Schedule Conflicts, Absences, and Vacations Policy
IUSM-PO-EDU-EMR-0002

FULL POLICY CONTENTS

- Scope
- Policy Statement
- Reason for Policy
- Procedures
- Definitions
- Sanctions

ADDITIONAL DETAILS
- Additional Contacts
- Forms
- Related Information
- History

Effect: 8/1/2016
Last Updated: 01/10/2018

Responsible University Office:
Medical Student Education

Responsible University Administrator:
Senior associate dean for medical student education

Policy Contact:
bradalle@iu.edu

RESponsible
Senior associate dean for medical student education
Student Promotions Committee

ACCOUNTABLE
Senior associate dean for medical student education
Student Promotions Committee

Support
Mentoring and Advising Program, Medical Student Education
Assistant dean of advising

Consult
Mentoring and Advising Program
Assistant dean of advising
Student Promotions Committee

Inform
IUSM students

LCME Standards

11.1 Academic Advising
12.8 Student Exposure Policies/Procedures

Scope
Policy Statement

Students are required to seek written permission from the statewide course/clerkship/elective director for absences from the educational program. Any absences of two or more consecutive days or three total days from a course/clerkship/elective for any reason must be approved by the Medical Student Education deans. Once an absence is approved, the student is responsible for notifying his/her instructor or attending physician/resident of his/her team in advance of the absence.

Reason for Policy

This policy was developed to serve the best interests of the individual and the individual's colleagues, as well as the goals of the School of Medicine. It intends to ensure that patient care will not be jeopardized nor will the education of medical students be hampered by absences and vacations. The intent of all absence accommodations is to provide students the ability to respond to events outside of their control without interfering with their training.

Excused absences and schedule revisions will be accommodated for significant and appropriate reasons and will be monitored to ensure adequate exposure in all aspects of the profession.

Approval

Approved by the Curriculum Council Steering Committee 07/11/2017.

Procedures

Vacations

The Curriculum Council Steering Committee will work through the Foundational and Clinical component committees to approve curriculum schedules that include a sufficient quantity of vacation time (See Calendar and Scheduling Policy for details).

1. A recess will occur between years 1 and 2 in phase 1 of the curriculum.
2. A recess will occur between phase 1 year 2 and phase 2 of the curriculum. This recess is intended to provide students sufficient time to complete Step 1 of the USMLE (see the Academic Requirements policy for further requirements regarding the USMLE).

Absences

Absences fall into two categories, anticipated and unanticipated. Using the criteria noted in this policy, the statewide course/clerkship/elective director determines if a student’s request qualifies for an excused absence and if the student has followed the appropriate procedures. Any absences of two or more consecutive days or three total days from a course/clerkship/elective for any reason must be approved by the Medical Student Education deans.
IUSM respects the right of all students to observe their religious holidays and will make reasonable accommodation, upon request, for such observances, which are considered anticipated absences.

**Anticipated absences and scheduling conflicts**
A student who anticipates being absent due to a schedule conflict will submit an [IUSM Time Away Request Form](#) at least two weeks prior to the start of the course/clerkship/elective to the statewide course/clerkship/elective director.

Examples of activities for which absences may be excused include national exams (e.g. USMLE); OSCEs; jury duty; doctor’s appointments that cannot be scheduled around clinical duties or course work; representation of IUSM as a member of an approved committee or task force or at an approved special event; or presentation at an approved meeting/conference.

A student’s academic requirements should take precedence over most other activities. Prior to planning time away for life events the course/clerkship/elective schedule, students should work with the course/clerkship/elective director in concert with their lead academic advisor in planning and prioritizing life events (e.g., weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, etc.); involvement in IUSM specialty-related organizations; events that are not affiliated with the current course/clerkship/elective (e.g., SIG fundraisers/events, meetings/conferences where the student is an attendee only, etc.); vacations; residency interviews; or other reasons related to convenience.

Absences that conflict with required educational activities and that do not receive approval may be treated as unexcused absences. See sanctions section for further details.

Depending on the circumstances and activities missed for an excused absence, the director may require the student to complete missed activities in order to successfully complete the course/clerkship/elective. These activities may need to be completed during independent learning time, connections days or other designated time off from a course/clerkship/elective. Certain experiences, however, cannot be duplicated and a need for prolonged or repeated absences may best be handled with a leave of absence.

