



Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science

"A Private University with a Public Mission"

CLERKSHIP ATTENDANCE and ABSENCE POLICY

POLICY: # 319.1A

Supersedes: N/A

Issuing Officer: Dean, College of Medicine
Responsible Office: Office of Medical Education
Effective University Date:
Effective EPCC Date: 4/1/25
Next Review Date: 4/1/28

I. PURPOSE:

The Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) has established standards regarding the requirement of medical schools to provide its medical students with timely access to needed diagnostic, preventive, and therapeutic health services at sites in reasonable proximity to the locations of their required educational experiences and has policies and procedures in place that permit students to be excused from these experiences to seek needed care (LCME Standard 12.4).

II. POLICY STATEMENT:

Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science (CDU) College of Medicine (COM) Doctor of Medicine degree (MD) Program outlines the attendance policy for the Clerkship Phase as well as the procedure for students to obtain an excused absence.

The professional standards and expectations in medical school are similar to residency and beyond. Attendance to clinical assignments and required clerkship activities is a full-time commitment and is a measure of professionalism. Students are expected to be present at all required attendance sessions and all assessments. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the attendance expectations for each clerkship. It is the expectation that all absences (planned or unplanned) be made up at the discretion of the clerkship director.

The only guaranteed holidays include:

- Thanksgiving (Thursday) and the following Friday. The full 4-day weekend is not guaranteed.*
- Winter holiday break. Students may be expected to work on clinical service the weekend before winter holiday break begins. See COM academic calendar for winter break.*

III. POLICY:

ACCOMMODATIONS

For students with disabilities who have registered with the university Disability Services Coordinator, the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will work with the clerkship leadership (e.g., clerkship director), at the beginning of clerkships to ensure students receive accommodation. For a student in need of an assessment for accommodation, the student must meet with the Senior Director of Learning Skills in the Office of Student Affairs.

PLANNED ABSENCES

Requests for planned absences are not guaranteed. Reasons for planned absences include:

- **Health:** *All medical students have the right to be excused from coursework and clinical work to attend their own healthcare appointments. Students with an illness of three or more days require the submission of a note from a healthcare provider. Students have a right to privacy when seeking health care and do not need to disclose the specific type of health care that is being sought. However, the documentation from the healthcare provider must include date of service, and time of return to school/work.*
- **Personal/Family Emergency:** *Students must provide a brief explanation when requesting an excused absence. Examples include but are not limited to funerals and medical emergencies of family members.*
- **Jury Duty:** *Students must provide a copy of the summons to the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions.*
- **Religious Holidays:** *Medical students have the right to be excused from coursework and clinical work due to religious observances.*
- **Special Circumstances:** *Approved on a case-by-case basis.*

UNPLANNED ABSENCES

- *Absences due to emergencies such as sickness; death in the family; serious personal illness; or illness of spouse, domestic partner or dependent child.*
- *Time off for studying is not a valid reason for an absence.*
- *Lack of transportation is not a valid reason for any absence.*
- *Excessive absences may be grounds for receipt of an incomplete or failing grade in a clerkship or result in clerkship repeat.*
- *Any request for absences not approved: If an absence is not approved, it is expected that the student will make the necessary arrangements to change their schedule to be present.*

PROFESSIONALISM CONCERNS RELATED TO ATTENDANCE

The following are considered professionalism issues, that will be monitored by the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions and may result in a referral to the Committee on Medical Student Evaluation and Promotion (MSEP):

- *Absence from a required session without obtaining advance approval. In cases of emergency, it is the student's responsibility to contact the clerkship/site director and/or coordinator before the start of a shift.*
- *Failure to communicate with the clerkship/site director.*
- *Failure to complete the online Absence Request Form.*
- *Trend/number of absences across clerkships.*
- *Arriving late or leaving clinical or educational duties early.*
- *Failure to make up an absence.*

