

# Attendance Policy for Clinical Rotations

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Effective Date: January 1, 2022

Responsible Party: University of Alabama at Birmingham Marnix E. Heersink School of Medicine's Assistant Dean for Clinical Education

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## POLICY ABSTRACT

The Attendance Policy for Clinical Rotations details expectations for attendance and time off service during clinical rotations.

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## REASON FOR POLICY

This policy sets the expectation for medical student attendance during clinical rotations. UAB Heersink School of Medicine follows existing Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) guidelines for work hours.

### **ACGME Common Program Requirements Section VI.F.2.D Clinical Experience and Education**

“Residents must be scheduled for a minimum of one day in seven free of clinical work and required education (when averaged over four weeks)”

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## SCOPE

This policy applies to all UAB Heersink School of Medicine students and visiting students participating in clinical rotations and details medical student attendance expectations during clinical rotations.

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## POLICY

Clinical training is an essential part of medical education and represents a critical phase of the medical student experience. Clinical training involves building a fund of knowledge as well as developing the professional skills to serve patients and support the healthcare team. Given this, any absence from clinical duties can negatively impact both the educational experiences and patient care.

The Heersink School of Medicine follows existing ACGME guidelines for work hours. Based on the ACGME policy, students should expect to receive at least 1 day off per week averaged over a one-month period. Weekends and UAB designated holidays (e.g. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day; Independence Day; Thanksgiving Day; other government designated holidays occurring during scheduled courses) are considered workdays in this policy. Ultimately, days off will be determined by each clerkship and clinical course according to service needs and schedules.

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## PROCEDURE

### **Required Core Clerkships**

Students are expected to be present for all required clerkship activities unless otherwise specified by the clerkship's director(s). This includes activities on weekends (on-call or post-call activities), at night (night float), and on holidays (on-call or post-call activities). Weekend days when students are not required to participate in clerkship activities are off days to invest in self-care activities or preparation for the Clerkship shelf exam.

MS3 clerkship students will be dismissed at noon on the day prior to a shelf exam on a 4-week Clerkship and will have the day prior to a shelf exam off on a 6- or 8-week clerkship.

### **Clinical Rotations Other Than Clerkships**

To preclude the possibility of a student being on call two consecutive days across two rotations, students should not be required to take night call or overnight shifts on Sundays prior to the start of a new rotation on a Monday.

### **UAB Designated Holidays**

For all clinical students, if you are on call or post-call on a holiday, students are expected to report to work.

### **Absence from Clinical Duties**

The Heersink School of Medicine recognizes that circumstances may arise necessitating absences from clinical rotations. An absence from clinical duties will reduce the amount of time the student can participate in clinical training. An absence from clinical duties is defined as an absence from scheduled work hours above the 4 days off averaged over a 4-week period. Any absences (unexcused or excused) over the allotted amount, will trigger review by the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) and the Assistant Dean for Clinical Education.

Students participating in longitudinal teaching activities such as Clinical Teaching Assistantships for the Introduction to Clinical Medicine Course, Anatomy Teaching Assistantships or Simulation Teaching Assistantship are to schedule their involvement in these activities to reduce time away from clinical duties. Clinical and patient needs should always be prioritized. Students are to obtain permission from the resident and attending providing student oversight to leave clinical duties to participate in these teaching activities. Students are expected to return to clinical duties when the teaching activity ends. Excessive time away will trigger review by the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) and the Assistant Dean for Clinical Education.

**A student with an absence from clinical duties may be required to make up the time missed, regardless of whether the absence was excused or not.**

Absences requiring make-up time are based on rotation duration and enforced at the discretion of the clinical course director. Days off are not considered absences.

