

**STATEMENT 1.2.0 – Attendance and Absenteeism**  
**Undergraduate Medical Education**

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| <b>Approved by:</b>      | <b>Curriculum Committee</b>  |
| <b>Supersedes:</b>       | <b>Attendance and Absenteeism Statement (website)</b><br><b>Statement on Attendance Monitoring</b> |
| <b>Related Policies:</b> | <b>Statement on Supplemental Fees</b>  |

**I. PURPOSE**

Participation in the Doctor of Medicine program (“Program”) in the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry at Western University demands active involvement in all learning modalities by each student. Students registered in each year are expected to attend all courses of instruction. In so doing, a student shows an active commitment to professionalism and advancing the curriculum content, teaching and quality. Student academic and social success hinges on attending all scheduled learning sessions.

Our Program competencies dictate that medical students must demonstrate and practice the four pillars of professionalism: altruism, integrity, responsibility and respect. Attendance at all scheduled learning sessions demonstrates professionalism and shows respect for faculty and colleagues.

**II. DEFINITIONS**

**Academic Leave**

- An Academic Leave is defined as an approved absence from curricular events for reasons which relate to a student’s medical education and/or academic career. Approvals are adjudicated by the Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) office, subject to policies and best practices of Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry and Western University.
  - Examples may include:
    - Attending a meeting as a member of a Schulich Medicine & Dentistry governance committee
    - Participating in an official administrative session as a representative of the student body
    - Presenting research at a national or international meeting or conference
    - Representing the School in an official capacity at a national or international meeting or conference relating to medical education
  - Requests for Academic Leave must be received by UME at least six weeks’ advance (for clerkship, six weeks before the block begins).
  - Requests for Academic Leave will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the UME Office.
    - Approval may not be granted if the absence significantly impacts assessment or if, in the opinion of the Associate Dean, UME, there is concern regarding the individual’s total missed time in the program.
  - If required, one day of travel before and after the event will be permitted.
  - Documentation must be provided upon request.
    - e.g., copy of presentation, invitation to conference, etc.
  - No more than two academic leaves will be approved in an academic year.
    - Only one leave may require deferral of assessment

- Exemption from this restriction is given to students in enrolled in special programs (i.e.: MD/PhD, MD/ENG programs).
- Permission will not be given for students to present the same project twice at different national or international meetings.
- An alternate or designate may be appointed if the official student representative is unavailable.

### **Non-Academic Leave**

- A Non-Academic Leave is defined as an approved absence from curricular events for reasons which are not officially related to a student's medical education and/or academic career. Approvals are adjudicated by the Learner, Equity and Wellness (LEW) office and/or the Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) office, subject to policies and best practices of Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry and Western University.
  - Examples may include:
    - Compassionate leave
      - Illness, injury, or death of immediate relative
      - Personal or family emergency
    - Health
      - personal injury or illness
    - Religious
      - holidays acknowledged by but not scheduled as statutory by Western University
    - Personal / Professional Development
      - Appointment with a faculty member
      - Cross-campus attendance
      - Performance at selected arts, political, or sporting events
      - Writing a required exam for an external program
      - UME-approved workshop, seminar, or other educational event
    - Significant planned personal or family events or celebrations
      - e.g., wedding, convocation
  - Requests for leave for Compassionate, Health, or Religious reasons will be processed by the Learner Equity & Wellness Office.
    - The specific reason for the absence will be confidential and UME will not have access to this information.
    - Where possible, notification must be given at least 6 weeks prior to the absence. For acute illness or emergency, notification must be given as soon as possible
    - As would be expected in a workplace setting, all requests must be made **prior** to an absence via Single Sign On. Any request received after the start of a mandatory session or scheduled assessment/assignment deadline/presentation will be recorded as unapproved.
    - Repeated requests for compassionate, health or religious absences may be subject to a request for supporting documentation and a meeting with LEW so that the student's situation may be assessed both from a personal and/or educational standpoint. Any learner who is determined to have falsified a claim may be noted for breach of professionalism on their MSPR.
  - Requests for Personal/Professional Development or Significant Planned events will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the UME Office.
    - Approval may not be granted if the absence significantly impacts assessment or if, in the opinion of the Associate Dean, UME, there is concern regarding the individual's total missed time in the program.

- Students are expected to provide six weeks' advance notice whenever possible.
- When required, one day of travel before and after the event will be permitted.
- Documentation must be provided upon request.
  - e.g. note from physician, invitation to perform, faculty/department letter of support etc.

An approved absence, of either an academic or non-academic nature does not excuse the student from any academic responsibilities

#### **Deferral**

- Formal notification that an assessment activity has been temporarily delayed or rescheduled.

### **III. POLICY**

#### **1. ATTENDANCE**

- a. It is expected that students will attend all scheduled learning sessions.
- b. Students are expected to arrive on time and not leave before a session ends.