When scheduling conflicts cannot be resolved for patient care and on-call responsibilities, it is up to the student to make sure that his/her patient care and on-call responsibilities are met in full. If allowed by the statewide clerkship/elective director, the student may arrange to complete his/her patient care duties at another time during that day or arrange coverage by other students. In the event that a student cannot obtain coverage, he/she is expected to take call him/herself, regardless of the conflict. If a student does arrange coverage, he/she must inform his/her clinical team (preceptor and resident), as well as the statewide clerkship/elective director in writing prior to the affected date.

**Anticipated Absences for Religious Holidays**
IUSM abides by the IUPUI policy on accommodations for major religious holidays (see IUPUI Policy on Religious Holidays under Related Information below). Students seeking schedule modifications for major religious holidays must make a request no later than two weeks prior to the start of the course (or prior to the start of the affected block for courses that span more than one block), by submitting the [IUSM Time Away Request Form](#) to the statewide course/clerkship/elective director.

**Unanticipated Absences**
On occasion, life events and personal emergencies may conflict with educational activities. In the event of an unanticipated absence, the student is responsible for notifying the course/clerkship/elective site leader and the statewide course/clerkship/elective director by email or phone as soon as possible. The student also must submit the IUSM Time Away Request Form to the statewide course/clerkship/elective director with the appropriate documentation.

- Absences require documentation of the situation that led to the unanticipated absence.
- Absences for illnesses lasting more than one day require a note from a qualified health care provider certifying that the student is fit to resume course work and to return to contact with patients.
- A pattern of recurrent or prolonged absence from required course/clerkship/elective activities may result in failure of the course/clerkship/elective, at the discretion of the statewide course/clerkship/elective director.
- Unanticipated absences may be excused by the statewide course/clerkship/elective director.
- Unanticipated absences involving a family member require the same level of documentation as above. “Family member” is defined for this purpose as a spouse, domestic partner, child, grandchild, parent, grandparent, sibling, in-law, step relative, an individual of whom the student has assumed legal guardianship, or another relative of whom the student is the sole survivor.
- Depending on the circumstances, the statewide course/clerkship/elective director may require the student to complete missed activities in order to successfully complete the educational goals of the clerkship. These activities may need to be completed during independent learning time, connections days or other designated time off from a course/clerkship/elective.

Phase 1 Attendance

Attendance in person is required for all small group sessions. See Sanctions below for consequences for unexcused absences. Attendance in person for didactic course sessions is not mandatory unless course management specifies the session as mandatory. Although attendance for didactic sessions is not part of the grade calculation, attendance is still strongly encouraged and students are responsible for all content. Classroom activity provides students opportunity to interact with faculty and their classmates. Moreover, the social environment of the classroom assists students in the development of their skills in professionalism, empathy, and communication.

Missing live lectures may also hamper retention of information for some students. It is the student’s responsibility to monitor this and make adjustments as missing live lectures coupled with poor performance may be correlated. As such, faculty or Mentoring and Advising Program representatives may make official recommendations based on observed class presence for poorly performing students.

IUSM encourages students to gain research experience and to pursue opportunities to present their research at local, national and international meetings. IUSM also recognizes that other types of professional development can be equally important. Thus, students in good academic standing are allowed up to a total of 3 days, including travel time, of excused absences for professional development opportunities (PDO) in Phase 1 year 1 and again in Phase 1 year 2. Common examples of PDOs include presentations, attendance at meetings, and attendance at professional advocacy days. To be excused for a PDO, a
student must first discuss their absence with the site leader and then submit the Professional Development Opportunity Request Form. For fall semester of P1Y1, the Professional Development Opportunity Request Form must be submitted at least two weeks prior to the PDO. For all other terms, the Professional Development Opportunity Request Form must be submitted at least two weeks prior to the start of the course in which the PDO will occur. (For absences in FCP, the submission deadline is two weeks prior to the start of the concurrent course in which the PDO will occur). Professional Development Opportunity Forms submitted after these deadlines will not be considered. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain the content from missed sessions and reschedule any missed preceptor visits. If assessments are missed, the site leader will determine an appropriate action. Exams must be made up during the Independent Learning Time closest to the absence either before the PDO or upon return depending on the decision of the site leader. Exams missed due to PDOs may not be made up after the course ends. On rare occasions, a course activity may preclude attendance at the PDO and a student may be denied an excused absence. Denials may be appealed as described in the Appeals section of this policy.

