



QUILLEN COLLEGE of MEDICINE

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Policy Name/Number: M4 Attendance Policy / MSEC-0111-4

Policy Owner: Kenneth Olive, MD / MSEC Chair (2008-2013); Ramsey McGowen, PhD / MSEC Chair (2013-2019); Ivy Click, EdD / MSEC Chair (2020-)

Committees, Departments, or Individuals Responsible for Implementation: Vice Dean for Academic Affairs, M4 Course Directors, Clerkship Coordinators, and Clinical Medical Education Director

Original Approval Date/ By: 1/11/2011 / MSEC

Effective Date: 3/21/2023

Most Recent Revision Date: 3/21/2023

Policy Advisory Committee Review Date: 3/21/2023

Date of Next Review: 3/23/2026

(All policies are reviewed by the Policy Advisory Committee every 3 years unless circumstances for an earlier review is identified.)

(A) Policy Statement:

Students pursuing the MD degree at Quillen College of Medicine are physicians in training who must meet standards of professional conduct and responsibility to develop into effective physicians. Institutional Educational Objective 5.0: “Demonstrate a commitment to carrying out professional responsibilities and an adherence to ethical principles.” As a professional school, Quillen requires attendance and active participation in all components of the curriculum, as defined by clerkship and course directors. Active participation in the School’s activities indicates the student’s understanding and mastery of professional responsibilities.

(B) Purpose of Policy:

The granting of the MD degree attests to the fact that the student has demonstrated a commitment to their professional responsibilities through participation in all aspects of the curriculum as defined by the faculty. When it is necessary for students to be absent from a required MD program activity, students must approach such absences with the same standard of professional responsibility required of practicing physicians, professional responsibility extends to one’s patients and members of one’s team.

(C) Scope of Policy (applies to):

M4 Students enrolled in the Quillen College of Medicine MD program.

(D) Policy Activities:

The *M4 Absence Request Form* becomes part of this policy.

Electives

Students may be permitted to miss up to twenty-five percent of an elective rotation (five [5] days for a four [4] week rotation; two and a half days [2 ½] for a two [2] week rotation) for residency interview purposes or up to two (2) days for purposes other than residency interview for justifiable circumstances provided a request is submitted at least one (1) week in advance.

Students requesting to miss more than twenty-five (25%) percent of a rotation will be required to:

1. Make up time missed;
2. Have an alternative activity assigned by the instructor to make up for the time missed; or
3. Withdraw from the rotation; however, this must occur at least two (2) weeks in advance of the elective start date.
4. A grade of Incomplete will be assigned until the above conditions are met.

NOTE: This policy is not to be construed to mean that a student is entitled to take up to twenty-five (25%) percent of a rotation off for any reason.

Requests must be submitted via the *M4 Absence Request Form* at least one (1) week in advance with supporting documentation of the scheduled interview or other purpose and approved by the course director.

Selectives

Students who miss more than two (2) days on a selective will be required to make-up missed activities. The make-up of missed activities/experiences is at the discretion of the course director.

Requests for up to two (2) days off must be submitted at least one (1) week in advance utilizing the *M4 Absence Request Form* and approved by the course director.

Unscheduled Time

- Unscheduled time is built into the M4 schedule.
 - Off-cycle students will have less unscheduled time.
- Examples of unscheduled time include: Step 2 study time, interviews, flextime for away rotations that do not align with the QCOM calendar, research.
- Students are still enrolled during unscheduled time and can be scheduled for activities throughout the M4 year where attendance is required and expected by the College of Medicine.

Medical Absence

Students are expected to seek necessary health care to maintain their physical and mental well-being. Examples of necessary health care include preventive health services, visits for acute illness, ongoing care for chronic illnesses, physical therapy, and counseling and psychological services. Consistent with their rights under ETSU's policies and the law, students have a right to privacy when seeking care. Documentation of medical necessity may be required. A medical absence is included in the number of days a student is permitted to miss during an elective or selective.

Planned Absences

For planned absences related to healthcare, students must contact the course director or course coordinator and preceptors or patient care team leader in advance to coordinate time away from the course. Students need not disclose the specific type of healthcare that is being sought. A student's decision to seek healthcare during a course should have no impact on their performance evaluation. Students should attempt to schedule routine visits so that they do not conflict with required curricular activities.

Other planned absences including but not limited to meetings and/or educational sessions must be approved by the course director in advance and an *M4 Absence Request Form* completed. No release from clinical duties will occur without prior approval.

The *M4 Absence Request Form* must be completed for all planned absences. A planned absence is included in the number of days a student is permitted to miss during an elective or selective.

Unanticipated Absences

Unanticipated absences for an illness or emergency, including emergencies involving immediate family, must be communicated to the course director or senior clerkship coordinator, preceptor, and patient care team leader as promptly as possible. Absences of greater than two (2) consecutive days (personal or family member's) requires a note from the student's personal healthcare provider. The *M4 Absence Request Form* must be completed for all unanticipated absences. An unanticipated absence is included in the number of days a student is permitted to miss during an elective or selective.

The make-up of missed activities/experiences is at the discretion of the course director. Absences requiring making up a required skill/proficiency may require a note from the student's healthcare provider.

Religious Observance

Clerkship directors must accept a student's assertion of the need to be absent from rotations for major recognized religious observances. A completed request form must be submitted and approved at least four (4) weeks prior to the absence.

Educational Absence/Quillen Activity (Official QCOM Committee or Integrated Grand Rounds/Other Teaching Activity):

- Time off from a required selective of up to three (3) days (inclusive of travel time) MAY be granted by the course director for a student to:
 - Attend a conference if the student is presenting research at a conference and a completed *M4 Absence Request Form* is submitted and approved at least four (4) weeks prior to the conference. The conference agenda, the conference flyer or letter of invitation documenting presentation must be submitted with the completed request.
 - Attend a conference representing QCOM as an elected institutional representative for a regional or national organization. A completed *M4 Absence Request Form* must be submitted and approved at least four (4) weeks prior to the conference.
- Students may request time off to participate in an official QCOM committee or Integrated Grand Rounds / Other Teaching Activity. A completed *M4 Absence Request Form* must be submitted and approved at least one (1) week in advance. Approved time for such activities does count toward the total number of days which can be missed as defined above for an elective or selective.

Makeup of Missed Activities/Experiences

The make-up of missed activities/experiences is at the discretion of the course director. Absences that entail making up a required skill/proficiency may necessitate a note from the student's health care provider.

Rotation Expectations

All rotations begin on Monday morning (occasionally Tuesday morning, if Monday is a recognized East Tennessee State University's Board of Trustees holiday) and continues until 4:30 PM the last Friday of the rotation, including weekends. A leave request must also be submitted for weekend days, unless the course specifies there are no expectations of student participation in required educational activities, such as, but not limited to call or hospital rounds on weekends.

Students are expected to follow the work schedule of the ambulatory or inpatient site they are assigned. East Tennessee State University's Board of Trustees recognized holidays do not apply to these sites.

Unexcused Absences and Consequences of Unexcused Absences

Any non-emergency absence that is taken without prior notification or permission of the course director is considered an unexcused absence and will be treated as an act of unprofessional behavior. A professionalism form will be submitted and it could impact the grade for the course.