Attendance is mandatory for many components of the curriculum as listed below. Attendance at non-mandatory sessions is strongly recommended to support a team learning environment.

- c. All requests must be completed using the online process in Single Sign On (SSO).
  - i. Requests submitted to LEW, UME, or a third party outside of Single Sign On will not be reviewed or considered.
  - ii. Students are instructed not to request permission from Course Chairs, facilitators, preceptors, tutors, or staff. The UME Office will advise if communication with other parties is necessary.
  - iii. For an Academic Leave, 6 weeks' notice is required. (for clerkship, six weeks before the block begins).
  - iv. For a Non-Academic Leave, 6 weeks' notice is expected whenever possible.
  - v. For emergencies and unexpected illness, students are expected to register the absence as soon as possible, particularly when assessment is missed.
    1. A mark of 0% is given for any assessment missed during unapproved absences.
    2. The LEW Office must receive notification through SSO in order to arrange for deferral of assessment.
    3. Except in extraordinary circumstances, the expectation is that advance notice will be given for missed assessment.
- d. Students granted an Academic or Non-Academic Leave are expected to inform tutors/facilitators of their approved absence, make up all work missed, and complete all assessments and assignments.
- e. A learner noted as having multiple unapproved absences may be required to meet with the Assistant Dean, LEW and/or the Associate Dean, UME.
- f. If a request is denied, the learner is expected to be present at the mandatory learning or assessment, otherwise professionalism sanctions will result.

#### **2. MANDATORY SESSIONS**

- a. Failure to attend mandatory sessions (without approval) may result in remediation of and/or a grade of "fail" in a Course.
- b. As per Senate approved Program Requirements, attendance in small-group learning sessions (as listed below) is mandatory.
  - i. Group learning is a powerful modality that supports small ratio coaching and formative peer feedback. Sessions that all students must attend include:
    1. Years 1, 2: Child Health small groups/tutorials, Discovery Week, Facilitated Course small groups/tutorials, Interprofessional Education sessions, Laboratory sessions, Simulation sessions, Orientation, Patient-Centred Clinical Methods (PCCM) small groups, Patient-Centred Context: Integration & Application (PCCIA) small groups, Pathology small groups/tutorials, all Team-Based

Learning sessions, as well as any other session identified as mandatory in the Course Syllabus.

- ii. Students assigned to groups must attend the sessions assigned.
- iii. Joining an alternate group is not permitted.
- c. All Assessments are mandatory and must be completed as scheduled.
  - i. Year 3: Introduction to Clerkship; All Academic Half Days; all written or Oral assessments, all Rotations including: exit interviews, scheduled shifts, On Call and seminars.
  - ii. Year 4: All Electives, and all of I&T.
  - iii. OSCE Preparatory and Summative Assessment sessions.
- d. Attendance in Clerkship and in Clinical Sciences Electives is mandatory.
  - i. Failure to attend scheduled clinical obligations may result in remediation of and/or a grade of "fail" on a rotation, of Clerkship or of an elective.

### 3. SANCTIONED ABSENTEEISM

#### a. In Years 1, 2 and 4 (I&T):

- i. 100% attendance is expected for I&T small group learning, weekly wrap-up of case-based modules, and Communications & Physicianship.
  - 1. Requests for leave will not be approved, except in the case of Compassionate, Health, or Religious grounds.
  - 2. **Match Day:** The afternoon of Residency Match Day will be a sanctioned half day off in I&T. Be aware that the day following Match Day is a regular class day. Everyone is expected to attend all sessions scheduled on that day.
  - 3. **Residency Interviews:** A three week break has been provided to students in Year 4 during the I&T course during which they are expected to attend all Residency Interviews.
- ii. There will be no deferral of assessments during the scheduled week of Final Assessments in both Term 1 and Term 2.
  - 1. Requests for Academic Leave during these time periods will not be approved.
    - a. The Session Dates for an academic year are set 12 months in advance. Learners should judiciously select the conferences they would like to attend with these dates in mind.
  - 2. Requests for Non-Academic (Compassionate and Health-related only) Leave during these time periods will be at the discretion of the Associate Dean, UME, in consultation with the LEW Office.
  - 3. The only exception to this will be for learners enrolled in the MD/PHD program who are required to present their work at an academic conference with the approval of their research supervisor and the Associate Dean, UME.
- iii. Cross-campus attendance:
  - 1. Campus assignment is done deliberately to ensure that there are adequate resources and learning opportunities for all students and therefore cross-campus attendance is prohibited without prior approval.
    - a. Students who attend lecture at an alternate campus without permission will receive documentation on their student record.
    - b. Students who are found attending the opposite campus for a second time without appropriate permission will be cited for unprofessional behavior on their MSPR.
  - 2. Permission to attend lecture at the student's non-assigned campus will be at the discretion of administration and limited on the basis of room capacity.
    - a. Students are encouraged to make use of the technology available to attend meetings or events virtually where possible to avoid unnecessary travel.

