



Cooper Medical School of Rowan University

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SECTION: Medical Students

SUBJECT: Student Attendance Policy

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POLICY: Student Attendance

This policy outlines what constitutes an absence, the processes that apply when submitting an absence request and the consequences of an unexcused absence.

PURPOSE: A physician has the great responsibility and privilege to care for patients. In many cases this requires that they are present in the clinical setting and that they alert colleague(s) to find and/or determine a replacement. Medical students have a similar responsibility. They must participate in their education, learning and assessment, to prepare for the care of their future patients. Students may have events occur during their medical education that will result in an absence from educational activities or assessment sessions. The importance of the health and welfare of each student is paramount. This policy outlines the importance of in-person, active engagement among students and faculty and the process for an anticipated or unanticipated absence. It is necessary to provide unambiguous expectations for active student participation in the educational program in a manner that is respectful of and adaptable to these events and allows students to plan their schedules responsibly.

SCOPE: This policy applies to students at CMSRU in all four years.

DEFINITIONS: “Attendance” is defined as presence during the entire scheduled activity (as appropriate)

- **Anticipated absence:** an absence that is known about weeks or months ahead of the dates of the absence (for example - a religious holiday or important family event)
- **Unanticipated absence:** an absence that becomes necessary the day before or the day of the date of absence (for example an illness)
- **Unexcused absence:** an absence that occurs without reporting/logging the absence or being absent if the absence was not approved.

PROCEDURE: Please note that all policies that apply to the medical education program are available in the *CMSRU Student Handbook*. <http://www.rowan.edu/coopermed/students/files/handbook.pdf>

You will be notified when there is a revision to any policy during an academic year. Please address any questions you may have about the medical education program policies to the Assistant Deans for Phase 1 or Phase 2.

All anticipated absence requests for mandatory sessions and assessment sessions are to be made using the Absence Request System in the CMSRU portal system. <http://cmsruapps.rowan.edu>; Login using your username and password, then from menu go to: Attendance - Create Absence Request.

Phase I

First and Second Year Students

Your engagement and participation in educational sessions is vital for your success as well as that of your classmates. CMSRU data demonstrates a significant relationship between student attendance at educational sessions and performance in the medical education program and on the USMLE Step exams.

Students are expected to attend all mandatory sessions and assessments. If a student knows they need to be absent from a mandatory session or assessment, they must submit a request to the Absence Request System. If a student is absent from a mandatory session or assessment and has not logged/reported the absence, this will be considered an unexcused absence.

Anticipated Absences:

1. All anticipated absences for a mandatory session or assessment must be submitted by the student as soon as they are aware they will be missing the session.
 - a. If it is an anticipated absence, it must be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to the session.
 - b. Students will be notified by email of each absence recorded in the system.
 - c. All absences are monitored by the Office of Medical Education. (Please also see the Prolonged Absence Policy for extended absences.)
2. It is solely the student's responsibility to ensure that their presence at required sessions is recorded, including to bring their ID in order to swipe into a mandatory session. Students who forget their ID should immediately notify the course director by e-mail. Recorded absences due to failure to bring ID will not be retroactively excused.
3. Students should also contact the course director or session leader to see what information they will be missing and how to make it up.
 - a. Course/clerkship director(s), at their full discretion, may require make-up work of course material missed during absences, in any form that the clerkship/course director(s) chooses. Failure to submit this work may result in an Incomplete (I) grade.
 - b. For an anticipated absence(s) involving Ambulatory Clerkship, WOW I & II, and Selectives, students must notify their course/clerkship director(s) for prior approval before the absence.
4. An anticipated absence on the day of an assessment will require the assessment to be made up on the scheduled assessment make-up day, which is set by the assessment team. Summative

assessments will not be administered to any student or a subset of students before the scheduled summative assessment date.

Unanticipated Absences:

1. If a student will have an unanticipated absence for a mandatory session, they must submit a request to the Absence Request System as soon as they are aware they are missing the session.
2. If a student will have an unanticipated absence for an assessment, they must contact the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and either the Assistant Dean for Assessment and CQI for block/course exams or the Standardized Patient (SP) Program Coordinator for OSCE's.
 - a. Students may be asked to provide a physician's note or documentation for the absence.
 - b. The assessment must be made up on the scheduled assessment make-up day, which is set by the assessment team.
3. If a student is absent for more than one assessment in an academic year, including a make-up assessment, the student will be required to meet with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. The Office of Student Affairs will work with the student to support them in being successful in the curriculum and avoiding future absences or other required activities.

