



Cooper Medical School of Rowan University

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SECTION: Medical Students

SUBJECT: Student Attendance Policy

ISSUE DATE: December 2, 2013

REVISION DATE: June 25, 2020; September 21, 2020; November 25, 2020; May 17, 2021; May 24, 2022

INITIATED BY: Office of Student Affairs

APPROVED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Annette C. Reboli, M.D." with a horizontal line underneath.

Annette C. Reboli, M.D., Dean

POLICY: Student Attendance

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

PURPOSE: Students will have events occur during the course of their medical education that are unpredictable. The importance of the health and welfare of each student is paramount. 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 unexpected events, and allows students to plan their schedules responsibly. This policy outlines the importance of in-person, active engagement among students and faculty.

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)

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 or the Associate Dean for Medical Education.

All absence requests 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.

Religious Observance:

The Cooper Medical School of Rowan University academic calendar specifies the days on which there are no mandatory academic activities, see the Academic Calendar for a full list. Students who wish to be excused from mandatory curricular activities for religious observance must notify the Course/Clerkship Director, Preceptor, Chief Student Affairs Officer, and Education Coordinator as soon as possible; but not less than 7 days prior to the scheduled day of observance. The student must submit an absence request through ARS system, and indicate Religious Observance in the comment field. The absence will NOT be counted against the student; however missed work must be made up.

Phase I

First and Second Year Students

Please note: 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.

Attendance is required for all course sessions that are mandatory.

1. **Students within the Phase 1 curriculum will be allotted six (6) half (1/2) days per semester, twelve (12) half (1/2) days for the academic year that can be utilized at the student's discretion, including to attend appointments or access health services.** *(Students in the PC3 program are allotted two (2) half (1/2) days during the summer session).*

All absences must be logged/reported by the student, and are monitored by the Office of Medical Education. (Please also see the Prolonged Absence Policy for extended absences.)

- No more than two half-day absences are allowed per course, per semester (including year-long courses).
- For absences involving Ambulatory Clerkship, WOW I & II, and Selectives, students must notify their course/clerkship director(s) for prior approval before the absence.
- Any absence that includes an assessment or the day before an assessment will require a doctor's note or proper documentation within two (2) days upon the student's return. The documentation is to be sent to the Chief Student Affairs Officer (CSAO). Only full-day absences are allowed on assessment days.
- For absences occurring on assessment dates in more than three courses during an academic year, the CSAO will be notified and a meeting with the student will be required. The student may be referred to the Director of Professionalism.

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- For absences occurring on assessment dates in more than three courses during an academic year, the CSAO will be notified and a meeting with the student will be required. The student may be referred to the Director of Professionalism.

- Students must contact their course/clerkship director and the Assistant Dean of Assessment and CQI so that they can reschedule the assessment. *A score of zero will be assigned if a doctor's note or proper documentation is not provided for any missed assessment.*
 - **Exceptions:**
 - *Absences due to religious holiday observances* will not be counted toward the 6 half-days limit, provided the student reports the absence and its reason.
 - *Absences due to students accompanying their Ambulatory patients to specialist visits* will not be counted toward the 6 half-days limit, provided the student reports the absence, and completes the relevant form and delivers it to the Ambulatory Clerkship coordinator. These absences are not allowed on assessment days, may not exceed 2 absences course/semester, and should be limited to a reasonable number throughout the year. The Ambulatory Clerkship directors may revoke this privilege in cases of abuse, at their discretion.
 - *Student (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.
2. The Office of Medical Education will monitor absence records. If a student's absences exceed the allowed numbers, or otherwise violate any of the policies above:
- a. The CSAO 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 CSAO 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.
 - d. 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.
 - e. For medical absences for three (3) consecutive dates (six half days total) a doctor's note will need to be provided to the Office of Student Affairs within two (2) days upon the student's return.

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 required session.

Logging, notification, and the absence system

- Students must submit the absence request as soon as possible or within the first 5 hours of their scheduled course or clerkship. Not doing so may result in a Professionalism report.
- The student **MUST** log all absences into the absence request system.
- Students will be notified by email of each absence recorded in the system.
- 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.

Phase II

Third Year Students

Daily attendance is required on all clerkships and electives.

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

The following sessions cannot be missed:

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

Absences exceeding more than 2 days of any 6-week block during the third year must be made up (there are seven 6-week clerkships blocks in the M3 year).

