

Curriculum Policy: Absences from Clinical Rotations

(Revised and approved by the Clerkship Director Committee June 2023; Approved by the Curriculum Steering Committee June 2023)

A student's responsibilities in clinical rotations include caring for patients on teams and therefore take precedence over other activities. However, we understand that situations may arise when a student will need to request a brief absence from daily responsibilities on a required clerkship or other clinical rotation. The guidelines listed below give insight as to what might be considered an acceptable request, and they include visiting students on senior rotations.

Note that these are institutional guidelines and some of the clerkships and departments may have more specific policies. Details regarding absences in individual rotations, such as means of notifying the clerkship/rotation director, and policies on make-up work, will be outlined in clerkship and rotation orientations.

All requests for leave must be presented to the clerkship/rotation director; it is the student's responsibility to make certain that they are approved. Directors of shorter clerkships/rotations will use their discretion in approving absences for non-emergencies in these rotations.

Sufficient remediation for absences will be established at the discretion of the clerkship/rotation director. Remediation may involve additional call nights, additional weekend responsibilities, clinical work on days normally set aside for NBME preparation, or make-up assignments for missed didactics. A clerkship/rotation director may require remediation of some work for absences of less than two days if they deem that learning opportunities are significantly affected by the absence.

Over the course of the clerkship/rotation, any leave totaling more than two days (for a single absence or for repeated absences, regardless of the reason) will require remediation prior to completion of the clerkship/rotation.

Requested absence days are included in the "one day in seven free of clinical work and required education averaged over the duration of the rotation," as outlined in the student work hour policy.

Adherence to these policy guidelines is considered a matter of professionalism, therefore excessive absences or non-emergent absences may be reflected in the evaluation of the student's work habits or professionalism.

1. Emergent Absence (such as illness or funeral):

Students should notify the clerkship/rotation director as soon as possible. If possible, the student should also notify their team (residents, interns, and attending). Leave of more than two days will require remediation prior to completion of the clerkship. Clerkship/rotation directors may require a note from the treating provider for absence due to illness. Make-up work may be assigned if the absence involves required didactics.

2. Non-emergent Absence (such as weddings, presentations at national conferences, or school business):

Students must request these absences from the clerkship/rotation director via e-mail prior to the start of the clerkship. The student should also notify their team (residents, interns, and attending) as soon as possible. Leave of more than two days will require remediation prior to the completion of the clerkship. Make-up work may be assigned if the absence involves required didactics.

3. Residency interviews (for seniors):

Students must request these absences from the clerkship/rotation director via e-mail prior to the start of the rotation or as soon as the interview is scheduled. The student should also notify their team (residents, interns, and attending) as soon as possible. Leave of more than two full days or four half days will require remediation prior to the completion of the rotation. Absences for interviews should be minimized, and students should make every attempt to schedule residency interviews at other times e.g., flex blocks. We recognize that this is not always possible.

4. Circumstances not stated in the above categories:

Students must request absences for other extenuating circumstances from the clerkship/rotation director via e-mail as soon as possible (before the start of the clerkship/rotation if possible), and approval is at the discretion of the clerkship/rotation director. As above, the student must notify their team and make up any work assigned by the clerkship/rotation director if the absence is approved.

Student Responsibilities on Holidays:

Unless otherwise stated, students will be free from clinical duties on the days below. Students are expected to perform clinical duties if assigned on the weekends associated with the holidays e.g., Saturday and Sunday before Labor Day. If a student is on their acting internship, they should not consider themselves exempt from working holidays and should consult with their clerkship/rotation director at the start of the rotation.

- July 4th
- Labor Day (off Monday)
- Martin Luther King, Jr. (off Monday)
- Mardi Gras (off Monday and Tuesday)
- Easter (off Friday, Saturday, Sunday)
- Thanksgiving (off Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday)
- Christmas (off 2 weeks around holidays -- off Christmas Day & New Years Day only if doing senior rotation in block 7)
- Memorial Day (off Monday)