

Policy Name: 12.04.1 Student Access to Health Care Services

LCME states that a medical school must 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.

Scope:

Attendance and engagement contribute to a student’s education and professional identity formation. Healthcare professionals have a responsibility to ensure they cover their clinical responsibilities and patient care needs. Practicing this duty with peers and teaching faculty fosters professional identity formation and is therefore a part of the professionalism competency at UT Tyler School of Medicine (SOM).

Policy:

Attendance is required for most educational activities and strongly encouraged for all others. Course/Clinical Experiences syllabi and the student handbook will outline in clear terms the attendance expectations for educational activities. Attendance expectations are in accordance with the SOM duty hour guidelines. Note that some clinical, laboratory, and other experiences are impossible to make-up without repeating the entire course and/or academic year.

Attendance expectations:

Educational Activity	Attendance Expectation	Rationale
Small group sessions/courses (e.g. CBL, IPE, TOPS, Structure labs, etc.)	Required	Professional responsibility to your small group. Active learning requires participation for maximal benefit. Content will not be covered elsewhere; participation is required for maximal benefit. Clinical skills develop through guided practice. Clinical practice cannot be replicated passively. Achieving inter-professional competencies require interaction with colleagues.
Large group interactive sessions	Strongly encouraged	Interaction requires participation for maximal benefit.

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Clinical experiences (e.g. core clerkships and electives)	Required	Clinical application and practice cannot be replicated with passive activities. Professional identity formation requires working with role models and actively participating in patient care responsibilities.
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Absences may be excused under certain circumstances as listed below.

University Holidays

Students in Phase 1 are not expected to be in attendance on official University Holidays.

Religious Holy Days

A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible, so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence.

Jury Duty

Medical students are frequently exempted from Jury Duty, due to clinical expectations. If not, the school will make every effort to provide make-up opportunities for missed experiences.

Absence for Military Service

(From the General Information Catalog) “In accordance with section 51.9111 of the Texas Education Code, a student is excused from attending classes or engaging in other required activities, including exams, if he or she is called to active military service of a reasonably brief duration. The maximum time for which the student may be excused has been defined by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board as “no more than 25 percent of the total number of class meetings or the contact hour equivalent (not including the final examination period) for the specific course or courses in which the student is currently enrolled at the beginning of the period of active military service.” The student will be allowed a reasonable time after the absence to complete assignments and take exams. Policies affecting students who withdraw from the University for military service are given in the Withdrawal section.” NOTE: Medical students excused for military service will be placed on leave of absence and withdrawn from the course only if the course will be repeated in its’ entirety.

Unforeseeable Events

Students who miss educational activities for unforeseeable events such as illness, family, or other emergency, should complete an Absence Request Form prior to the unseen event, if possible. The Absence Request Form includes information regarding required documentation. Documentation of illness will not require a specific diagnosis. If the unforeseen event is an emergency and the student is unable to submit the Absence Request Form prior to the event, they should still email the Phase Coordinator/Director and/or Associate Dean of Student Affairs (if possible). The student is expected to complete the form as soon as they are able.

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Medical students may be excused from classes or clinical rotations to access health services and should make every effort to schedule elective healthcare appointments during Independent Study Time. If this is not possible and students must miss mandatory activities, the student may be required to make-up coursework. In the event of urgent or emergent medical issues that require an absence from class or clinical activities, students should contact the Office of Student Affairs, course, and clinical experience directors as soon as possible.

Tardiness:

In addition to any course policy in the syllabus, excessive tardiness may be considered as a conduct matter or professionalism violation, by the Student Process and Promotion Committee.

All absences and tardiness for required educational events will be recorded and monitored. The Course/Clerkship Director will consult with students to discuss any work that needs to be completed due to absences. Additionally, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs is kept abreast of all absences and tardies to monitor for repeated patterns and identify if students could benefit from additional support.

Weather or Unsafe Conditions Related Absence:

All Phase 1 courses, and longitudinal courses (i.e., Teaching Outstanding Physicians, PHSS, IPE) are cancelled when the University is closed due to weather or other unsafe conditions. If the clinical site is closed or in an emergency staffing status, students are not expected to attend clinical courses.

Should a clinical site be closed or on an emergency staffing status, students may contact the clinical supervisor (course or team director) and request to report. Two factors should be considered during this request: the safety of the student to travel from their current location to the clinical site; and the level of patient responsibility the student is allowed (didactics or observing have minimal patient responsibility, active participation in procedures or an Acting Internship would involve higher patient responsibility) For example: A student with a higher level of patient responsibility such as an Acting Internship, may request to attend to support patient care, if they feel confident that travel is safe given their circumstances.

Regardless of the status at the clinical site, the location from which or through which a student must travel may not be safe. Students should consider Tyler Independent School District (Tyler ISD) closures as well as travel advisories from police or other governmental authority. Students will be excused from their clinical site if Tyler ISD is closed. Further, if the student believes it is unsafe to travel, the student should call the course or clinical director and make them aware. This absence will be excused.

Curriculum Oversight Committee approved: 01/11/2022

Review and Modification: Pending – 3/2023