



QUILLEN COLLEGE of MEDICINE

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Policy Name/Number: TRAILS Pre-Clerkship Attendance Policy / MSEC-0622-28

Policy Owner: Ivy Click, EdD / MSEC	
Committees, Departments, or Individuals Responsible for Implementation: Vice Dean for Academic Affairs, Pre-Clerkship Course Directors, and Course Support Staff	
Original Approval Date/ By: 6/7/2022 / MSEC	Effective Date: 7/15/2024
Most Recent Revision Date: 7/15/2024	Policy Advisory Committee Review Date: 7/15/2024
Date of Next Review: 7/15/2026 <i>(All policies are reviewed by the Policy Advisory Committee every 3 years unless circumstances for an earlier review is identified.)</i>	

(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 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 TRAILS curriculum. Active participation in the College's course activities indicates the student's understanding and mastery of professional responsibilities.

The [Pre-Clerkship Absence Request Form](#), available on the Forms page on the Academic Affairs website, is used to document the approval of all absence requests.

(B) Purpose of Policy:

The granting of the MD degree attests to the fact that the student has demonstrated a commitment to 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. This policy addresses the LCME requirements of Element 12.4 as stated above.

(C) Scope of Policy (applies to):

TRAILS pre-clerkship medical students enrolled in the Quillen College of Medicine MD Program.

(D) Policy Activities:

All instructional sessions have educational merit and value, and students are required to attend. The majority of teaching and learning strategies employed during the pre-clerkship phase in the TRAILS curriculum are active learning activities, where much of the learning occurs through peer engagement and active participation during class and are impossible to replicate at a later time. In addition, course assessments occur during regularly scheduled course sessions. The curriculum has multiple open half-days each week. Students should plan appointments such as doctor visits, therapy, regular home and car maintenance, and other business outside of scheduled class time as much as possible.

Definitions

Absence: Missing at least one (1) mandatory event in one day.

Excused Absence: An absence that has been approved using the Pre-clerkship Absence Request Form.

Unexcused Absence: An absence that has either been denied or has not been submitted using the Pre-Clerkship Absence Request Form.

Flex Days

Attendance is required at all scheduled teaching and learning activities, yet we recognize individual student needs for some flexibility in scheduling academic and personal responsibilities. All students therefore have flex days that they may request at their discretion.

Students will be permitted to use up to five (5) flex days per semester of the pre-clerkship phase of the curriculum. Examples of flex day absences include family obligations, weddings, child's school conference, summer job interviews, etc. Students do not need to provide a reason for requesting a flex day. Flex days do not carry over from semester to semester. Out of respect, the student should discuss their planned absence with all faculty and students involved once approval for a flex day or other absence is received. A student who needs to miss scheduled required activities must request approval for a flex day 24 hours in advance.

Flex days will not be granted for the following circumstances:

1. The day before or the day following official school vacations or holidays (including 3-day weekends)
2. During major exams or assessment weeks
3. For sessions that are not feasible to recreate such as: clinical simulation, IPE, IGR, communications skills sessions, physical diagnosis sessions, or procedure workshops.
4. For other "blackout dates" defined by the course director(s) and indicated in the syllabus.

Procedure for Requesting Flex Days:

Students must request planned flex day absences at least 24 hours in advance. No more than two (2) flex days will be granted consecutively. The request must be made by submitting a *Pre-Clerkship Absence Request Form*, available on the Forms page on the Academic Affairs website. If a student unexpectedly would like to request a flex day, they should submit the request immediately and email the relevant course directors and Mariela McCandless (mccandless@etsu.edu) to ask to be considered for a delayed approval.

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 University policies and the law, students have a right to privacy when seeking care. Students need not disclose the reason for or the specific type of health care that is being sought. A student's decision to seek health care during a course should have no impact on their performance evaluation. Documentation of medical care may be required.

For planned absences related to health care, students must submit an absence request and communicate with the course director or designated course staff support person at least 24 hours in advance to coordinate time away from the course. Students are encouraged to coordinate the scheduling of routine visits so that they do not conflict with required curricular activities identified by the course director.

Unanticipated absences for illness or emergency, including emergencies involving immediate family, or other unanticipated needs must be submitted to the absence request form and communicated to the course director as promptly as possible. Students with three (3) or more consecutive days of unanticipated absence due to illness or injury must provide documentation of medical care. Documentation may be required for any absence.

Religious Observance

Course directors must accept a student's assertion of the need to be absent from class for religious observance. Students must complete a *Pre-clerkship Absence Request Form* indicating the required absences within the first two weeks of the beginning of the course.

Education Leave/Quillen Activity (Official QCOM Committee / Other Teaching Activity):

Course Directors may identify course-specific days when absences will not be approved (i.e., first and/or last day of a course, guest presentations, clinical presentations, exams, etc.). It is the student's responsibility to coordinate the dates/times of a requested absence with the Course Director. Course Directors will identify to the student required make-up of missed activities/experiences.

- Time off from a required course of up to three (3) days (inclusive of travel time) MAY be granted for a student to:
 - Attend a conference if the student is presenting research at a conference and a completed 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 form.
 - Attend a conference representing Quillen College of Medicine as an elected institutional representative for a regional or national organization. A completed 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 / Other Teaching Activity. A completed request form must be submitted and approved at least one (1) week in advance.

Holidays

Students will be granted holiday time for recognized dates identified by the East Tennessee State University's Board of Trustees. Students will be released from their courses at the end of the day prior to a holiday and must return by the start of the course the next working day following a recognized holiday.

Make-up of Missed Activities/Assignments

Students are expected to review material from missed course sessions to prepare for future assessments. Arranging review sessions should occur in consultation with and at the discretion of the instructors and course director(s). In foundational science courses, points from missed in-class graded activities due to excused absences will be excluded from the final course grade. Students with medical absences with documentation from a medical provider or who have approved educational leave will be allowed to make up individual in-class graded activities upon request. In doctoring courses, the make-up of missed activities is at the discretion of the Course Director(s).

This policy is to be considered in conjunction with the expectations set forth in the [QCOM Exam Administration Policy \(MSEC-0515-11\)](#) if the absence involves missing an examination. Students must complete makeup activities before course conclusion. Failure to do so will result in a grade of Incomplete. The student must fulfill the course director requirements for completion within one year or the Incomplete will convert to an F, per University and College of Medicine policy. In instances of an extended absence, students may be required to request a leave of absence as outlined in the Leave of Absence Policy.

Consequences of Policy Violations:

Absences from teaching and learning activities can negatively affect student performance and will be monitored. Students missing graded activities due to unexcused absences will receive a grade of zero without the option for make-up of that learning event. Students will receive a warning for the first unexcused absence. Subsequent unexcused absences will result in a professionalism report. Students with excessive absences may be required to discuss the situation with the Vice Dean.