



TITLE OF POLICY

TEC 2.0 Foundation Phase Attendance Policy

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy outlines the Attendance Policy for the Foundation Phase TEC 2.0 curriculum as well as the procedure for students to use excused absences. The policy also states the thresholds for reporting absences to Student Affairs Leadership, the Committee on Professionalism Education, and the Student Progress Committee.

RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND REVIEW CYCLE

Foundation Phase Committee will review this policy annually and Education Committee will approve the final amended policy.

LCME REFERENCE(S)

LCME 12.4: Student Access to Healthcare Services

HISTORY OF APPROVALS AND UPDATES

Approved by the Education Committee, March 18, 2024. This version of the policy will be effective Summer 2024.

Approved by the Education Committee March 20, 2023.

POLICY

The goal of this policy is to support students in identifying time needed during the pre-clinical curriculum to take care of personal matters and to attend to life events that require *limited* time away from class while balancing learning and accountability to classmates. For larger concerns and need for time away (i.e., more than four days away from class), please consult directly with Student Affairs as early as possible by emailing SALeadership@listserv.med.unc.edu.

The TEC 2.0 curriculum has multiple open afternoons each week. Students should plan appointments such as doctor visits, therapy, regular home and car maintenance, and other business during free, non-curricular afternoons.

In the event of an unanticipated need to be absent from class or planned, fixed-date need (e.g., family wedding), students may use an excused absence. Below is detailed information about how excused absences may be used and how students should request them. Students who do not follow the appropriate steps to notify OMSE that they will be absent (e.g., communicate only with faculty/instructors instead of filling out the form) may be referred for professionalism concerns.

Regardless of whether the absence is planned or due to illness, crisis, or conference, students are responsible for making up the work they miss, including exam make-ups. A student who is away from the curriculum for an extended period of time may benefit from an informal stepping away until the next course starts or a more formal leave of absence. Student Affairs can advise students on appropriate steps.

Students who receive a notice or summons for jury duty (in any jurisdiction) or who are assigned to report for military duty on dates that conflict with scheduled curricular time are encouraged to email SALeadership@listserv.med.unc.edu as early as possible with a copy of the notice.

I. What are “excused absences”?

- Excused absences are intended to allow a student to miss scheduled class time for illness, delay of transportation (such as car breakdowns), family emergencies, urgent medical care (i.e., not routine doctor’s appointments) or other similar needs. Students are not required to submit documentation, doctors’ notes, or other justification for taking an excused absence.
- **Students are allotted four excused absences per semester** for unplanned health/wellbeing needs or personal/family matters.
- An excused absence will be used when a student reports they will miss one or more classes on any given school day.
 - An excused absence will be used regardless of whether the student misses one or all classes on a given day.
 - Attendance at all Orientation events is mandatory unless otherwise indicated.
- A student cannot use more than two absences during any course (including 6-week medical sciences courses, the semester-long Patient Centered Care (PCC) course, and the semester-long Social and Health Systems (SHS) course).
- A student cannot use an absence during an exam or major assignment in any course or during resource-intensive sessions such as patient encounters and labs. The only exception to this rule is for Peer Accelerated Learning (PALS) quizzes, which may be made up if they are missed during an excused absence. Students may not request absences during resource-intensive sessions.
 - Resource-intensive sessions will be scheduled on the Canvas calendar three or more months in advance.
 - A student who misses an exam (other than a PALS quiz) will have an absence deducted from their “bank.”
 - If a student is ill during an exam, major assignment, or resource-intensive session, they should still submit [Qualtrics form](#) for an excused absence so that they are known to be safe and accounted for, as well as email SALeadership@listserv.med.unc.edu.
- Absences do not carry over to the next semester.
- At the discretion of Student Affairs, a student who experiences an emergency health crisis or urgent family matter will not have their absence(s) deducted from their “bank.” Students must report their concern as soon as possible to SALeadership@listserv.med.unc.edu and complete the [Qualtrics form](#) at their earliest convenience.

II. Can I attend a conference?

- In addition to the four absences permitted each semester, Foundation Phase students are permitted **up to two full-day absences per academic year** (Year 1: August-May; Year 2: August-December) to travel and participate in a conference.
- To be granted permission to use a conference absence, a student must be listed in the conference agenda as a presenter.

- Students must email SALeadership@listserv.med.unc.edu with a copy of the conference program/agenda or email acceptance of their presentation and the date(s) on which they will be absent.
- Conference absences may be granted during a resource-intensive session.
- If a student requires additional days to travel or attend the conference, they may use excused absence days from their bank.
- When the conference is approved by Student Affairs, the student must complete the [Qualtrics form](#) indicating the projected dates of absence and forward the approval email to Foundphaseattendance@med.unc.edu.

III. Should I use an excused absence for religious observance?

- No, the School of Medicine (SOM) follows the University's [Religious Accommodations Policy](#) for religious observance.
- To apply for a religious accommodation, fill out the [form](#) for review by the Equal Opportunity and Compliance office (EOC) at least 10 business days before the accommodation/absence is needed (per university policy). Once approved, forward the notice from the EOC to SALeadership@listserv.med.unc.edu and FoundPhaseAttendance@med.unc.edu. Students must still complete the [Qualtrics form](#) indicating the projected date(s) of absence.
- Students are expected to make up any missed work (including but not limited to assignments, labs, quizzes, exams) in a timely manner and should arrange with their instructor plans for alternative completion deadlines.
- Students with approved religious observance accommodations will not need to deduct excused absences from their semester allotment.