The Office of Medical Education will monitor absence records.

- a. No more than two half-day absences are allowed per course and no more than six half-days total are allowed per semester.
- b. Students in the PC3 program are all not allowed more than 2 half-days during the summer session.
- c. Absences due to religious holiday observances will not be counted towards the total allowed absences.
- d. Students (re-)entering the curriculum after the beginning of a semester will be allowed a pro-rated number of absences for that semester. The student will be notified of the number of available absences at the time they enter the curriculum.

If a student's absences exceed the allowed numbers, or otherwise violate any of the policies above:

- a. The Assistant Dean for Student Affairs will be notified and may require additional information from and/or a meeting with the student to establish the reason for the repeated absences.
- b. The Assistant Dean for Student Affairs will inform the Office of Medical Education and the course and/or clerkship director(s) as necessary.
- c. The student may be referred to the Director of Professionalism.

If a student is found to have been absent from a mandatory session and did not log/report the absence, was not approved for an absence and/or did not inform OSA and OME about their needed absence, this will be considered unprofessional, and a professionalism form will be submitted. In addition, if this is a repeated offense or there have been other unprofessional events during the course or clerkship the student's grade in their enrolled course or clerkship may result in an Unsuccessful Remediable (UR).

**Please note: Referrals may also be made to the Director of Professionalism when:

- Students are excessively tardy.
- Students sign-in or swipe-in for a session and leave.

- Students sign-in or swipe-in for someone else.
- Students leave early during a mandatory session.

Phase II

Third Year Students

The M3 Education Coordinator will monitor all absences for third year students.

Daily attendance and engagement in the clinical experience is critical for learning and assessment and is required on all clerkships and electives. All sessions on clinical rotations and assessment sessions are mandatory.

All absences from clinical rotations and assessments must be logged/reported by the student as soon as they are aware they will be missing a clinical experience/activity.

1. If it is an anticipated absence, it must be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to the day of absence.
2. If it is an unanticipated absence, it must be submitted as soon as the student is aware they will miss clinical time.
3. In addition, the student must notify their clerkship/elective director, preceptor, and clerkship or elective coordinator of the time they will miss. The clerkship/elective director and/or preceptor will then notify the student of any remediation for the missed time.

If a student has a total of 8 absences or more in an academic year, the M3 Education Coordinator will alert the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs who will then determine if a meeting is required to discuss reasons behind multiple absences (Personal illness, family issues, etc.) and possible solutions. This is to ensure student welfare.

For medical absences for three (3) or more consecutive dates, a doctor's note may need to be provided to the Office of Student Affairs.

Unexcused absences in the M3 or PC3 year are unacceptable. If a student is found to be absent from their educational activities and did not log/report the absence, was not approved for the absence and/or did not inform OSA and OME about their needed absence, a professionalism form will be submitted. If there have been other unprofessional events in the clerkship or it is a repeated unexcused absence, their grade in their enrolled clerkship may result in an Unsuccessful Remediable (UR).

For unanticipated absences on the day of a shelf exam, in addition to submitting the absence, the student must contact the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and the Assistant Dean of Assessment and CQI to inform them of the assessment absence. The Assistant Dean of Assessment and CQI and/or team member will contact the student regarding the assessment rescheduling date.

Any absence on the day of a shelf exam will require the assessment to be rescheduled. Assessments must be rescheduled after the original date of assessment. Summative assessments will not be administered to any student or a subset of students before the scheduled summative assessment date

Absences due to illness or serious extenuating circumstances occurring on the date of scheduled exams may require supporting documentation.

***Retroactive absences are not allowed: you cannot apply for an absence after an absence occurs. This will be considered an unexcused absence.

M3 Clerkships:

If a student is absent for more than 2 days of any 6-week clerkship block during the third year, the missed time must be made up (there are seven 6-week clerkships blocks in the M3 year).

Examples:

- If you missed 3 total days on your 6-week Pediatrics Clerkship, you would have to make up 1 of these days.
- If you are in the 6-week Anesthesiology/Neurology block (2 weeks of Anesthesiology/4 weeks of Neurology), you can only miss a total of 2 days during that 6-week block.

