

UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION
SCHULICH SCHOOL OF MEDICINE & DENTISTRY
ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE PROCEDURES

In adjudicating issues related to student attendance, the following process will be used by the UME Office, LEO and/or the UME Dean or delegate in reaching a decision on a student-requested leave, absence and/or deferral from required Program educational learning activities. Documentation for a leave of absence (academic and non-academic) and issues of attendance are the responsibilities of the UME Office and the student. These will be recorded in the electronic student record.

The final decision for a requested leave, absence and/or deferral is by the UME Dean (or delegate) and/or the Assistant Dean Learner Experience Office (AD LEO) (or delegate).

1. LEAVES, ABSENCES, AND DEFERRALS

- In requesting absences, leaves or deferrals involving the MD Program required educational learning experiences, students must complete the online request process in the Hub in advance of their absence at: [Schulich Medicine & Dentistry Hub - Login \(uwo.ca\)](https://uwo.ca).
- Non-approved leaves or absences may prompt a review by the MD Program Competence Committee. This may result in a recommendation of non-progression for Professionalism.
- Students granted an Academic or Non-Academic Leave for an educational learning experience are expected to inform facilitators and/or faculty leads of their approved absence in advance electronically, to make up all the work missed, and to complete all assessments. It is at the course chair's discretion to determine the make-up work required.

Persistent program absences, even if approved by LEO or UME, will trigger a student review by the MD Program Competence Committee and may impact progression in the course or program. These absences will be documented on the student's academic record in accordance with the Assessment and Appeal Policy and may extend the duration of the MD Program beyond the typical four years to ensure all program outcomes are met.

2. ABSENCE TYPES

Students may be granted absence from mandatory learning by the UME or LEO Offices under the following categories: Academic Leave, Non-academic Leave, or Flex Days. For each year

that the student is in the MD program, they may be granted the following number of absences:

- Academic Leave (5)
- Non-academic Leave (3)
- Flex Days (3)

These absences are tracked within the [Schulich Medicine & Dentistry Hub](#) and re-set at the start of the academic year as specified in the [Sessional Dates](#) calendar.

I. Academic Leave:

Academic Leave Days:

- Academic Leaves will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the UME Office and/or the UME Dean. The Session Dates for an academic year are set in advance. Learners should select the conferences they wish to attend with these dates in mind.
- Students are eligible to take up to five (5) days of Academic Leave during each year of their program provided they comply with the other clauses in this policy
 - All academic requests must be submitted to the Hub for approval: [Schulich Medicine & Dentistry Hub - Login \(uwo.ca\)](#).
- Academic Leaves cannot be approved by course chairs, rotation/academic directors, preceptors, or course coordinators.
- Students are expected to inform their facilitator, supervisor, and/or preceptor in writing once the academic leave has been approved through the HUB.

Requests for Academic Leave must be:

- Received by the UME Office at least six (6) weeks in advance for mandatory educational experience in Years 1, 2, and 4.
- Received for Clerkship or Clinical Electives at least six (6) weeks before the start date of the relevant core rotation or elective.
- Substantiated with documentation provided by the student to the Program upon request (e.g., copy of presentation, invitation to attend conference, conference agenda).
- Academic leaves in Clinical Electives and Transition to MD selectives must be approved in advance by the UME Dean as well as the elective supervisor with whom the student elective takes place **before** making the request in the Hub.
- Approval of academic leave must be communicated to the student by the UME office before the leave starts.

Approval will be contingent upon the student ensuring that the leave request does not:

- Overlap a summative (medium or high stake) assessment.
- Occur within a pattern of documented significant or unexplained missed time.
- Violate the rules for requested timelines.
- Occur with issues of professionalism evident in the student request.
- Duplicate a presentation of the same project or paper at a previous national or

international meeting.

II. **Non-Academic Leave and Flex Days:**

Non-Academic Leave Days:

Students can take up to three (3) days of Non-Academic Leave and this does not impact Academic Leave. This includes significant personal events, professional development, and performance at selected approved arts, political, or sporting events.

