

TITLE OF POLICY

TEC 2.0 Clinical Phases Attendance Policy

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy outlines the Attendance Policy for the clinical phases in the TEC 2.0 curriculum as well as the procedure for students to use absences from their “bank” each semester. The policy also states the thresholds for referring absences to the Committee on Professionalism Education and the Student Progress Committee.

RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND REVIEW CYCLE

Application Phase and Individualization Phase Committees 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 Application Phase Committee November 4, 2024

Approved by Education Committee November 18, 2024

POLICY

The goal of this policy is to support students in identifying time needed during the 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. It is also intended to serve as a bridge between the nature of the learning environment and the demands of the physician profession. For larger concerns and need for time away (i.e., more than two days away from class for illness, emergency, etc.), students should consult directly with their campus/site designee as early as possible via email.

The TEC 2.0 curriculum offers varying schedules among courses, many of which may allow for noncurricular time during the business day. Students should plan appointments such as doctor visits, therapy, regular home and car maintenance, and other business during free, non-curricular time.

In the event of an unanticipated need to be absent from class or a planned, fixed-date need (e.g., family wedding), students may use an absence day. Below is detailed information about how absence days may be used and how students should request them. Students who do not follow the appropriate steps to notify the Offices of Medical Student Education 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 unplanned, urgent or not (including but not limited to illness, crisis, wedding, accidentally misreading one’s schedule, or attending a conference), students are responsible for making up the work they miss. This may include standardized patient encounters, clinical work hours, quizzes, didactics, and exam makeups. A student who is away from the curriculum for an extended period of time may benefit from withdrawing from the current course and rejoining the

curriculum when the next course starts or from a 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 their campus/site designee as early as possible with a copy of the notice.

I. What are “absence days”?

- Absence days are intended to allow a student to miss scheduled class or clinical 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 absence day.
- **Students are allotted six absence days per academic year for planned or unplanned health/wellbeing needs or personal/family matters.**
 - **Students may not exceed two (2) absences per block in either Application Phase or Individualization Phase.**
 - **Students may not miss more than two (2) Social and Health Systems (SHS) days per academic year.**
- An absence day will be used when a student reports they will miss class/clinic on any given day regardless of whether the student misses one or all classes/clinics on a given day.
- A student cannot use an absence on the following blackout days:
 - Transition to Application Phase
 - Shelf exams (Application Phase)
 - Observed Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE; Application Phase)
 - Career Day
 - Class Meetings (Application Phase)
 - Transition to Individualization Phase
 - Transition to Residency
 - Days on which student has signed up to take the CAP requirements
 - Adjacent to conference absences (see Section II below)
- Attendance at all course orientation events is mandatory unless otherwise indicated.
- Absences do not carry over from Application Phase to Individualization Phase.
- At the discretion of the campus/site designee, 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 and fill out the Clinical Phases Absence Form.
- A student who misses a curricular obligation due to planned or unplanned circumstances will incur the deduction of one absence from their “bank.” If the missed content requires the student to schedule a make-up, the absence will not be restored to the student’s bank.

II. Can I attend a conference?

- In addition to the six absences permitted per academic year, clinical phase students are permitted **up to two full-day absences per academic year** 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 their campus/site designee with a copy of the conference program/agenda or email acceptance of their presentation and the date(s) on which they will be absent.
- When the conference is approved by the campus/site designee, the student must complete the Clinical Phases Absence Form indicating the projected date(s) of absence.

III. **Should I use an absence day 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). Students must forward the EOC approval to their campus/site designee as well as complete the Clinical Phases Absence Form indicating the projected date(s) of absence.
- Students are expected to make up any missed work 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 absences from their year's allotment.

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

- Requests for absences should be submitted as early as the absence is planned via Clinical Phase Absence Form or as soon as the need becomes apparent and no later than the start of class/clinic that will be missed that day.
 - **Reporting or arranging an absence with a preceptor, instructor, course director, course coordinator, etc. is a violation of this policy. See Section VII for possible next steps.**
- 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.
- Course directors, course coordinators, and campus/site leadership will also be notified.
- When a student completes the Clinical Phase Absence Form, it is the responsibility of the student to communicate with faculty, preceptors, residents and/or clinical teams of the absence and to coordinate any makeup work.
- If a student is absent and unaccounted for due to not submitting an absence form, regional campus/site leadership will initiate a health and safety check. If for any reason a student does not submit an absence form, the absence will still be counted as one of the six permitted per year.

V. **What should I do if I'm sick?**

- If a student is ill and cannot come to class, they should use an absence. This includes time needed for mental health.
- **Students should report via Clinical Phase Absence Form that they are using an absence no later than the beginning of the class/clinic they will miss.**
- If you are sick on an exam day or other day when absences are not allowed, you should communicate with your campus/site designee as early as possible and then complete the Clinical Phases Attendance Form.
- Sick students who are in clinic and are patient-facing must observe the health and safety guidelines of their hospital system/clinic for COVID, upper respiratory illness, etc.

- Any time missed due to isolation while awaiting test results should be submitted as an absence.
- A student with an acute illness or injury that spans more than two days may have their absences “collapsed” into a single absence deducted from their bank, but should continue to fill out the Clinical Phase Absence Form for each day they are absent.

VI. What happens if I have exhausted my 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 absences, the student must email their campus/site designee as soon as they become aware of the need for time away from class.
- If a student is ill during a blackout date (see Section I), they should still submit a Clinical Phase Absence Form so that they are known to be safe and accounted for, as well as email their campus/site designee.

VII. What happens if I miss class/clinic and don't submit for an absence, if I miss class/clinic and have used up all my absences, if I exceed the allotted number of absences in any one course, or if I miss class on an exam day or other day when 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, leadership at the student's regional campus/site 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, Equal Opportunity and Compliance office), 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 Application Phase Committee, Individualization Phase Committee, and Education Committee.
- The policy will be reviewed with students during the Transition to Application Phase and Transition to Individualization Phase courses.
 - The campus/site designee for attendance matters will be identified to students during the transition courses.
 - Students will attest to having read and agreed to the Clinical Phases Attendance Policy during each transition course.
- Student Affairs and/or campus/site leadership, in consultation with Curricular Affairs leadership, SOMIT, and OMSE leadership, will operationalize the policy as described above.
- Students may email their campus/site designee at any point with questions about the attendance policy and its procedures.

The campus/site designee has the discretion to grant additional absence days for extenuating circumstances and/or to engage students in discussion of longer leaves as needed.