

TITLE:

Clerkship Absence Policy

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:

The clinical phase of the curriculum requires a full-time commitment by the student for all patient care and educational activities. Students are part of a health care team and assume an active role in the care of patients. Educational experiences (e.g. patient care, clinics, classes, rounds, conferences, simulation, presentations, etc.) are not considered “optional” unless clearly stated in the syllabus.

The purpose of this policy is to formalize guidelines for time off for planned or unplanned absences during the required clerkships; it is intended to ensure that students have time to attend to personal obligations that may arise during the clerkships without compromising patient care or educational requirements.

APPROVED BY: Curriculum Committee

APPROVAL DATE: March 28, 2022

EFFECTIVE DATE: March 28, 2022

APPLIES TO: Chicago Medical School (CMS) students on required or elective clerkship rotations

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: Clinical Sciences Department

RESPONSIBLE PARTY CONTACT: Applicable Education Directors

LAST REVIEWED: March 2022

SUPERSEDES: CMS Excused Absence Policy

POLICY STATEMENTS:

Excused absences require written permission from the Education Director.

Unexcused absences will be considered a lapse in professionalism and may affect the final grade or result in failure of the clerkship (see the CMS Clerkship Grading Policy).

DEFINITIONS:

Planned Excused Absence: Absences granted due to legal proceedings (jury duty, court date), medical appointment

or procedure, participation in local/national meetings where the student is representing RFU/CMS, presentation at an academic conference, religious observance, remediation of summative M3 OSCE, Step 2 CK (during M4 year only), or personal days (up to four days total; see definition below).

Unplanned Excused Absence: Absences granted due to personal medical conditions (a physician's note is required after one day or on the day of an OSCE or final exam), death or critical illness in a close family member (e.g. grandparents, parents, spouse, children, sibling), or other emergencies that may be considered on a case by case basis.

Personal Days: Allowable days for students to tend to personal business, weddings, reunions, or other events not included in the list of the events that constitute an excused absence, whereby students are allowed up to four personal days off during their clerkship curriculum: two personal days in the first part of the academic year ending in December 31, and two personal days in the second part of the academic year starting in January. Personal days do not roll over and must be used in the term to which they are allocated.

Unexcused Absence: An absence where the student has not received written permission from the Education Director.

PROCEDURES, FORMS, AND RESOURCES:

Missed time will be made up with additional clinical work/didactics/ alternative learning experience at the discretion of the Education Director.

Days off for holidays are determined by the clinical site. Students on clinical rotations do not follow the Chicago Medical School holiday schedule.

Planned Absences:

1. For a planned excused absence, the student must complete the CMS Clerkship Absence Request Form at least four weeks prior to the start date for the rotation. The Clerkship Absence Request Form must be routed to the clerkship's ACME Specialist. Supporting documentation may be required. Submission of this request does not guarantee approval.
2. All planned absences must be approved by the Education Director. Approval for an excused absence is dependent upon the activities of the team, educational sessions, and the number of students off on any given day.
3. The maximum number of full day planned absences a student may be excused is indicated below. No half days or hour counts are permitted.

Clerkship/Elective	Maximum number of excused absence days
Required 8-week clerkship	two days
Required 6-week clerkship	one day

Required 4-week clerkship	one day
M3 4-week Elective	one day

4. Planned excused absences are not permitted on the first or last day of the rotation due to Orientation and Exam scheduling.
5. Students will receive notification by email if their request has been approved or not. An absence is not considered approved until email confirmation has been received.

Unplanned Absences:

1. For an unplanned excused absence, the student must contact 1) the clinical site and 2) the clerkship's ACME Specialist by the start of the work day/shift.
2. Unplanned absences lasting more than two days require documentation of the cause.
3. In the event of extreme weather, students should check with the clinical site regarding its status. Unless otherwise directed by the Site Director, students should report for the rotation as scheduled.
4. In the event of an unplanned unexcused absence on the day of the final exam, the student will be allowed to reschedule the exam with a maximum score of Pass for the exam component of the overall grade. If a student has an unexcused absence for two or more exams, the student will be referred to the CMS Professionalism Committee.

HISTORY (IF APPLICABLE):

- March 28, 2022 – Policy was updated to address discontinuance of Step 2 CS, clarify allowable personal day periods, and update CMS staff titles.
- July 1, 2019 - Original policy created to align with new procedures.