- Students may use Non-Academic Leave to attend conferences or meetings related to student leadership roles in provincial, national, or international organizations.
- All non-academic requests must be submitted to the Hub for approval: [Schulich Medicine & Dentistry Hub - Login \(uwo.ca\)](#)
- Non-Academic Leave requests for compassionate, religious, or health reasons will not count towards the (3) Non-Academic Leave or (3) Flex days allotted to learners, although they will count towards the total days absent when considering progression and promotion.
- Time off for health appointments will not count towards a student's total Non-Academic Leave, provided that the release time to attend the appointment is less than 4 hours.
 - Students must ensure they provide both a start time and end time in their HUB request for the appointment not to count towards their total time off. Students who will need longer release time or frequent/recurrent appointments should plan for accommodation directly through LEO.
- Time off to participate in Schulich governance committee meetings will not count towards a student's Academic Leave or Non-Academic Leave totals.
 - Students are encouraged to participate via teleconference or videoconference to minimize time required away from service.
- Once a student has taken three (3) days of Non-Academic Leave, they will not be eligible for any additional Non-Academic Leave during the year.

Flex Days:

Students are eligible to take up to three (3) Flex days each year in the program which do not require an explanation but must be logged into the Hub. Flex days must be taken as full day absences. Partial or half flex day requests will be denied.

- Flex days do not count toward Non-Academic or Academic Leave.
- Flex days cannot be used to attend other non-curricular experiences (e.g., Optional Clinical Learning Opportunities [OCLOs]).
- Flex days will typically not be approved on days Clinical Skills or Anatomy labs are scheduled.
- Flex days may not be taken on "grey days" which include but are not limited to the day before and after:
 - a summative (medium or high stakes) assessment
 - the end of a rotation
 - the CaRMS interview break
 - a statutory holiday

- the last scheduled day of in-person educational sessions for each course
- Teaching Observed Structured Clinical Exam (TOSCE) post-exam take-up sessions
- simulations sessions or
- any other dates otherwise indicated in the schedule/course syllabus.

NOTE: Dates of grey days will be indicated in each course syllabus

- All requests must be made prior to the leave via the Hub. Any request received after the start of a mandatory session or scheduled assessment/assignment deadline/presentation will be recorded as unapproved.
- Any MD program assessment or deadline missed without an approved absence will be marked as zero or incomplete.
- Requests for Non-Academic Leave for compassionate, religious, or personal/family emergency reasons must be requested via the Hub to the LEO and are adjudicated by the Assistant Dean (Undergraduate) LEO.
- All other outlined reasons will be requested via the Hub to the UME Office and decided by the Manager UME in discussion with UME staff and the UME Dean (or delegate).
- Emergency requests for Non-Academic leave may be under exceptional circumstances granted by the UME Dean (or delegate).
- For acute illness, learners must submit their absence request through the HUB before the learning event they will be absent from. Retroactive illness requests will typically not be approved without documentation.
- For personal or family emergencies, notification must be communicated as soon as possible electronically.
- *Any falsified claims will be addressed under the [Statement of Professionalism](#) and Western University regulations.*

Repeated requests for compassionate, health or religious absences may be subject to a request for supporting documentation and a meeting with the LEO Office so that the student's situation may be assessed both from a personal and educational support standpoint.

Requests for Non-Academic Leave must be:

- Received by the UME Office via the HUB at least 1 week in advance for Years 1, 2, and 4.
- Received for *Clerkship* or *Clinical Electives* at least six (6) weeks before the start date of the relevant core rotation or elective.

Requests for Flex Days must be:

- Received by the UME office via the HUB in advance of the absence of the absence for Years 1, 2, and 4.
- Received for *Clerkship* or *Clinical Electives* at least six (6) weeks before the start date of the relevant core rotation or elective.

Approval of Non-Academic and Flex Days will be contingent upon the student ensuring that the leave request does not:

- Overlap a summative (medium or high stakes) assessment
- Occur within a pattern of documented significant or unexplained missed time.
- Violate the rules for requested timelines.
- Occur with issues of professionalism evident in the student request.

3. ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

Pre-clerkship Learning (Years 1 and 2) and Transition to MD (Year 4):

- All courses in years 1, 2 and Transition to MD in year 4 require attendance at all scheduled sessions, unless otherwise indicated in the course syllabus. Students are expected to be on time and prepared to participate for all sessions outlined in the schedule, including small and large group learning.
 - Students assigned to groups must attend the group sessions they are assigned to. Joining an alternative group is not permitted unless granted by the course chair, UME Manager, or LEO for compassionate or accommodation reasons.
- All assessments are mandatory and must be completed as scheduled. Requests for Academic or Non-Academic Leave during scheduled summative assessments must be approved by the UME Dean (or delegate) or the Assistant Dean (Undergraduate) LEO (or delegate).