IV. How do I report and document that I am taking an excused absence?

- Requests for absences should be submitted as early as the absence is planned via the excused absence [Qualtrics form](#) or as soon as the need becomes apparent and not later than the start of the first class session that will be missed that day.
- Students will receive an email confirmation of their absence request(s) and are responsible for monitoring their use of absences and for not exceeding the allotted number.
- When a student completes the excused absence [Qualtrics form](#), the instructors or facilitators for each missed session will receive an emailed copy of the form, but it is the responsibility of the student to communicate with them regarding makeup work.
- If a student is absent and unaccounted for due to not submitting an excused absence form, Student Affairs will initiate a health and safety check. If for any reason a student does not submit an excused absence form, the absence will still be counted as one of the four permitted per semester.

V. How do I document my attendance in all my different classes?

- Students will badge into all required curricular sessions including large-group PALS sessions, case-based learning (CBL), SHS, and PCC meetings, class meetings, and anatomy/micro labs.

- If your individual badge will not scan after two attempts, students should send an email to Foundphaseattendance@med.unc.edu to document their attendance at each class until the badge issue is resolved. In the event of a complete system failure, attendance will not be taken for that session.
- Please remember that it is a violation of the Foundation Phase Professionalism Standards as well as the [UNC Honor Code](#) to badge into a session and leave or to misrepresent your attendance or any classmate's attendance in any way.

VI. What should I do if I'm sick?

- If a student is ill and cannot come to class, they should use an excused absence. This includes time needed for mental health.
- Students should report via [Qualtrics form](#) that they are using an excused absence no later than the beginning of the class they will miss.
- If you are sick on an exam day or other day when excused absences are not allowed (physical or mental health), follow the procedures listed in Section I above.
- The School of Medicine observes current CDC guidelines on COVID testing, isolation, and return. See <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html> for more information and to use the Isolation and Exposure Calculator.
- Any time missed due to isolation while awaiting test results should be submitted as an excused absence.
- A student with an acute illness or injury that spans more than two days will only have one day deducted from their bank, but should continue to fill out the [Qualtrics form](#) for each day they are absent.

VII. What happens if I have exhausted my excused absences OR have met the allowed number of absences in any one course and need additional time away from class?

- If a student needs to take time off beyond the allotted four excused absences, the student must email SALeadership@listserv.med.unc.edu as soon as they become aware of the need for time away from class.
- If a student is ill during an exam, major assignment, or resource-intensive session, they should still submit for an excused day so that they are known to be safe and accounted for, as well as email SALeadership@listserv.med.unc.edu.

VIII. How will I make up work that I miss?

- CBL: Students will be required to review the case, review the Panopto recording of the missed session, and submit written responses to the "high-yield discussion questions" and other questions embedded within the case to their CBL facilitator.
- PALS: Students must make up missed PALS quizzes if they use an excused absence. Following submission of the [Qualtrics excused absence form](#) indicating that a PALS session will be missed, students will receive an email with the date and location of the makeup quiz session if available (makeups will not be available after the end of the course).

- SHS, PCC, & Anatomy: Students must communicate directly with their facilitator/tutor/instructor and agree on a make-up assignment. Students are expected to complete the makeup assignment defined by the instructor on the agreed upon timeline.
- Exams: Students who miss an exam will receive an email from the NBME Chief Proctor who will arrange a makeup exam date. Please see the TEC 2.0 Foundation Phase Exam and Quiz Policy for a complete outline of exam makeup policies.

IX. What happens if I miss class and don't submit for an absence, if I miss class and have used up all my absences, if I exceed the allotted number of days in any one course, or if I miss class on an exam day or other day when excused absences are not allowed?

- When there arises a concern about a student's health and/or well-being, or when a student has not followed attendance procedures, the Associate Dean, Assistant Deans, or Senior Director of Student Affairs may conduct a wellness check-in with the student to offer support, provide information on available resources (e.g., Taking Care of Our Own, CAPS, Accessibility Resources and Service), and/or ensure that the student has a clear understanding of the attendance policy.
- If a student evidences there are underlying barriers to professional behavior regarding attendance that are not health or emergency-related, the student may be reported to the Committee on Professionalism Education (CoPE) and will be required to follow through with any expectations set by the committee.
- Students who demonstrate significant professionalism concerns following a referral to CoPE will be reported to the Student Progress Committee to determine whether a student has the professional demeanor necessary to continue at the SOM.

PROCEDURE

- The attendance policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Foundation Phase Committee and Education Committee.
- Once approved, it will be shared with the Admissions team, who will answer any questions from prospective students based upon the most up-to-date version of the policy.
- The policy will be reviewed with students during the "Second Look" Admissions event.
- Students will attest to having read and agreed to the Attendance Policy at the point of matriculation via online form.
- The attendance policy will be reviewed at MS1 and MS2 Orientation.
- The Foundation Phase Project Manager and Student Affairs leadership, in consultation with Curricular Affairs leadership, SOMIT, and OMSE leadership, will operationalize the policy as described above.
- Students may email SALeadership@listserv.med.unc.edu at any point with questions about the attendance policy and its procedures.

OMSE has the discretion to grant additional excused days for extenuating circumstances and/or to engage students in discussion of longer leaves as needed.