Phase 2 Attendance Policy

Background

The profession of medicine requires the utmost commitment of time and energy to learning/education, patient care, and, when appropriate, other scholarly activities. Teaching, learning, and assessment in both clinical and nonclinical settings are dependent on the student’s presence and active participation. Time spent away from educational experiences, in both clinical and nonclinical settings, may substantially decrease learning and impede effective assessment.

The clerkships in Phase 2 of the Gateway Curriculum consist of a foundational week, 6 weeks of clinical experiences divided into individual rotations based on the specific clerkship, and a final week of assessment, reflection, coaching, and community (ARCC).

This document outlines the attendance policies and expectations for Phase 2 of the Gateway Curriculum while also recognizing that students may have legitimate reasons for absences. In keeping with Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) element 12.4, all students requiring access to necessary diagnostic, preventive, and therapeutic care for both acute and chronic health concerns are to be excused from required learning activities. Please refer to the Access to Healthcare Services Policy for details.

Policies

Students are expected to attend all required sessions within Phase 2 of the Gateway Curriculum as specified within the learning management system and expressed or directed by the clerkship leadership. In the unusual circumstance that a student finds themselves unable to attend a required session or clinical experience due to illness or a personal emergency, the student must have a discussion with the clerkship director or associate clerkship director and then complete an Absence Notification Form in the learning management system that will be sent to the faculty lead, with a copy sent to the Office of Medical Student Education (OMSE) and other individuals, as appropriate. The student needs to have documented that this discussion has occurred in the form of an email between the student and the clerkship director or associate clerkship director. This form must be completed prior to the session that the student must miss or as soon as possible after the session as allowed by the illness or emergency. Students unable to attend a team activity should additionally notify their team members with as much advance notice as can reasonably be expected under the circumstances. This obligation also applies to correspondence with clinical teams for absences that occur during the clinical portion of the clerkship. If the unavoidable absence occurs during any scheduled competency-contributing assessment, the student must also complete the Request to Delay Assignment/Assessment form.

When students encounter an unavoidable absence for required events within the foundational or ARCC weeks of a clerkship, students will work with the clerkship directors and/or other responsible parties to develop a plan for the missed session. All required assignments associated with a missed session must be completed, and clerkship directors may require additional makeup work for missed sessions.

Students will remain accountable for meeting all clerkship requirements. Any absences that compromise a student’s ability to meet these requirements and/or other Phase 2 requirements may result in the need for additional clinical time to sufficiently meet the learning and assessment goals. Absences that compromise a student’s ability to meet clerkship requirements are defined as the following:

- Missing ≥25% of an individual learning experience (as defined by the clerkship leadership) and/or
- Impacting the ability for assessors to provide credible performance information to support competency decisions

In addition to illness and personal emergencies, it is recognized that a student may, on a rare occasion, desire to be excused from clinical activities for professional or significant personal events, including religious holidays. For the rare circumstances in which these anticipated absences exist, students are expected to contact the clerkship leadership team in advance of the clerkship to determine if scheduling options exist that may minimize the impact on clinical experiences. Note: Travel prior to or following observed university holidays and breaks that occur outside of the officially designated times/dates on the MD Program Academic Calendar as well as extracurricular and/or research events or experiences do not constitute a significant personal event or unavoidable absence.

Attendance data will be tracked longitudinally by the OMSE within the learning management system for all phases of the curriculum. An absence will be recorded even when makeup work for a missed session is completed. Data will be monitored by the Assistant Dean for Assessment in collaboration with the OMSE and reviewed by the Competency Attainment Committee (CAC) as evidence contributing to the attainment of competency in PROF-2: Exhibit high standards of professional integrity.

Guidelines

Failure to adhere to the above policy requirements (e.g., failure to file an Absence Notification Form and/or appropriately notify clerkship leadership and clinical team members) may result in the submission of a Professional Behavior Form.

A trend of absences may be discussed with the Student Success Team to ensure that appropriate student support can be offered and provided and may be referred to the CAC, in accordance with PROF-2.

Last approved on December 4, 2023