Exceptions to this rule:

Certain individual activities or clinical experiences must be made up regardless of number of absences when they are a required component of the clerkship. These include but are not limited to:

- Transdisciplinary Sessions
- Ultrasound Sessions
- M3 formative OSCE
- M3 summative OSCE
- Shelf exam

In addition, please refer to the clerkship syllabus to see any other absences which must be made up no matter the circumstance. (example – Ob/Gyn call time that is missed must be made up).

M3 One-Week Electives:

Absence of more than a half of a day of a one-week elective must be made up.

Ambulatory Clerkship:

For absences involving Ambulatory Clerkship, third-year students must notify the Ambulatory clerkship director(s) for prior approval before the absence. Unexcused absences may be documented in the narrative section of the Ambulatory Clerkship summative evaluation. A Professionalism Report maybe completed for unexcused absences.

PC3 Students

- Absences of more than 1 day in a 4-week clerkship must be made up.
- For the CLOC rotation, students are allowed 1 absence every 4 weeks.

Fourth Year Students

The M4 Education Coordinator will monitor all absences for fourth year students.

Daily attendance and engagement in the clinical experience is critical for learning and assessment and is required on all clerkships and electives. All sessions on clinical rotations and assessment sessions are mandatory.

The M4 Academic year consists of 40 weeks, including eight (8) weeks that can be utilized for residency interviews, vacation, and other personal time.

- These 8 weeks may be broken up into 4-week, 2-week, or 1-week time spots or can be taken as an entire 8 weeks, so long as the 32 weeks of required clerkships/electives can be completed in the time frame to graduate. This time cannot be taken within a clerkship / elective / Sub-Internship. For example – you cannot start your Sub-Internship and then take a week off within the Sub-Internship block.

Students who will be absent beyond the eight (8) weeks must email the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs for their reason for the absence. The Assistant Dean for Student Affairs will alert the M4 Director and the M4 Education Coordinator. Should the absence be excused, the student will be responsible to make up any missed time.

All absences from clinical rotations and assessments must be logged/reported by the student as soon as they are aware they will be missing a clinical experience/activity.

- If it is an anticipated absence, it must be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to the day of absence.
- If it is an unanticipated absence, it must be submitted as soon as the student is aware they will miss clinical time.
- In addition, the student must notify their clerkship/elective director, preceptor, and clerkship or elective coordinator of the time they will miss.
- Absences for any reason during a fourth year clerkship/elective, must be made up at the discretion of the clerkship/elective director. Remediation for the missed time can take the form of clinical time/patient care, writing a report on a topic of the clerkship/elective director's choosing, or any other educational activity that the clerkship/elective director chooses.
- Failure to complete missed time due to an absence will lead to an incomplete grade and possible failure of the clerkship/elective.
- For medical absences for three (3) or more consecutive dates, a doctor's note may be required.

Absence due to Residency Interviews

CMSRU wants to ensure students are able to go on residency interviews while obtaining the clinical knowledge and experience necessary to succeed in residency. Below are the rules regarding interviews during a clerkship / elective / Sub-Internship:

- Maximum of 4 excused days for residency interviews in a 4-week rotation.

- Maximum of 2 excused days for residency interviews in a 2-week rotation.
- Maximum of 1 excused day for residency interview in a 1-week rotation.
- Excused days for residency interviews do not have to be made up, if they are within the limit.
 - Exception – this only applies for rotations where you are required to come in every day. For rotations such as Emergency Medicine and Pediatric Emergency Medicine where you are not required to report every day and you work shifts, you will need to move your shifts so that you are not scheduled to work a shift on an interview day

You cannot use excused days for residency interviews for any other purpose. Inappropriate use of residency interview days will be viewed as unprofessional behavior and will lead to a Professionalism Report and possible failure of the Clerkship/Elective Rotation. Students may be required to present documentation of their residency interview.

Absence due to Step 2 CK

- Excused days for Step 2 do not have to be made up.

Unexcused absences in the M4 year are unacceptable. If a student is found to be absent from their educational activities and did not log/report the absence, was not approved for the absence and/or did not inform OSA and OME about their needed absence, a professionalism form will be submitted. If there have been other unprofessional events in the clerkship or it is a repeated unexcused absence, their grade in their enrolled clerkship may result in an Unsuccessful Remediable (UR).

***Retroactive absences are not allowed: you cannot apply for an absence after an absence occurs.

Match Week

- Students are required to attend all mandatory CMSRU Residency Match Week sessions.