Exam Postponement
Occasionally, circumstances may interfere with students' ability to complete an examination at the scheduled time. Students may request an extension or delay when a) circumstances would preclude effective performance on an examination, or b) the absence has been approved, or c) students become unable to complete an exam due to illness during the exam. Students are required to talk with course/clerkship/elective director if they believe circumstances might justify a postponement. The director will have discretion to reschedule the examination or to deny the student's request.

Appeals
Students may appeal a decision made by the statewide course/clerkship/elective director to the dean of the curriculum phase in which the student is enrolled within seven days of the director’s decision. This appeal must be made in writing. Notification of the outcome of the appeal will be made in writing within seven days to the student, the statewide course/clerkship/elective director and the senior associate dean for medical student education or his/her designee. If the student’s appeal is approved, the appeal ends.

If the appeal is not approved, the student may file an appeal with the senior associate dean for medical student education within seven days of the previous decision. Notification will be made within seven days to the student and the statewide course/clerkship/elective director. The decision of the senior associate dean is final.

Definitions

Unanticipated absences: A change in the student’s ability to participate in a required educational activity occurs shortly before the event. Examples include but are not limited to sudden onset of illness, car accidents, and the death of a close family member.

Anticipated absences: Absences that may realistically be foreseen and may be accommodated for significant and appropriate reasons.

Unexcused absences: Absence from a required educational activity (including but not limited to a rotation, small-group session, or lecture) without following proper procedures, deadlines, or notification to the appropriate constituent and those for which
approval was not obtained.

**Excused absences:** Anticipated absences for which previous approval has been obtained or unanticipated absences for which approval is obtained after the event.

### Sanctions

Failure to submit the proper forms prior to an anticipated absence will be considered an unexcused absence. Failure to receive approval for unanticipated absences will be considered an unexcused absence. Patterns of unexcused absences may lead to an Isolated Deficiency or failure of a course/clerkship/elective.

For Phase 1 Courses, two days of unexcused absences will result in the assignment of an Area of Concern in Professionalism (see AOC policy). Additional unexcused absences will result in an Isolated Deficiency in Professionalism that will need to be successfully remediated under the direction of the Professionalism competency director; failure to do so will result in a course failure.

If the student’s justification of an exam postponement does not warrant excusing the absence the student will receive a score of "zero" for the missed examination. In addition, if the student did not receive approval from the course/clerkship/elective director for exam postponement, the student will receive a score of "zero" for the missed examination.

### Additional Contacts

A list of site leaders and course directors is available at [https://curriculum.medicine.iu.edu/site-leaders/](https://curriculum.medicine.iu.edu/site-leaders/). A list of clerkship directors and coordinators is available at [http://mse.medicine.iu.edu/curricular-affairs/curriculum/clinical-education/contacts/clerkship.html](http://mse.medicine.iu.edu/curricular-affairs/curriculum/clinical-education/contacts/clerkship.html).

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<th>Contact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Advising</td>
<td>Abigail Klemsz</td>
<td>317-274-1963</td>
<td><a href="mailto:aklemsz@iu.edu">aklemsz@iu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
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<td>Marti Reeser</td>
<td>317-274-2208</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Dreeser@iu.edu">Dreeser@iu.edu</a></td>
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### Forms

**IUSM Time Away Request Form**

### Related Information

- [Mission and Professionalism](#)
- [IUPUI Policy on Religious Holidays](#)
- [Impaired Student Program](#)

### History
Approved by the Curriculum Council Steering Committee 3/11/2014.
This policy replaces Absences and Accommodations.
Approved by the Curriculum Council Steering Committee 11/2015.
Friendly amendments made and approved by the Curriculum Council Steering Committee 2/14/2017.
Phase I attendance expectations modified on 4/2/2017.
Attendance expectations in small group and the outline of exam rescheduled added.
Approved by the Curriculum Council Steering Committee 07/11/2017.
Replaces Exam Rescheduling Policy; archived 7/24/2017.
Replaces Class Attendance in Student Handbook; archived 08/03/2017.
Minor grammatical changes on 08/03/2017.
Addendum to address professional development absences on 11/29/17.
Approved by FCC on 11/28/17.
Approved by the Curriculum Council Steering Committee on 12/12/17.
Professional Development Opportunity Request Form replaced Time Away Request Form in the section describing Phase 1 PDO procedures on 12/14/2017 via CCSC friendly amendment.
Included student illness within the Phase 1 Attendance Exam Postponement section on 01/05/2018.
Approved by CCSC on 01/09/2018.