

Last Approved April 28, 2022 | Review every 3 years (Next Review 2025)

## MD Program Pre-Clerkship Absence Policy

<b>Office of Accountability:</b>	Associate Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education
<b>Office of Administrative Responsibility:</b>	MD Program
<b>Approver:</b>	MD Curriculum and Program Committee
<b>Scope:</b>	Compliance with MD Program policy extends to all members of the MD Program community.

### Overview

The *Post-Secondary Learning Act* of Alberta gives General Faculties Council (GFC) responsibility, subject to the authority of the Board of Governors, over “academic affairs” (Section 26(1)). Further, the *PSLA* gives the Board of Governors authority over certain admission requirements and rules respecting enrolment (Sections 60(1) (c) and (d)). The Board has delegated its authority over admissions requirements and rules respecting enrolment to GFC. GFC has thus established an Academic Standards Committee (GFC ASC).

### University of Alberta Policies

#### **University of Alberta Calendar, Academic Regulations, Attendance**

*“Since presence at lectures, participation in classroom discussions and projects, and the completion of assignments are important components of most courses, students will serve their interests best by regular attendance. Those who choose not to attend must assume whatever risks are involved. In connection to this students should review the following sections.*

*The University recognizes that occasionally life events occur that require a student to miss term work, term examinations, or final examinations. However, excused absences are not granted automatically and will be considered only for acceptable reasons such as incapacitating mental and/or physical illness, severe domestic affliction, or for circumstances as described in the University’s Discrimination, Harassment and Duty to Accommodate Policy (including religious belief). This policy is available on the [University of Alberta Policies and Procedures Online \(UAPPOL\) website](#). An interfaith calendar is available on the Office of the Registrar [University Calendar page](#).*

*Unacceptable reasons include, but are not limited to personal events such as vacations,*

weddings, or travel arrangements. When a student is absent without acceptable excuse, a final grade will be computed using a raw score of zero for the work missed. Any student who applies for or obtains an excused absence by making false statements will be liable under the code of Student Behavior. Students should consult their Faculty for detailed information and requirements.”

### **Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, Doctor of Medicine Absence Policy**

#### **PURPOSE:**

The Faculty of Medicine & Dentistry operates under a unique contract with society in which students are required to attend and directly participate in all components of the educational program. When the Faculty confers the MD degree, the Faculty attests not only that the student has achieved a level of competency as measured by performance on tests, but that the student has shown a commitment to professional responsibility and has also participated in the entire educational experience that is defined by the curriculum.

The assessment points collected and analyzed by the MD program are the cornerstone of monitoring a learner’s progress and determining competency and ability to be promoted.

The MD program understands that absences are to be expected from time to time however the student is expected to communicate their absence to affected parties in a reasonable amount of time especially when it impacts other learners. The process of “excused absences” and the requirement of a request to be made to the MD program for approval and granting permission to complete a missed assessment for grades/marks is outlined below in Section 2.1. Unexcused absences will result in a grade of zero for missed assessments and may result in a professionalism lapse.

#### **PRINCIPLES:**

A student pursuing the degree of Doctor of Medicine is responsible to meet the Faculty’s expectations regarding professionalism and participation in all aspects of the curriculum. This absence policy is designed to enable medical students to be self-directed adult learners while respecting their professional obligations.

1. Students are expected to be punctual and attend all sessions barring illness or extenuating circumstances.
2. Attendance at sessions will be monitored as needed and is considered a significant component of professionalism.
3. Students absent for reasons of illness or unexpected exceptional circumstances must inform the MD program as soon as possible in writing if they have missed

an assessment or tracked session. For professional courtesy, clinical or small group preceptors should be notified where applicable.

4. A student with personal or professional obligations which prevent them from attending sessions should follow procedures to notify the MD program absences administrator.
5. Students should notify those who are affected by their absence including, but not limited to course administration, instructors and fellow learners impacted by their absence.

**While notification is required, this step does not guarantee approval of excused absences.**

**Students recognize that all sessions have objectives that are vital to their development as a physician and assessment for competency in the MD Program. Therefore, the student absent from a learning session bears the responsibility to learn all objectives and competencies assigned by the MD Program. Absent students will be expected to undertake independent learning to ensure the assigned competencies are achieved.**

**Students requiring specific arrangements or particular considerations are recommended to speak with the Assistant Dean, Academics of the MD Program or delegate. A student's privacy and confidentiality will be respected.**

## **POLICY:**

### **SECTION 1: LOGISTICS**

#### **1. EXCUSED ABSENCE FORM SUBMISSION**

- A. Absence forms must be completed by the student with details of all curriculum components that will be missed due to the absence to the best of their knowledge.
- B. Forms must be submitted to the MD program via Cally at least 10 business days in advance of the date being requested for approval for any planned absences
- C. Forms must be submitted to the MD program via Cally as soon as possible and feasible for any unexpected or emergent absences.

