

School of Medicine

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Office of the Dean
Registrar

Basic Clerkship Attendance Policy¹

Basic Clerkship attendance is required. Attendance rules are governed by the School of Medicine in the following ways:

1. School Holidays

The School of Medicine publishes an annual calendar that identifies official SOM holidays for students (<http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/som/students/academics/calendar.html>). These holidays currently include the following:

- Labor Day (Quarter 1, 1 day)
- Thanksgiving (Quarter 2, 4 days [2 weekdays, 2 weekend days])
- Christmas and New Year (winter break)
- Martin Luther King Day (Quarter 3, 1 day)
- Spring vacation (spring break)
- Memorial Day (Quarter 4, 1 day)
- Independence Day (Summer Quarter, 1 day)

The holidays which occur during the Clerkship time generally fall on a Monday or Friday adjacent to a weekend. These weekend days adjacent to these weekday holidays are **NOT** considered official school holidays (with the exception of Thanksgiving) and required activities may be scheduled on those weekend days at the discretion of the Clerkship Director. University Commencement and Convocation are **NOT** considered holidays for Basic Clerkship students. Similarly, election day, presidential inauguration, and other public or civic events are not considered holidays for Basic Clerkship students.

2. Excused & Unexcused Absences

a). Residency Interviews

The following policy is to address the amount of time that fourth year students can miss from their Basic Clerkships for residency interviews. The goal is to ensure that students obtain sufficient experience in each of the basic disciplines to meet the objectives of the Hopkins curriculum. Interview days should not be considered the equivalent of PERSONAL days. Students should make every effort to leave as late as possible and return as early as possible when interviewing to minimize time lost from a core clerkship.

- 1) On 6-9 week clerkships, students will be allowed to miss 3 full days of responsibilities as excused absences for interviews.
- 2) On 4-4.5 week clerkships, students will be allowed to miss 2 full days of responsibilities as excused absences for interviews.

¹ Approved by the CCD 3/26/09; Approved by the EPCC 4/2/09

- 3) Students must inform course directors of any such absences in advance of the beginning of the clerkship when possible. If students do not contact the course director in advance of any absences, they will be considered unexcused and will impact on the student's final grade.
- 4) All students who miss more than the allowed days above will be required to develop a plan for remediation of missed days with the clerkship director. Such remediation is a necessary requirement for successful graduation from the M.D. curriculum.

b) Comprehensive Clinical Skills Exam (CCSE)

The CCSE is a required educational activity for all graduating medical students. Students are encouraged not to schedule their CCSE during a Basic Clerkship, but this is not always possible. The student is to be excused from Clerkship duties for the duration of the exam (approximately 7-9 hours, since the current 10-case version of the exam runs from about 7AM to 4PM). Students should expect to attend required basic clerkship educational activities after they have completed the exam.

c) Other Required Coursework

Certain required courses (e.g., Rational Therapeutics) may occasionally be scheduled concurrently with a Basic Clerkship. If this occurs, scheduled activities for these other courses take priority over all scheduled Clerkship activities. Nevertheless, if such a conflict arises for a particular student, remediation may be required (*see below*).

d) Elective Coursework

Under no circumstances will elective coursework supersede required Basic Clerkship activities. Students will not be excused from required Basic Clerkship duties to attend clinical elective courses (or similar activities, such as research electives or ACLS training), whether such electives are internal or external to Johns Hopkins SOM. This includes elective experiences requiring complex or expensive travel arrangements, such as those conducted overseas. ***It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that no such conflicts arise.*** Students should consult the SOM calendar and the Registrar's office for official start and end dates for each required Basic Clerkship.

e) Personal Reasons (including Religious Holidays)

Students must notify the Clerkship Director as early as possible **before** the start of the clerkship regarding any scheduled absence other than those described above, and should expect that they will need to make up missed time. This includes (but is not limited to) any absence for religious holidays, academic events (e.g., national meetings and other presentations, including within Johns Hopkins), and civic responsibilities (e.g., election day, jury duty). Although each Clerkship Director has discretion to allow or disallow such absences (except for jury duty and religious holidays, see below*) based on their potential impact on the educational experience, the general rule is "a day for a day" (i.e., each missed day will generally result in one additional day made up at a later time).

**University policy regarding religious holidays states, "Religious holidays are valid reasons to be excused from class. Students who must miss a class or an examination because of a religious holiday must inform the instructor as early as possible in order to be excused from class or to make up any work that is missed."*

f) Weather and Other Related Emergencies Within the Baltimore Area

Weather-related policies are stipulated by the Johns Hopkins University and may be found at the URL below:

http://webapps.jhu.edu/jhuniverse/administration/emergency_weather_security_information/policy_on_university_closings/index.cfm

Weather emergencies are available at the phone numbers and website below, as well as on radio and TV broadcasts (<http://www.insidehopkinsmedicine.org/weather.pdf>):

Baltimore 410-516-7781
Outside Baltimore 800-548-9004
URL: <http://webapps.jhu.edu/emergencynotices>

Basic Clerkship students are not considered “Required Attendance Employees” and are excused from attendance at normally-required Clerkship activities if affected by circumstances (e.g., weather) related to University delays or closings. As necessary, remediation plans will be made on a case-by-case basis by the Clerkship Director.

Weather and Other Related Emergencies Outside the Baltimore Area

Students who travel during (e.g., on weekends) or in close temporal proximity to (e.g., just before) a Basic Clerkship may be delayed in their return travel plans by inclement weather, flight cancellations, or other similar events outside their control. In such circumstances, safety is the first priority. Once the student’s safety is assured, they should immediately notify people related to the Clerkship, as appropriate (e.g., Clerkship Director or Coordinator, clinical team or preceptor with whom they are rotating, etc.). Students will generally be required to remediate any time or activities upon safe return or at a later date. Students should be advised, however, that extended or repeated travel-related absences will be considered unprofessional behavior and will likely result in grade reductions, failure, or disciplinary action.

g) Illness or Injury (Personal or Family)

Illnesses or injuries are handled on a case by case basis by Clerkship Directors. In almost all cases, such events cannot be predicted in advance. When either occurs, the student’s first responsibility is to their own personal safety and the safety and well-being of those around them. Once the situation has stabilized sufficiently and it is safe to do so, a student should immediately notify people related to the Clerkship, as appropriate (e.g., Clerkship Director or Coordinator, clinical team or preceptor with whom they are rotating, etc.). Family emergencies (including illness or death of a loved one) should be handled similarly. As necessary, remediation plans will be made on a case-by-case basis by the Clerkship Director.

3. Remediation of Coursework

It is at the discretion of the Clerkship Director to establish a required remediation plan for the student, ***regardless of the reason for absence***. Note that if a significant component of the educational experience is missed for any reason, it is at the Clerkship Director’s discretion to require remediation, reduce the student’s grade, or remove the student from the Clerkship that cycle. In such cases, students may need to wait for the next available Clerkship slot, potentially delaying promotion or graduation in some circumstances.

4. Consequences of Unexcused Absences

Students who fail to attend required activities (e.g. Clerkship Orientation) without advance notice and are unable to offer a reasonable or appropriate justification (as judged by the Clerkship Director) may be subject to grade reductions, failure, or disciplinary action on grounds of lack of professionalism.

5. Recourse for Students Who Feel They Have Been Treated Unfairly

Any student who feels unfairly treated with regard to attendance or duty hours policy should discuss these issues with the Clerkship Director. If a mutually agreeable decision is not reached, the student should contact the Office of Student Affairs if they wish to pursue the matter further.