**b. In all Clinical Learning: (Clerkship and Year 4 Clinical Electives)**

- i. Students are expected to attend all sessions according to the schedule set by the supervisor, including call duty, rounds, etc. for the full period of the rotation and to inform supervisors of any approved absences.
- ii. In order for a request to be approved, the time absent must be limited and not interfere with clinical teaching.
  1. Provision must be made for patient safety issues.
  2. Time away must be limited to 10% of the rotation 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).
    - a. If additional time away is requested and granted, the student will be expected to make up the missed time, at the discretion of the Rotation Director and the Chair of CEC.
  3. A total of five (5) days have been designated as the metric for review of unacceptable absenteeism in clerkship.
    - a. This does not mean that Year 3 Clerks are entitled to receive five days off clerkship. Five days is the point at which absences are formally reviewed.
      - i. If the total time away in Clerkship reaches five days during the clerkship year, the student's leave history will be reviewed by the Chair of CEC and make up time may be required during the student's Year 4 Elective period.
- iii. If clerkship absence is approved:
  1. The Rotation Director or preceptor must be contacted as soon as possible.
  2. Daily updates are required for absences due to illness.
    - a. Two or more consecutive days of absence because of illness, or three or more random days of absence because of illness within one rotation requires written documentation from the treating physician submitted to the LEW Office.

**4. UNAPPROVED ABSENCES**

- a. Years 1, 2, & 4 (I&T)
  - i. Students will receive a mark of 0% on any assessment given during an unapproved absence.
  - ii. In accordance with the *Statement on Attendance Monitoring* the Manager, UME will monitor attendance:
    1. Students recorded as absent from a mandatory session without approval from either LEW Office or UME will have the unapproved absence documented on their academic record.
    2. Students recorded as absent from more than one session without approval will be required to meet with the Associate Dean, UME and will have their observership and academic privileges revoked.
    3. Ongoing egregious attendance issues will be considered to be in violation of Western's Student Code of Conduct and will be recorded in the student's MSPR.
    4. Information provided by facilitators will be considered accurate.
      - a. "Failure to sign-in" will not be considered a legitimate excuse for non-attendance of a small group session.
      - b. Students may not sign attendance documents on behalf of their peers. Students caught forging attendance documents will be referred to the Associate Dean and dealt with under the terms of Western's Policy on Academic Offenses.
    5. Students must attend the group to which they are assigned.
      - a. Attending an unassigned group will be considered an absence.

- b. Years 3 & 4 (Clerkship and Clinical Science Electives)
  - i. Professionalism is a graded component of Clerkship and Clinical Science Electives.
  - ii. Unapproved absences will be considered a breach of professionalism.
  - iii. Unapproved absences must be noted on the assessment form and may result in a grade of Fail on a Rotation, the Course “Clinical Clerkship” or a Clinical Science Elective at the discretion of the Rotation Director.
  - iv. Failing a rotation, Clinical Clerkship or a Clinical Science Elective as a result of unprofessional behaviour such as unapproved absences will not be remediated.

**5. LEAVE FOR ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT**

- a. A term of up to two (2) years may be granted providing the MD Program is completed within a six (6) year window from enrolment.
  - i. Such leave will need to be formally requested and approved by the Associate Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education.
  - ii. Monitoring of the conditions of such a leave will be completed by the Undergraduate Medical Education Office.
  - iii. Return to the program will be at the discretion of the Associate Dean, UME.

**6. LEAVE FOR PERSONAL AND/OR HEALTH REASONS**

- a. A term of up to two (2) years may be granted providing the MD Program is completed within a six (6) year window from enrolment.
  - i. Such leave will need to be formally requested and approved by the Associate Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education upon recommendation by Assistant Dean, Learner Equity & Wellness.
  - ii. Monitoring of the conditions of such a leave will be completed by the LEW Office according to the Statement on Student Return to UME Curriculum after Granted Leave for Personal and/or Health Reasons.
  - iii. Return to the program will be at the discretion of the Associate Dean, UME.

**7. COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH ABSENCE FROM MANDATORY LEARNING SESSIONS**

- a. In all cases, any costs related to the remediation of a missed mandatory learning session shall be incurred entirely by the student.
  - i. This includes the costs associated with proctoring, the use of standardized patients, the renewal of content for unique assessments etc.
- b. The program will communicate the total cost for remediation to the student.
- c. Remediation costs must be paid in full before a grade of pass will be awarded for the course and no later than the end of the academic year during which remediation occurs.