PROCEDURES FOR ABSENCES

1. **Requests for PLANNED absences must be submitted 6 weeks in advance of the date of the start of the clerkship.**
 - a. All students must complete the online [Clerkship Absence Request Form](#) for anticipated absences greater than four (4) hours or more (or for recurring medical appointments) of clinical or educational duties on a given day.
 - b. Follow up your online request with an email to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Admissions.
 - c. Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Admissions will acknowledge receipt of the student request within three (3) business days.
 - d. Documentation confirming the necessity of excuse may be requested by the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Admissions.
 - e. The Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Admissions will communicate with the clerkship/site directors and clerkship manager to attempt to accommodate the request.
 - f. The Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Admissions will notify the student if their request has been approved/denied within 10 days of receiving the request.

2. **Notification for UNPLANNED absences or tardiness**
 - a. Unanticipated absences due to emergencies such as sickness; death in the family; serious personal illness; or illness of spouse, domestic partner or dependent child must be communicated to the clerkship/site director, coordinator, and team as soon as possible.
 - b. Students should inform their clerkship/site director, coordinator, and team that they will be late before the start of shift through the clerkship-specific emails.
 - i. EMclerkship@cdrewu.edu
 - ii. FMclerkship@cdrewu.edu
 - iii. IMclerkship@cdrewu.edu
 - iv. NEUROclerkship@cdrewu.edu
 - v. ObGclerkship@cdrewu.edu
 - vi. PEDSclerkship@cdrewu.edu
 - vii. PSYCHclerkship@cdrewu.edu
 - viii. SURGERYclerkship@cdrewu.edu
 - c. As soon as possible, students must complete the online [Clerkship Absence Request Form](#) for absences greater than 4 hours or more of clinical or educational duties on a given day.

3. **Expectations following any absence**
 - a. Students must complete make-up shifts for ANY absence.
 - b. Make-up shifts will be determined by the clerkship director and may need to be completed at a future time (cannot interfere with other clerkship/educational requirements) if there are insufficient make-up shifts that can be scheduled during the clerkship or possibly violate the Duty Hour Policy.
 - c. Students may receive an Incomplete, or Fail the clerkship, if they do not complete make-up assignments or missed time.
 - d. Missing more than 25% of a clerkship (clinical or educational duties) will require students to retake the clerkship.
 - e. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions will maintain a list of all student absences.

- f. *The clerkship director/coordinator will inform the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Admissions of any student who does not make up an absence.*
- g. *Students with more than one unmade up absence per clerkship will be referred to MSEP.*

IV. APPLICABILITY:

The faculty, students, and staff of the CDU COM are responsible for knowing this policy and its procedures.

V. DEFINITIONS:

- *Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee (EPCC) is the committee charged to represent the faculty to oversee the medical education program as a whole and has responsibility for the overall design, management, integration, evaluation, and enhancement of a coherent and coordinated medical curriculum.*
- *Medical Students Evaluation and Promotions (MSEP) committee is the committee responsible for 1) reviewing the academic and professional progress of all students as they progress through the curriculum, 2) recommending students for advancement to the next level of training, 3) deciding on appropriate action for students earning one or more academic deficiency, and 4) final review and certification that each student has met all required outcome measures and standards of achievement for graduation.*

VI. RELATED POLICIES:

- *CDU Academic [Catalog](#)*
- *COM [Clerkship Absence Request Form](#)*
- *CDU COM Policy # 322.5 Medical Student Conference and Travel Policy*

VII. RELATED LINKS:

LCME Standards, Publications, & Notification [Forms](#)

VIII. POLICY HISTORY:

Review Dates:	Change Description:
4/1/25	Clerkship specific policy separate from Pre-Clerkship policy suggested by Clerkship Phase Subcommittee (CPSC). Draft created and sent to the Clerkship Phase Subcommittee for further feedback and input on 3/5/25. Policy reviewed and approved by EPCC on 4/1/25