



Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science
"A Private University with a Public Mission"

PRE-CLERKSHIP ATTENDANCE and ABSENCE POLICY

POLICY: # 322.4

Supersedes: Policy 322.4 version 6/21/21 & 7/2/24

Issuing Officer: Dean, College of Medicine
Responsible Office: Office of Medical Education
Effective EPCC Date: 4/15/25
Effective University Date:
Next Review Date: 4/15/28

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 Pre-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 course 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 course.

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 course leadership (e.g., course director), at the beginning of courses 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.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Excused absences are not guaranteed. Reasons for excused 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.*
- **Professional Activity:** *second or fourth year medical students who are invited to present or hold an elected position or are on a planning committee of a national association/organization.*
- **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:** *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.*

PROCEDURES

- *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 course director as soon as possible.*
- *Any absence (unless emergent) must be approved in advance (at least 30 days) of intended absence. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the course director in writing. All students submitting an absence request must complete the online Absence Notification Form. Documentation confirming the necessity of excuse may be requested and provided by the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions. The course director will notify the student within 10 days of receiving the request if the absence is approved.*
- *No student will be penalized if unable to participate in any examination, study, or work requirement because of his or her attendance at urgent care visit, religious obligations and practices, personal/family emergency or required jury duty.*
- *A student who is absent will be given an equivalent opportunity to make up any examination, study or work requirements which the student may have missed because of the absence.*

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

- *If an absence is not approved, it is expected that the student will make the necessary arrangements to change their schedule to be present.*
- *Time off for studying is not a valid reason for an excused absence.*
- *If a student is more than 15 minutes late to a course, it is an unexcused absence. It will be the student's responsibility to work with their course director to make up any assignments missed.*

- *Excessive absences may be grounds for receipt of an incomplete or failing grade in a course, or result in other disciplinary action, regardless of final exam scores.*
- *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 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 course director.*
 - *Failure to communicate with the course director.*
 - *Failure to complete the online absence notification form.*
 - *Trend in number of absences across courses.*

PRE-CLERKSHIP PHASE PROCESS

1. *Students may be absent for up to six (6) sessions total per nine (9) months each academic year at their discretion and/or need. Course directors reserve the right to have students remediate missed work. Students who exceed six (6) sessions in a nine (9) month period will be referred to the Medical Students Evaluation and Promotions (MSEP) committee.*
2. *Students may not be absent more than three (3) sessions from the same longitudinal course (Intersessions, Clinical Skills, Medicine & Society, and Research) or two (2) sessions per course during an academic year. Exceeding these numbers may result in referral to the Medical Student Evaluations and Promotions Committee (MSEP).*
3. *Absences may be used for research presentations, conferences, personal wellness days, illness, personal or family emergency, and significant life events.*
4. *Students are considered in attendance of a session when they are in the classroom and their attendance is accounted for by the means determined by the Office of Medical Education. No other proof of attendance will be accepted.*
5. *Students who miss the sign-in sheet for attendance will be marked as absent.*
6. *Students who mark themselves as present and leave a session early without prior approval will be marked as absent and referred to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or designee for professionalism issues.*
7. *Falsifying attendance records or aiding in the falsification of another student's attendance records will result in a referral to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or designee.*
8. *Students must submit an online absence notification form when they plan to be, or are, absent.*
9. *Students must also notify the instructor of a longitudinal course (Intersessions, Clinical Skills, Medicine & Society, and Research) if the absence occurs in those courses.*
10. *Students who accrue more absences than allowed must meet with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or designee and may need to appear before the Medical Student Evaluation and Performance (MSEP) Committee.*

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](#)
- [CDU COM Pre-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:
6/22/21	New Policy approved by the EPCC.
7/2/24	Updated policy language to add the following statement: <i>“Missing > 3 days (excused or unexcused) of a single clerkship will result in remediation or an alternate clinical deliverable at the discretion of the clerkship director.”</i> Policy approved by the EPCC.
4/15/25	Policy updated to remove references to clerkship absences as the clerkships will have their own Clerkship Absence Policy. No changes to the original pre-clerkship section of the policy. Policy reviewed by the EPCC on 4/15/25.