Rotation length and time allotted for excused absences:

- 2-week clinical rotation: ≤ 1 day
- 4-week clinical rotation: ≤ 2 days
- 6-week clinical rotation: ≤ 3 days
- 8-week clinical rotation: ≤ 4 days

### **Criteria for Excused Absence from Clinical Duties**

Students may be excused from mandatory activities or examinations with proper documentation and approval, only in the case of an incapacitating medical issue or hospitalization, or if there is a death or serious illness of a loved one. Requests for excused absences associated with giving a presentation at a professional conference may be considered. Specifics are further detailed below. In general, students should notify the course director, their medical team, and the respective campus Medical Student Services office of their absence.

Students who may need reasonable accommodations based on disability under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation and/or the ADA must seek accommodation through UAB Disability Support Services.

### **Make-up Policy for Excused Absences from Clinical Duties**

During clerkships and clinical rotations, students will make up missed days after coordinating with the rotation's leadership and within 12 weeks from the end date of the rotation. If make-up time cannot be scheduled within 12 weeks, the matter must be brought by the student and the clinical rotations leadership to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education and the Assistant Dean of Clinical Education for consideration of an extension. A grade of Incomplete may be required in cases where students are unable to complete coursework by the time grades are due.

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## **REASONS AND PROCEDURE FOR EXCUSED ABSENCES FROM CLINICAL DUTIES**

### **Personal Illness, Medical Issue, or Hospitalization**

In such cases, the students should notify their clinical team, the leadership of the rotation and their corresponding Medical Student Services representative as soon as possible. Students should present a letter/excuse from a healthcare professional to their campus Medical Student Services representative as soon as feasible. The letter/excuse content should only validate the date of the missed activity and the date that the student may return to school or work. Medical Student Services representatives will communicate the interval that the student's absence is approved to Undergraduate Medical Education and/or the rotation's leadership. Approval is required prior to scheduling any make-up time with the rotation's leadership.

**Bereavement**

In cases of serious illness, bereavement, and/or funeral attendance for loved ones, the students should notify their clinical team, the leadership of the rotation and their corresponding Medical Student Services representative as soon as possible. The student and the rotation's leadership will work on a plan to make up needed dates. The Office of Undergraduate Medical Education may be called in as needed.

**Conference Presentation/Medical Training Opportunities**

Students invited to present at a medical or professional conference may request consideration for an excused absence with the rotation's leadership and the Office of Undergraduate Medical Education prior to committing to attend. Students should submit requests as soon as possible, but no later than 2 weeks prior to the initiation of the clinical rotation. Students should alert the leadership of the rotation as far in advance as possible (preferably before the initiation of the rotation) so that scheduling adjustments can be made. If approved, the excused absence is generally granted for the date of the presentation only. Timeliness of request, Student Academic Standing (academic probation, etc.), and relevance to the student's training will be considered prior to approval.

Request submission form and instructions to submit can be found at:

<https://uab.app.box.com/v/ExcusedAbsenceforPresenting/file/845298104076>

All forms are subject to review by the Office of Undergraduate Medical Education.

**All Other Requests**

Student may require absences for reasons not otherwise covered in this document. Make-up and extensions for absences deemed reasonable will be coordinated between the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education, the Assistant Dean for Clinical Education, the rotation's leadership, and the student. Approval of excused absence requires that appropriate explanation and documentation be submitted to and approved by the rotation's leadership, and Medical Student Services campus leadership in coordination with the Office of Undergraduate Medical Education. All requests will receive due consideration from the office of Undergraduate Medical Education (Associate Dean for UME, Assistant Dean for Clinical Education). The formal request must be made at least 2 weeks prior to the scheduled activity. If such a request for an excused absence is approved, the exact time, date and assigned location of the make-up activity will be arranged between the rotation's leadership and the student.

Time away for parental responsibilities is discussed in the Parental Leave Guidelines.

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**HISTORY**

**Created: 07/18/2012**

**Approved: 12/21/2021 by UA Systems Office**

**Revised: 12/21/2021**

University of Alabama at Birmingham Marnix E. Heersink School of Medicine policies shall be reviewed periodically to determine whether revisions are appropriate to address the needs of the medical school community.