

Policy Title: EXCUSED ABSENCE POLICY
UAMS COM Undergraduate Medical Education Policy 2.1.7
Section: Learning Environment
LCME Element(s): 12.4 Student Access to Health Care Services
Approved By: UAMS COM Curriculum Committee
Version History: February 28, 2022; July 22, 2024; April 27, 2026

The following policy outlines processes by which students may be granted excused absences.

PERSONAL HEALTHCARE: Medical students are strongly encouraged to maintain their own physical and mental health and well-being. Whenever possible, students should schedule non-emergent healthcare appointments during times that do not conflict with classroom and clinical activities. In the event an appointment must be scheduled during a required educational activity, students must request permission from the course/clerkship director to be excused. Absences will be granted based on this Excused Absence Policy.

The College of Medicine is committed to supporting students who have ongoing healthcare needs requiring frequent medical appointments. Students in this situation must:

- Discuss their situation with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or the Executive Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.
- Contact Michelle Zengulis, ADA Coordinator, to determine whether accommodations are appropriate.
- Notify and coordinate with the course or clerkship director.

These parties will work together to assess the students' needs and determine appropriate support or accommodations while maintaining the integrity of the clerkship experience.

The specific details for excused absences vary by academic year in the program. See below for detailed absence policy information by class.

M1/M2 Excused Absence Policy

In the M1 and M2 years, course faculty will inform students of those events which have a required attendance requirement. Students should notify the course director and coordinator to be granted an excused absence. This notification should be made in advance of the absence (except in cases of emergency/sudden illness where such notification cannot be made).

If the excuse is for an illness or injury, the student must provide a doctor's note within one week of the excused absence. Any required sessions or academic assignments that are missed must be fulfilled to the satisfaction of the course director. Within reason, course directors will assist students to complete all work missed during excused absences, as deemed necessary by the director of the course.

Reasons for excused absences may include:

- Acute illness
- Family emergency
- Doctor/healthcare appointments that cannot be reasonably scheduled outside MD program activities.
- Religious observances
- Giving a scholarly presentation at an academically relevant meeting
- Other extenuating circumstances at the discretion of the course director.

Protocol for Missed Exams and Quizzes

- Students may only re-take missed examinations or quizzes if they have an excused absence.
 - Students must contact the course or clerkship director or designee to arrange a make-up time.
- Questions on make-up examinations and quizzes cannot be appealed.
- Students who have an unexcused absence from an in-house examination or quiz or who miss a make-up examination or quiz will receive a grade of zero for that examination/quiz.
- Students who have an unexcused absence from an in-house examination (excluding quizzes) may receive a negative Student Performance Assessment.

M3 Excused Absence Policy

Clinical training is an essential part of medical education and represents a critical phase of the medical student experience. Given this, any absence from clinical duties (ACD) is considered a serious matter. Clerkship directors understand that circumstances will sometimes require a student to be absent from clinical duties. The following are responsibilities and general guidelines for a medical student requesting an ACD:

Reasons for ACD may include:

- Acute illness
- Family emergency
- Extenuating circumstances making it difficult to attend clinical duties (i.e., car trouble/transportation issues)
- Doctor/healthcare appointments that cannot be reasonably scheduled during non-clinical time.
- Sitting for a USMLE exam
- Religious observances

Student Responsibilities

- Students should communicate with the clerkship director and coordinator as soon as possible regarding the need for an ACD.
- Students should communicate with their supervising attending physician or resident physician regarding their ACD.

- A planned absence (appointment, USMLE exam) must be communicated to the clerkship director at least one week in advance (before the planned absence), if not earlier.

With advanced notice, the clerkship director may be able to work with the student to arrange rotations or shifts in advance. If this is not possible, making up missed activities may be required at the discretion of the clerkship director. Missed didactic activities such as lectures or quizzes may also be required to be made up at the discretion of the clerkship director.

Students who fail to notify their clerkship director of ACD may receive an AFI or negative Student Professionalism Assessment.

Students who miss three or more consecutive days of a clerkship may be required to provide a doctor's note or other form of verification.

Refer also to the "M3 Clerkship Year Personal Days" policy regarding other excused time off in the M3 year.

M4 Excused Absence Policy

Clinical training is an essential part of medical education and represents a critical phase of the medical student experience. Given this, any absence from clinical duties (ACD) is considered a serious matter. Clerkship directors and directors of M4 courses/electives understand that circumstances will sometimes require a student to be absent from clinical duties. The following are responsibilities and general guidelines for a medical student requesting an ACD:

Reasons for ACD may include:

- Acute illness
- Family emergency
- Extenuating circumstances making it difficult to attend clinical duties (i.e., car trouble/transportation issues)
- Doctor/healthcare appointments that cannot be reasonably scheduled during non-clinical time.
- Sitting for a USMLE exam
- Religious observances
- Residency interviews
- Research conferences

Student Responsibilities

- Students should communicate with the course director and coordinator as soon as possible regarding the need for an ACD.
- Students should communicate with their supervising attending physician or resident physician regarding their ACD.
- A planned absence (appointment, USMLE exam, research conference, residency interview) must be communicated to the course director at least one week in advance (before the planned absence), if not earlier.

With advanced notice, the course director may be able to work with the student to arrange rotations or shifts in advance. If this is not possible, making up missed activities may be required at the discretion of the course director. Missed didactic activities such as lectures or quizzes may also be required to be made up at the discretion of the course director.

Students who fail to notify their course director of ACD may receive an AFI or negative Student Professionalism Assessment.

Students who miss three or more consecutive days of a course may be required to provide a doctor's note or other form of verification.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Graham". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James Graham, Executive Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

Date: April 27, 2026