



University of the Virgin Islands School of Medicine

Policy Name and Section: <i>Absence and Attendance Policy</i>	Effective Date:	UVISOM Policy Number: <i>021</i>
Responsible Authority: <i>Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions</i>	UVISOM Document where Policy is Available: <i>UVISOM Student Handbook</i>	Approval Body and Date: <i>Executive Council, Self-Study Committee, Curriculum Committee March 2016</i>

Students are expected to attend all scheduled hours of clinical responsibilities and didactic instruction. Mandatory session and clerkship participation requirements in modules and clerkships, and remediation due to absence are determined by the module/clerkship directors. The student will be held responsible for any material covered during the excused absence, but will be permitted a reasonable amount of time to complete any missed work. Recognizing that situations arise which require students to miss time from their module/clerkship responsibilities, the procedures presented below will be followed when absence is necessary:

Year 1 and Year 2 Modules:

MANDATORY ATTENDANCE POLICY M1/M2 YEARS: Students are required to be at their local residence during term time. Attendance is mandatory for all sessions of a course or module. Unexcused absences will be considered as violations of professionalism by the Committee on Student Progress.

EMERGENCIES – FAMILY ILLNESS, PERSONAL ILLNESS, ETC: If the absenteeism will result in the student missing a class session or a scheduled exam, the student must e-mail or telephone the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions to report his/her absenteeism on the first day of being absent. The student must indicate the nature of the emergency. The Office of Student Affairs and Admissions will take whatever action is necessary and will notify the module director of the student's absence. If possible, the student should contact the module director as well.

An excused absence may be granted if the student is ill. Absences require that a note from the student's physician be obtained and given to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions within 24 hours: (a) if the illness is expected to last 72 hours or more at any time, (b) if the illness lasts 24 hours during the final week of a module, or (c) at the discretion of the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions if further investigation seems warranted. Upon return from illness, the student must complete and submit the student absence form to the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions.

Emergency excusal from an exam will only be granted in cases of severe illness (e.g. hospitalization) or a

death in the family. If the student will miss an exam due to illness, a note is required from one of the following: UVI Health Services, a licensed physician, nurse practitioner or physician assistant.

- *Failure to comply with any component of the above instructions will result in unexcused absence.*

SCHEDULED TIME OFF (conflicts, out of town meetings, personal requests, etc.): All modules: Students must submit a written request to the module director for permission to miss scheduled exams, module projects, or mandatory sessions. The request should be submitted **at least one month** in advance of the scheduled event. The decision to grant or deny the request and determine subsequent action will be at the discretion of the module director. It is the responsibility of the student to advise the module director if they are on warning status or experiencing academic difficulties. Consideration will be given for activities such as presenting research, elected student representation to various organizations, and personal requests. The student must provide any documentation requested to the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions to justify the need for the absence. Students who miss a mandatory session are expected to acquire the same level of competency as other students involved in the module.

Year 3 Clerkships and Year 4 Senior Required and Elective Rotations

GENERAL ABSENTEE POLICY: As a member of a health care team during the third and fourth years of medical school, students are expected to attend all scheduled hours of clinical responsibilities and didactic instruction. There is no guaranteed time off for holidays. Students are expected to follow the holiday practice of the clinic/hospital/site at which they are rotating. Clinical responsibilities, such as night call and making clinical rounds, take precedence over holiday schedules. If situations arise which require students to miss time from clerkship responsibilities, the guidelines below will be followed.

EXCUSED ABSENCES – DEFINITIONS AND REQUIRED ACTIONS

Anticipated Absences

- Presentation of research at professional meeting
 - Maximum of one meeting per academic year; and
 - Same research project may not be presented at more than one meeting; and
 - Time away is only for presentation of data and travel time; *and*
 - Requests must be submitted to Clerkship Directors for approval no later than 6 weeks prior to date of presentation.
 - If approved, the student is responsible for notifying the attending/resident and their team in advance of all anticipated absences.
 - The student must complete the absence form, have it signed by the Clerkship Director and forward it to the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions.
 - *Requests for exceptions to this policy (e.g., for those on National Committees or those with compelling reasons to give additional research presentations) must be discussed with the Clerkship Director in advance.*

- Residency interviews
 - During interview months of October – January, students will be allowed to take time off for interviews.

