME.
- 4.43 In accordance with section 3.32; Within the UGME PDC unexpected absences in 3 sessions within a 12 week block will be reported to the Director, Clerkship Academic Curriculum.
- 4.44 Where required, a letter of referral to the Associate Dean, Professionalism and/or the Assistant Dean, Student Affairs for each student deemed to have breached the Student Attendance policy will be drafted. This letter, signed by the Associate Dean, UGME will be emailed to the student with a copy placed in the student's evaluation file. Dependent on the circumstances, the possibility exists for the attendance issue to be noted on the student's Medical Student Performance Report (MSPR), in which case the student would be notified of this fact.

5. **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, UGME, and Associate Dean, Student Affairs (UGME).
- 5.2 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 UGME Associate Dean and Associate Dean, Student Affairs (UGME) immediately for further direction.

6. **POLICY CONTACT**

Please contact Associate Dean, UGME with questions respecting this policy.