



**The Medical College of Georgia
Academic Affairs Office**

Attendance & Absence Policy: Clerkship & Enrichment Experiences

Patient care teams are responsible to each other in order to provide high quality care and a good learning environment. Being absent or late, even for good reasons, may affect the team. Therefore, the following policy applies to all rotations, including both on-campus and off-campus experiences.

1. All absences must be excused:

- a. Excused absences are granted by the Clerkship Director. If the student's rotation is on a regional campus, the Site Clerkship Director (Athens) or the Clinical Campus Dean (NW, SE, or SW) may grant the excused absence and notify the Clerkship Director.
- b. Requests for excused absences should be made as soon as feasible and students should expect a timely written response to their request.
- c. Examples of excused absences include: Personal illness, family emergencies, health care appointments, observance of religious holidays, residency interviews, USMLE exams, the Phase 3 OSCE, Match Day, and occasionally presentations of scholarly works.
- d. A student may not miss more than 2 days in a 3-week rotation, 3 days in a 4-week rotation, 5 days in a 6-week rotation, or 6 days in an 8-week rotation to ensure adequate clinical experience.
 - i. The Clerkship Director, Site Clerkship Director (Athens) or Dean (NW, SE, SW) will determine how to best facilitate the student's learning when there are absences. Effort will be made to ensure that the student has adequate clinical exposure by arranging make-up experiences for time missed.
 - ii. Up to two additional days may be excused for interviews only and must be made up.
 - iii. If a student misses more than the allowed excused absences (for any reason), the student must drop the rotation.
- e. Absences will be centrally monitored by Academic Affairs.



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- 2. If an absence is not planned** and the student is absent or late for any reason, on the same day as the event s/he is required to contact:
- a. If in Augusta:
 - i. The attending physician and/or resident for that rotation, and
 - ii. The Clerkship Director and the Clerkship Director's office to request an excused absence
 - b. If on a regional campus:
 - i. The attending physician and/or resident for that rotation, and
 - ii. The appropriate Site Clerkship Director (Athens) or the Clinical Campus Dean (NW, SE, SW) with a copy to the Clerkship Director's office to request an excused absence
- 3. If an absence is planned:**
- a. When a student becomes aware that s/he will need to be absent due to a qualifying reason for a relatively brief period, the student should obtain an excused absence in writing through the Clerkship Director or from the appropriate Site Clerkship Director (Athens), or Clinical Campus Dean (NW, SE, SW)
 - b. The student must meet with the Associate Dean for Curriculum in Augusta or in Athens the Campus Associate Dean for Curriculum or their designee who would then notify the Associate Dean for Curriculum prior to beginning the Clerkship Experience or as soon as feasible if:
 - i. The student needs to be away from clinical responsibilities on any required rotation for more than the allowed number of absences on a particular rotation, or
 - ii. The student is required to be away for more than seven days or seven 24-hour periods during an academic year.
 - c. In such instances, the Associate Dean for Curriculum will work with the student to modify the curriculum to ensure the student meets the educational requirements for graduation.
 - d. The student should notify the clerkship director as soon as possible about planned absences so that schedules can be modified to minimize time missed.
- 4. Excused absence for health care (planned absence):**
- a. Medical students are encouraged to obtain health care and will be excused from course and clerkship activities to seek their own health care.



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- b. As professionals, when possible, they should choose appointments that interfere the least with educational responsibilities
- c. If such absences exceed one appointment per month, a formal medical excuse must be obtained and submitted.
- d. Adherence to this policy will be monitored by COC, reviewed on a biannual basis and modified as appropriate.

5. Observance of religious holidays (planned absence):

- a. As a culturally sensitive institution, MCG respects the desire of individuals to be absent for observance of major religious holidays that are personally observed.
- b. The student must meet with the Associate Dean for Curriculum, prior to the beginning of the rotation to obtain approval for the excused absence.
- c. After approving the student request, the Associate Dean for Curriculum will communicate with the Clerkship Director, Site Clerkship Director (where appropriate), and the appropriate Student Affairs Dean to advise of the excused absence. The Clerkship Director or Site Clerkship Director will advise the faculty member (attending physician) of the excused absence, noting that students have permission to be away from their clinical responsibilities for the religious observance.
- d. If the Associate Dean for Curriculum does not approve the request, the student may appeal the decision to the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs.
- e. Time away from the rotation for excused absences will not affect student evaluations.

6. Unexcused Absences:

- a. Any absence not approved as excused according to the policy above is an unexcused absence.
- b. Unexcused absences will result in notation about unacceptable professionalism in the evaluation comments, referral to the Student Promotions Committee, and may result in a failing grade for the course.