Absence Limitations:

- Students who miss 25% or more educational sessions in any course, for any reason, will be given an incomplete for that course pending the Competence Committee decision at the end of the year.
- In addition, the UME Dean may consider insufficient educational time spent to achieve course and program competencies regardless of the total time and refer the student to the Competence Committee.
- The course chair(s) will recommend Pass or Fail in individual courses to the Competence Committee based on any assessment and other information that may be available to them.
- The final decision for progression and promotion lies with the Competence Committee considering all assessment and course requirements, including attendance.
- Learners should refer to course syllabi for specific absence limitations related to each component of the course.

Years 3, 4 Required Clinical Learning (Clerkship and Clinical Electives):

Clerkship is a single Year 3 course and Clinical Electives is a single semester course in Year 4 of the required MD Program educational experiences. For both, the learning context demands mandatory attendance as outlined below:

- Year 3 students are expected to punctually attend all clinical duties and educational experiences in the schedule set by the rotation/academic directors, including call duty,

rounds, assessments, etc. for the full period of the rotation and to inform supervisors of any approved absences as outlined below in the 'Notification Requirements' section.

- Year 4 students are expected to punctually attend all clinical duties and educational learning experiences as outlined by the selective rotation.
- For a requested absence to be approved, the time absent must be limited and not interfere with clinical learning. Persistent or multiple absences from scheduled clinical obligations may result in an incomplete or failure on a Clerkship rotation, the Clerkship course, or Clinical Electives. This may delay graduation.
- Requests for Academic or Non-Academic Leave which conflict with orientation sessions or assessment such as end-of-rotation summative assessments and exit interviews will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis but will usually **not** be approved.

Absence Limitations:

- During Clerkship and Clinical Electives time away is limited to a maximum of 10% of the rotation/educational experience length (i.e. one day for a 2-week rotation; 2 days for a 4-week rotation; 3 days for a single 6-week rotation). Additional time away must be made up later as approved by the rotation/academic or elective director.
- Students who miss 25% of a rotation or an elective, for any reason, will be given an Incomplete for that rotation or elective, pending a progression and promotion decision by the Competence Committee at the end of the year.
- The rotation/academic/elective director will recommend Pass or Fail to the Clerkship & Electives Committee (CEC) based on any assessment and other information that may be available to them.
- The CEC will discuss the recommendation, considering any assessment and other available information from Clerkship or Clinical Electives available to them, and make a recommendation to the Competence Committee.

Notification Requirements for Short-Notice Absences in Clerkship or Clinical Electives:

Students are required to notify **via three discrete channels** if they must miss clinical time or educational learning activities on short notice:

- Notify the clinical team (residents, consultants) as soon as possible before the learning activity or scheduled shift begins that they will be unable to make it in.
- Notify the rotation/elective administrator.
- Log the absence in the Hub [Schulich Medicine & Dentistry Hub - Login \(uwo.ca\)](https://uwo.ca/hub).

Failing to notify **all** three groups may be considered a breach of professionalism.

Cross-Campus Attendance

Students are assigned to a campus by the MD Program purposely to ensure that there are adequate resources and learning opportunities for all students. Cross-campus attendance is prohibited without prior approval by the UME or LEO or the UME Dean (or delegate) and is available on a limited basis only. Requests are only granted for compassionate or academic reasons. Students who attend learning at an alternative campus without permission will receive a caution for Professionalism and documentation on their student record.

Unapproved Absences

Students will receive a mark of incomplete or zero on any assessment given during an unapproved absence. All assessments and course requirements will be reviewed by the Competence Committee in determining progression and promotion to the next year or for graduation.

- Students recorded as absent from any educational experience without approval from either LEO or the UME Office will have the unapproved absence documented on their academic record.
- A summary of unapproved absences may be recorded on the Medical Student Performance Record (MSPR) required for the residency matching process, and if recurrent, a flag for professionalism may be noted in the academic record.
- Failure to sign-in is not a legitimate reason for non-attendance at any educational session.
- Students may not sign attendance documents on behalf of their peers. Students forging attendance documents for peers will be referred to the UME Dean and dealt with under the relevant MD Program and Western University professionalism policies.
- Students must attend the campus and small group session to which they are assigned. Attending an unassigned campus or group may be considered an absence.