#### **2. ABSENCE FORM APPROVAL**

- A. Approval of absence requests can only be made by the MD program office.
- B. Previous requests and academic performance may be reviewed for all requested absences.
- C. Outcome of the application process will be communicated to the student via their University of Alberta email address.
- D. Students may request to meet with the Assistant Dean, Academics of the MD program or delegate to discuss specific requests with the knowledge that said policies will be adhered to and exceptions will only be made in



extenuating circumstances.

- E. Absences will be reviewed according to the University's Discrimination, Harassment and Duty to Accommodate Policy (including religious belief) - see above.

### 3. ARRANGEMENTS

- a. The MD program will make every effort to minimize the impact on the following events: i. Ice Bowl, AMSCAR, ICAM, and GAAC Provincial Lobby Day
- b. Travel arrangements (flights, hotels etc.) should be booked **ONLY AFTER** an excused absence is granted to the student by UME.

## SECTION 2: TYPES OF ABSENCES

It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they make up any missed work for an approved absence.

### 1. EXCUSED ABSENCES

- a. Students that are granted an excused absence may be given the opportunity to make-up missed assessments/work where feasible and resources are available. For planned absences, the student must complete assessments that will be missed before they leave for the absence. It is the student's responsibility to contact the assessment coordinator to make these arrangements. Ultimately the responsibility to make up for missed learning objectives lies with the student as outlined in their curriculum.
- b. Excused absences may be granted in the following circumstances:
- University of Alberta Varsity athletic commitments* maybe approved with appropriate documentation from the coach/manager outlining circumstances. Students may be asked to meet with the Assistant Dean, Academics or delegate to discuss these types of absences.
  - Academic presentations (e.g. at a conference)*. At the time of the request, the itinerary and confirmation of start and end time of the presentation must be submitted. Approval may be granted for the day of the presentation. Additional travel time may be granted one day pre and post presentation if needed. The total leave granted for the presentations (including travel) will be restricted to no more than 10 days per academic year.
  - Official religious events and commitments*.
  - Student representing the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry in a *medical student association (MSA, BMSA, IMDSA) designated or approved role*.



v. *Medical appointments*

1. Students are encouraged to schedule elective appointments at the time that does not interfere with pre-clerkship experiences.
2. The MD Program recognizes that this is not always possible and will accommodate as necessary.

vi. *Medical illness*

1. To ensure that students have adequate support, the MD program may offer support or direct the student to the Office of Advocacy and Wellbeing.

vii. *Family and/or Personal Emergency* including bereavement: students will be

granted up to five days leave (plus travel time if needed) for death of an immediate family member.

viii. *Maternity and Paternity Leave* - students will automatically be granted up to two weeks of consecutive leave with the expectation that they still complete all of their learning requirements. Should the student require additional leave they can apply for an extended leave of absence of up to one year.

c. Students requesting an excused absence during the following days may be required to meet with the Assistant Dean, Academics of the MD program or delegate:

- i. Summative Exams including but not limited to, OSCE, course final exams and Year 2 Comprehensive Exam.

2. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES occurring on dates of sessions where grades are assigned (e.g. quiz, exam, assessment points worth marks) will result in an automatic grade of zero and/or a professionalism lapse.

### SECTION 3: EXTENDED LEAVES OF ABSENCE

There may be specific circumstances where a student requests an extended leave of absence from the preclerkship courses, beyond the excused absences listed above. Any requests for an extended leave of absence must be discussed with the Assistant Dean, Academics or delegate. Impact of the leave of absence on affected courses and program assessments will also be discussed with the required course coordinators and the Assistant Dean, Assessment, in order to determine the appropriate make-up work and timing of assessments to meet the required preclerkship competencies. Such instances will be managed on a case-by-base basis by the Assistant Dean, Academics.

### **DEFINITIONS**

Any definitions listed in the following table apply to this document only with no implied or intended institution-wide use.
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<b>Attendance</b>	The presence during the entire scheduled activity or until the student has completed a quiz or examination.
<b>Cally</b>	MD Program's program delivery system used by staff, faculty and students.
<b>Excused Absence</b>	approved absence for planned non-attendance or unplanned non attendance
<b>Examination</b>	An examination includes any formative or summative assessment or other assessment which may or may not be graded. It may also be called a quiz, test or workplace based assessment.

#### **RELATED LINKS**

<a href="#">Electronic Communication Policy for Students and Applicants</a> . University of Alberta Calendar (2022)
<a href="#">Academic Regulations, Attendance: Absence From Final Exams</a> . University of Alberta Calendar (2022)

#### **APPROVAL HISTORY**

<b>APPROVER</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>DATE</b>
MD Curriculum and Program Committee	Approved	07 September 2017
MD Curriculum & Program Committee	Approved	28 April 2022
Associate Dean, MD Program	Minor editorial change to replace the word MedSIS with Cally in the policy to reflect the new program delivery system.	8 July 2024