

Absence Policy for Mandatory Sessions during the First Two Years of Medical School

Introduction

Students are expected to attend all mandatory educational sessions. However, situations arise in which absences are unavoidable. These mainly involve illnesses and family emergencies, yet there are other reasons for which students might feel that it is necessary to miss mandatory sessions. The absence policy below applies to both the MD and MD/MPH curriculum tracks.

This policy has three main features to accommodate students when such circumstances arise:

- 1. Two (2) personal days can be taken when necessary to miss mandatory sessions. Note: Students are expected to be in class as per their schedules. Examples of how personal days may be taken: routine (not emergency) doctor's visits, dentist visits, getting your car fixed, attendance at meetings both on and off campus, and attending family weddings and graduations. That is the intent.**
- 2. Students report their absences directly to the Medical Education Curriculum Managers (see listing below). This streamlines absence reporting as, for most absences, only the Curriculum Managers need to be contacted.**
- 3. Personal days are expected to be "pre-planned"; therefore, students need to notify the Curriculum Managers at least 5 days prior to the absence. If the student is missing a mandatory activity where they function as a team (as in PBL), then the student must notify the members of the group.**

The Curriculum Manager will convey the notification of the student's absence to the course director, and PBL Director if required, and also, as with all absences, file an absentee report through the absence reporting system. Failure of a student to report a personal day to the Curriculum Manager will result in the loss of that personal day and will be listed as an "unexcused absence". It is not a requirement to provide a reason for the personal day and the privacy of students will be respected.

***The Doctoring and Clinical Skills courses are an exception to #2 above from now until the end of the semester. Students in those courses should continue to report absences to Valerie Velez and/or Annie Maurer in the Doctoring/Clinical Skills Office.**

Part I: Policy for Personal Days

A student will be allotted a **maximum of two "personal days"** per semester for missing mandatory sessions. A "personal day" absence applies to any and all mandatory sessions on a **single given day**. As indicated above, such personal days might be used for family celebrations or attendance at meetings or routine medical/dental visits.

The personal day allocation is separate from any excused absences as defined in Part II: Policy for Excused Absences below. Personal days cannot be carried over from one semester to another semester and do not accumulate from year to year.

Rules for Personal Days:

1. There are black out days for personal days: Student Convention; Blueprint and Comprehensive Basic Science exam days; and Pinning Ceremony events. Students are NOT to take a personal day when an examination is scheduled. Taking such a personal day may cause the student to receive a grade of F

(failure) or I (Incomplete) on the examination or in the course at the discretion of the course director together with the Associate/Assistant Deans for Student Affairs. **Any exception to this policy must be agreed to by the course director and the Associate/Assistant Deans for Student Affairs as soon as possible prior to the exam or quiz date. If an exception is required, students should not make travel commitments or other advanced plans until the exception is granted.**

2. If a personal day is taken and the student misses a mandatory session where points are awarded for attendance, for work performed, quizzes or other assessments, the student may forfeit the points associated with this exercise. This is at the discretion of the course director and the course director will determine if make-up work is allowed.

Students who miss educational activities are responsible for learning the missed content. For missed mandatory sessions, specific make-up assignments may be required at the discretion of the course director. Even if make-up work is completed, this may still result in loss of points associated with the exercise and affect the student's grade. This is at the discretion of the course director.

3. **Two personal days per semester are allowed.** Any unexcused absence in excess of these 2 personal days (and apart from any Part II excused absences) will be reported by the Curriculum Managers, course directors, or members of the administration via the absence reporting system and reported to Student Affairs. These will be marked "unexcused absences in excess of the two personal days". Such absences will be discussed at the Freshman or Sophomore MD Promotions Committee meetings or the MD/MPH Promotions Committee meetings and may result in disciplinary actions.

Questions concerning these policies can be directed to the Associate/Assistant Deans for Student Affairs, the Associate Dean for Preclinical Curriculum, and/or the Director for the MD/MPH Program.