- On 4-week rotations, the maximum number of days allowed is 4 (no more than 3 consecutive days). On 2-week rotations, the maximum is 2 days. Requests for additional days must be discussed and approved by the rotation director. If the time requested exceeds the maximum number allowable, student may be required to repeat the rotation.
 - Requests must be submitted in writing to Clerkship Director/s prior to the start of the affected rotation/s or within 24 hours of an interview offer during the course of the rotation.
 - Once approved, the student is responsible for notifying the attending/resident and their team in advance of all anticipated absences.
 - The student must complete the absence form, have it signed by the Clerkship Director and forward it to the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions.
- Meeting with core advisor or Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions
 - May schedule one meeting with advisor or Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions during each clerkship/elective
 - Meeting/s must be approved in advance by the Clerkship Director; and
 - Meeting/s must be scheduled at a time that minimizes disruption of clinical responsibilities, didactics and other clerkship activities; and
 - Absence includes time for meeting and appropriate travel time only; and
 - Students are required to be present at clinical sites before and after meeting/s as dictated by their clinical schedules.
 - Special Considerations: There are certain instances that will be considered on an individual case-by-case basis. In the event of the following anticipated absences, student must contact the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions in writing at least one month in advance to request permission. In each case, permission is granted at the request of the Associate Dean.
 - Personal days or social events for major life events, including weddings, graduations or birthdays
 - Routine doctor/dental appointments that cannot be rescheduled outside of class hours
 - Military Duty: Military obligations will be considered on an individual basis and will require communication between Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions and military agency
 - UVISOM will respect students' civic duty for those called to jury duty. In the event that a student is selected for jury duty, he/she must provide copy of the selection letter to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions may submit proof of enrollment to jury selection body to attempt to secure excusal from jury duty.

Unanticipated Absences

- Hospitalization of student
- Death of family member
- Illness
 - An excused absence may be granted if student is ill. Absences require that a note from student's physician, NP, PA or UVI Health Services be obtained and given to the Clerkship Coordinator within 24 hours: (a) if the illness is expected to last 72 hours or more at any time, (b) if the illness lasts 24 hours during the final week of a rotation, or (c) at the discretion of the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs if further investigation seems warranted.; and

- The Clerkship Coordinator and the attending physician/resident physician on student's clinical team are notified in a timely fashion (e.g., before the start of AM rounds); and
- The student absence form is completed, signed by the Clerkship Director and forwarded to the Office of Student Affairs and Admissions.
- *Failure to comply with any component of the above instructions will result in unexcused absence. Residents or faculty directly working with students cannot grant approval for absence. Students should not approach these individuals, as approval by them is not official.*

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES – DEFINITIONS AND REQUIRED ACTIONS

- Unexcused absences include:
 - If the student chooses to travel for personal reasons during the rotation (e.g., a weekend off), it is expected that the student will return to her/his clinical responsibilities on time. Delays in returning (e.g., bad weather, missed flights) will be considered as unexcused.
 - Missing any portion of the Orientation to the Third Year, the M3 Capstone, the M4 Capstone or the longitudinal Curricular Sessions
 - *In the event of an absence from the clerkship without permission from the clerkship director, the absence will be counted as unexcused. Additional remediation may be required at the clerkship director's discretion (e.g., the taking of extra call).*

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

It is the policy of the UVISOM to reasonably accommodate the religious observances, practices and beliefs of individuals in regard to admissions, class attendance and the scheduling of examinations and work assignments. A student who desires to observe a religious holy day of his/her religious faith must notify all of his or her instructors and will be excused from classes/clinical responsibilities to observe the religious holy day. Students should submit notification of religious holy day to be taken off to Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions at least one month in advance. The student must provide any documentation requested to the Office of Admissions and Student Affairs addressing absenteeism. Students who miss scheduled hours are expected to acquire the same level of competency as other students involved in the module/clerkship.

The student will be held responsible for any material covered during the excused absence, but will be permitted a reasonable amount of time to complete any missed work. Where practical, major examinations, major assignments and university ceremonies will not be scheduled on a major religious holy day.

Students who are absent from academic or social activities because of religious observances will not be penalized. A student who believes that he or she has been unreasonably denied an educational benefit due to his or her religious belief or practices may seek redress under the Student Grievance Policy, located in the Student Handbook.