

Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) Policy

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| Title: Short-Term Absence Policy | | | |
| <i>Origination Date:</i> 04/2/2023 | <i>Last Amended Date:</i> 6/28/2024 | <i>Next Scheduled Review Date:</i> 11/01/2025 | <i>Policy Reaffirmed Date:</i> |
| Purpose: | To establish criteria and outline the process and timeline for short-term absences throughout all phases of the Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree curriculum. | | |
| Definitions: | <p>Preclinical curriculum - the foundational first 20 months of the curriculum emphasizing acquisition of formal knowledge and clinical skills prior to the start or clerkships.</p> <p>Clinical curriculum - the clinical phase of the curriculum.</p> <p>Inclement Weather - periodically the University of Texas Health at San Antonio (UTHSA) is closed or has alternate work hours related to inclement weather. Preclinical students follow the preclinical decision regarding reporting to campus. Clinical students follow the decisions of the clinical site to which they are assigned. If conditions are not safe in their home area, all students can use leave using the below procedures.</p> <p>Short-term Absence - time away from the preclinical or clinical curriculum that is not a leave of absence.</p> <p>Leave of Absence - see the university policy on criteria and process for a leave of absence.</p> <p>National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) Subject Exam - provides subject examinations in the basic and clinical sciences for the purpose of assessing the educational achievement of individuals in specific subject areas. Subject examinations are primarily designed for use as final examinations after courses, clerkships, or other units of instruction.</p> <p>Required mandatory academic session - as noted in the grading policy for each module in the preclinical curriculum, including examinations, quizzes, RATs, TBLs, Synthesis, Clinical Skills sessions, histopathology laboratories, anatomy laboratories, neurology laboratories, graded activities or otherwise noted as required in the course grading policy. In the clinical curriculum, this includes NBME examinations, assigned time in the clinical learning environment, and other activities noted as required in the course grading policy.</p> <p>Institutional holidays - UTHSA has several institutionally recognized holidays. During the preclinical curriculum, all holidays are included on the institutional calendar. Students are expected to attend scheduled academic events on holidays not included on the institutional calendar. During the clinical curriculum, students are expected to follow the procedures of their clerkship, elective/selective, and/or clinical site.</p> <p>Examination - An examination is a summative assessment in the preclinical curriculum including midterm examinations and final examinations. In the clinical curriculum, this includes midterm examinations and NBME examinations.</p> <p>Clinical Skills sessions - Any activity within the clinical skills module is a clinical skills session. Examples of these sessions are basic and advanced laboratories, ultrasound laboratories, venipuncture laboratories, cases, workshops.</p> <p>Registered Student Organization - A student-led organization that is recognized by the University and is compliant with all requirements established by the Office of Student Life.</p> | | |
| Policy: | The UTHSA MD degree program is committed to providing students with the flexibility and agency to take short-term absences while ensuring the successful completion of the program's requirements. | | |

Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) Policy

Students pursuing the MD degree at UTHSA are physicians in training who must meet standards of professional conduct and responsibility to develop into effective physicians. Active participation in the preclinical curriculum and clinical curriculum indicates the student's understanding and mastery of professional responsibilities. If it is necessary for students to be absent from a required mandatory MD program activity, students must approach such absences with the same standard of professional responsibility required of practicing physicians; professional responsibility extends to one's patients and members of one's team. Students remain responsible for all learning objectives despite absences and assume the responsibility for absences from the preclinical and clinical curriculum.

The Short-Term Student Absence Policy distinguishes between health-related absences (Sick, Health appointments), non-health related absences (Flex Days, Personal Days) and urgent crises.

Absences may also be processed on an individual basis by a Student Affairs Dean or designee in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), and the Texas Education Code, Section 51.982, if applicable.

Students who are found to be in violation of this policy will be referred to the Student Progression and Promotions Committee and this may result in the failure of the course or a professionalism memorandum added to the student's record.

Students will be allocated the following number of full days per category for excused absences. Any remaining days cannot be carried over to the next academic year. Students with an unexcused absence will lose a personal day for the absence and will be required to make up a mandatory activity.

Any absence not explicitly approved as outlined in this policy is considered unexcused.

| Category | Number of allotted days per academic year For purposes of this policy, the AY will run from July 1 to June 30 |
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| Health-related Absences (Sick days and healthcare appointment) | 14 |
| Urgent Crises | Will be taken from total number of allotted days (i.e., 24 including health-related absences, flex days, and/or personal days) |
| Flex days | 6 |
| Personal days | 4 |

Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) Policy

Excused absences will be considered for the following reasons:

| Health-related Absences | | | |
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| Absence Type | Deadline to make request in Absence system | Justification Requirements | Additional Information |
| <p>Sick Day</p> <p>Applicable for self or immediate family member.</p> <p>e.g., acute illness, exacerbation of chronic illness including mental health illnesses</p> | <p>If day of an exam: Prior to the start-time of the exam</p> <p>Otherwise: Within 24 hours on the day of the absence</p> | <p>Medical note required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day of an examination • Clinical Skills session • Third consecutive day of illness • Student has already used ten sick days in the academic year <p>Medical notes not available at time of submission must be sent by email to Med Student Affairs within five calendar days of the absence.</p> | <p>A student with recurrent health-related absences who has already used their allotted absences for the academic year may be required to meet with a Student Affairs Dean or designee to discuss.</p> <p>For parental leave, any time required outside of the health-related absences will need to be discussed with a Student Affairs Dean or designee.</p> |
| <p>Healthcare Appointment</p> <p>Applicable for self or immediate family member.</p> | <p>At the time the appointment is booked</p> | <p>N/A</p> | <p>A student with recurrent health-related absences who has already used their allotted absences for the academic year may be required to meet with a Student Affairs Dean or designee to discuss.</p> <p>A student with chronic illness who may require more healthcare appointment days than allotted should contact the Academic, Faculty and Student Ombudsperson & ADA Compliance Office regarding accommodations.</p> |

Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) Policy

| Urgent Crises | | | |
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| Absence Type | Deadline to make request in Absence system | Justification Requirements | Additional Information |
| Urgent Crises | Preferably prior to start-time of exam. Otherwise, as soon as possible on the first day of absence. | An explanation will be required. | A student will be required to submit documentation if more than one day is used for urgent crises within an academic year. |
| Flex Days | | | |
| Absence Type | Deadline to make request in Absence system | Justification Requirements | Additional Information |
| Professional experiences | 30 days in advance If schedule is received or modified <30 days before absence: Within 72 hours of receiving notification of schedule change. | Form must be submitted with documentation of the event and explanation for it to be considered for approval. Documentation must be uploaded in the Absence system at the time the request is made online. | Professional experiences will be considered and reviewed on an individual basis once the completed form is submitted. Professional experience absences cannot be combined with other absence categories. |
| Residency interviews | Within 72 hours of receiving the invitation with supporting documentation showing proof of when the invitation was confirmed. | Documentation must be uploaded in the Absence system at the time the request is made online. | Students will not be deducted for residency interviews in a rotation. Required make up will be determined according to the policy of the rotation. |
| Religious Holy Day | Immediately following registration / enrollment or within the first fifteen days of the term per university policy. | Name of religious holy day must be uploaded in the absence system at the time the request is made online. | When an exam falls on a student's holy day, the student should request an absence in accordance with this policy. |

Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) Policy

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| | <p>Marriage/Civil Union</p> <p>A student may be absent for up to 5 days for their marriage or civil union.</p> <p>A student may also be absent from the rotation on the day of the marriage or civil partnership of a child or stepchild, parent, sibling, first degree relative or if in the wedding party.</p> | <p>30 days in advance</p> <p>If schedule is received or modified <30 days before absence: Within 72 hours of receiving notification of schedule change.</p> | <p>Documentation of event and role.</p> <p>Documentation must be uploaded in the Absence system at the time the request is made online.</p> | <p>Approval may be granted for up to 5 days for a student's own wedding.</p> <p>For the marriage or civil partnership of a child or stepchild, parent, sibling, first degree relative, or if in the wedding party approval may be granted for up to 3 days.</p> |
| | <p>Acute Loss/Attending a Funeral</p> <p>A student may be absent for 5 days on the occasion of the death or the funeral of their spouse or child or of the child of their spouse, or of their parent or sibling. For anyone not listed above, a student may be absent from their course for one day each on the occasion of the death and/or funeral.</p> | <p>1 day in advance for a funeral</p> <p>As soon as possible for an acute loss</p> | <p>N/A</p> | <p>N/A</p> |

Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) Policy

| Personal Days | | |
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| Absence Type | Deadline to make request in Absence system | Additional Information |
| Personal Day A student may use personal days for life events (e.g., friend's wedding, family reunion) that do not meet the definition of Health-related absences, Urgent Crises, or Flex days. | 30 days in advance | Students may request up to 2 Personal Days in a course or rotation. Students may not take a Personal Day that would make a course incomplete, or includes any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An examination or points generating assessment (this includes, but is not limited to, quizzes, RATs, OSCEs) • An orientation session for a clerkship or the beginning of an academic year • Clinical Skills session • Third year OSCE/Exploring Clinical Medicine |
| Process: | Planned Absences: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The student submits an online Absence Request Form accessible through a link on the student's applicable Class of 20XX Canvas website 2. OUME receives the Absence Request Form and responds via email to the student with an approval or denial of the request. 3. If the request is approved as an excused absence, the student notifies the course/module director(s) to make arrangements to make up course work. 4. Students with an excused absence during an examination must take the examination on the make up examination date. Unplanned Absences: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The student sends an email, as soon as possible, ideally on the day of the absence, to the student's course/module director(s) detailing the situation and the course/module activity being missed. 2. The student also submits an online Absence Request Form accessible through a link on the student's applicable Class of 20XX Canvas website. 3. OUME receives the Absence Request Form and responds via email to the student with an approval or denial of the request. The course/module director has access to the absence list for reference. 4. If the request is approved as an excused absence, the student may contact the course/module director to plan make up work, if applicable. | |

Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) Policy

Approval Body: Long School of Medicine, Office for Undergraduate Medical Education

CERTIFIED BY:

Policy Custodian

Name: Joshua Hanson, MD
Title: Associate Dean for Student Affairs

Date

Responsible Officer

Name: Deborah Conway, MD
Title: Vice Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education

Date

ACCEPTED AND AGREED TO:

Responsible Executive

Name: Francisco G. Cigarroa, M.D.
Title: Acting Dean, Long School of Medicine

Date

References to regulations and/or other related policies:

- **LCME and SACSCOC Elements:**
 - 3.5 Learning Environment/Professionalism
 - 12.3 Personal Counseling/Mental Health/Well-Being Programs
 - 12.4 Student Access To Health Care Services
 - SACSCOC 12.3 Student Rights

- **LSOM Policy/Guideline/Document:**
 - Clerkship Grade Composition Policy
 - Preclinical Grade Composition Policy
 - Student Duty Hour Policy
 - UTHSA University Catalog