Part II: Policy for Excused Absences

A student will be excused from mandatory classes/exams/quizzes for the following reasons:

1. **Illness.** Students will be excused when ill. A doctor's note is not required for the absence to be excused unless the absence is prolonged and in excess of 2 days. When a doctor's note is required, please deliver this note to the Associate Dean for Student Services. If students when ill need assistance, they should contact the Assistant or Associate Dean for Student Affairs and/or the Associate Dean for Student Services. Absences due to illness do not count toward personal days.
2. **Family or other emergency.** Students will be excused for family or other emergency. If students have an emergency and need assistance, they should contact the Assistant or Associate Dean for Student Affairs and/or the Associate Dean for Student Services. Absences due to emergencies do not count toward personal days.
3. **Presentation of research at a national or international meeting.** Note, the student **MUST** be the first author on the abstract and presenter of the research to qualify for an excused absence. Students must provide a copy of the letter of invitation and acceptance of the abstract for the meeting as well as a copy of the abstract itself demonstrating that the student is the first author. Absences for these purposes do not count toward personal days.
4. As an **active participant** (not simply an attendant) officially representing the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine at a meeting or other event. The Associate/Assistant Deans for Student

Affairs must approve of this excused absence. Absences for these purposes do not count toward personal days.

Students who are absent for the above reasons should learn the missed content and may have to do make-up work as determined by the course director. With completion of any make-up work requirements, students will not be penalized for any grades associated with the missed mandatory session.

The students should notify their Curriculum Manager for their courses **at least 5 working days** prior to a planned absence (such as attendance at a national meeting). When this is an unplanned absence (such as illness or emergency), the student must notify the Curriculum Manager as soon as possible of the absence, generally **within 3 days** of the unplanned absence.

If the absence for the above reasons causes the student to miss a mandatory session where points are awarded or an examination or quiz, the student should arrange for make-up as soon as possible. Arrangement for make-up work should be done by consultation with both the course director and with the Associate/Assistant Deans for Student Affairs. **At maximum, any make-up work or make up of an exam or quiz should be done within 5 business days following the absence unless an exception is granted by the course director and by the Associate/Assistant Deans for Student Affairs in consultation with the Associate Dean for Student Services when appropriate.** Make-up exams/quizzes are not allowed to be conducted during normal scheduled course time and the time for these is arranged with the Curriculum Manager.

Exceptions to this policy **MUST** be approved by the Assistant and/or the Associate Deans for Student Affairs and the course director. If Problem Based Learning (PBL) sessions are to be missed for other than the reasons above, the PBL Director must also approve an exception to this policy.

Part III. Leave of Absence (LOA)

Absences in **excess of 5 consecutive days** generally require a leave of absence (LOA). The student must contact the Associate/Assistant Deans for Student Affairs to discuss this and arrange for the LOA. Please consult the Handbook of Student Rights and Responsibilities for additional information regarding Leave of Absence.

Current Roster of Deans/Program Directors and Curriculum Managers 2015-2016

Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education	Dr. Alex Mechaber
Associate Dean for Student Affairs	Dr. Ana Campo
Assistant Dean for Student Affairs	Dr. Chrisfouad Alabiad
Associate Dean for Preclinical Curriculum	Dr. Richard Riley
Associate Dean for Clinical Curriculum	Dr. Paul Mendez
Associate Dean for Student Services	Dr. Hilit Mechaber
MD/MPH Program Director	Dr. Jay Sosenko
MD/MPH Assistant Program Director	Dr. Meaghan McNulty
MD/MPH Problem Based Learning Director	Dr. Mark Gelbard
MD/MPH Curriculum Director	Dr. Richard Riley
MS-1 MD Curriculum Manager	Mr. Anthony Fratacci
MS-2 MD Curriculum Manager	Ms. Cindy Santana
MS-1 MD/MPH Curriculum Manager	Ms. Valerie Velez
MS-2 MD/MPH Curriculum Manager	Ms. Tahimi Rodriguez Diaz
MD Manager of Curriculum Programs	Ms. Julia Johnson
MD/MPH Manager of Curriculum Programs	Mr. Alex Reinoso