Example: If you missed 3 total days on your 6 week Pediatrics Clerkship, you would have to make up 1 of these days.

Exceptions to this rule where absences must be made up will be in each clerkship specific syllabus. Please refer to the clerkship syllabus to see which absences must be made up no matter the circumstance (example – Ob/Gyn call time that is missed must be made up).

If a student has a total of 8 absences in an academic year, the M3 Education Coordinator will alert the Chief Student Affairs Officer (CSAO) 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.

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 and/or preceptor's choosing, or any other educational activity that the clerkship/elective director and/or preceptor chooses.

Unexcused absences (missing time and not alerting anyone) in the M3 year. Because the M3 curriculum is heavily experiential, attendance is vital to its integrity. Any absences must be requested prospectively and must be made up or a Professionalism report may be filed.

Students who will be absent more than one (2) days during a (6) week block during any curriculum component, must email the Chief Student Affairs Officer for their reason for the prolonged absence. The CSAO will alert the M3 Director and the M3 Education Coordinator. Should the absence be excused, the student will be responsible to make up any missed time.

Absences due to illness or serious extenuating circumstances occurring on the date of scheduled exams, must be communicated to the CSAO and will require supporting documentation sent from a physician within three (3) days of the absence. Absence requests are to be made using the Absence Request System in the CMSRU portal system.

A student representing CMSRU in a leadership role or presenting at a conference should submit an absence request with proper documentation.

***Retroactive absences are absolutely not allowed (you cannot apply for an absence AFTER an absence occurs). This will be considered an unexcused absence. Missed time will be made up and can lead to a Professionalism Report.

M3 Quarantine/Isolation/Covid-19 Absence Makeup Plan and Shelf Exam Policy

Any student who misses 3 or more consecutive inpatient days in the M3 year due to illness or quarantine related to COVID-19 must make up the time at the end of the year.

Logging and Notification of Absences by the student:

- The student MUST log all absences into the absence request system.
- 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 the remediation for the missed time.
- Students must notify their clerkship/elective director and/or preceptor as early as possible of an impending absence. In the event of an unanticipated absence, the student must notify their clerkship/elective director and/or preceptor within the first 2 hours of their scheduled shift/activity. Not doing so may result in a Professionalism report and the possibility of failing the rotation; which is at the discretion of the clerkship/elective director and/or preceptor.
- Any date that includes an assessment (e.g. subject exam) for which a student is ill, will require notification to the Chief Student Affairs Officer (CSAO) prior to the administration of the assessment. A doctor's note or proper documentation should be sent to the Chief Student Affairs Officer (CSAO) within two (2) days upon the student's return. Only full-day absences are allowed on assessment days.
- 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.
- For medical absences for three (3) consecutive dates, a doctor's note will need to be provided to the Office of Student Affairs within two (2) days upon the student's return.

Fourth Year Students

Daily attendance is required on all clerkships and electives.

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 Chief Student Affairs Officer for their reason for the absence. The Chief Student Affairs Officer 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.

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.

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

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 AND travel to and from your residency interviews in a 4 week rotation.
- Maximum of 2 excused days for residency interviews AND travel to and from your residency interviews in a 2 week rotation.
- Maximum of 1 excused day for residency interview AND travel to and from your residency interview in a 1 week rotation.
- **Excused days for residency interviews do not have to be made up, as long as 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.**

Step 2 CK

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

Match Week

- Students are REQUIRED to attend all Mandatory Match Week Sessions.

Logging and Notification of Absences by the student

- The student MUST log all absences, residency interviews, and Step 2 testing dates into the absence request system.
- 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 will then notify the student of the remediation for the missed time.
- Students must notify their clerkship/elective director and/or preceptor as early as possible of an impending absence. In the event of an unanticipated absence, the student must notify their clerkship/elective director and/or preceptor within the first 2 hours of their scheduled shift/activity. Not doing so may result in a Professionalism report and the possibility of failing the rotation; which is at the discretion of the clerkship/elective director and/or preceptor.
- All students are required to log their absences/interviews in the CMSRU on-line attendance system, failure to do so may result in a Professionalism report and the possibility of failing the rotation.
- For medical absences for three (3) consecutive dates, a doctor's note will need to be provided to the Office of Student Affairs within two (2) days upon the student's return.