TRAILS Pre-Clerkship Attendance Policy

Policy Number: MSEC-0622-28

Original Approval Date and Who Approved by: 6/7/2022 / MSEC

Revision Date(s) (include a brief description) and Who Approved by: 11/8/2022 / MSEC – added religious observance as absence category

Effective Date(s): 7/18/2022; 11/8/2022

Revision(s) (briefly describe) by Administrative Staff and Date (these revisions do not require voting/approval by a committee and/or individual):

Exemption(s) to Policy (date, by what committee or individual, and brief description):

LCME Required Policy [Yes/No]: Yes

LCME Element(s) Affiliated with Policy (include Element number/name/statement):

12.4 STUDENT ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE SERVICES

A medical school provides its medical students with timely access to needed diagnostic, preventive, and therapeutic health services at sites in reasonable proximity to the locations of their required educational experiences and has policies and procedures in place that permit students to be excused from these experiences to seek needed care.

All policies will be reviewed every three years unless 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 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 Leave Request Form is used to document the approval of Medical and/or Educational Leave/Quillen Activity and becomes part of this policy. See attached form.
(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 expected 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.

Flex Days

Attendance is expected 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 two (2) 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.

Flex days will not be granted for the following circumstances:
1. To “bookend” any 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, procedure workshops, or other activities defined by the course director(s).

Procedure for Requesting Flex Days:

A student who needs to miss scheduled required activities must request approval at least one week in advance. The request must be made by submitting a Flex Day Request Form (click here), available on the Forms page on the Academic Affairs website. If a student unexpectedly would like to request a flex day, he/she 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.

Absences other than flex days must be approved by course directors and communicated to the Vice Dean of Academic Affairs. See details below.

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
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and the law, students have a right to privacy when seeking care. Documentation of medical necessity may be required.

For planned absences related to health care, students must contact the course director or designated course staff support person in advance to coordinate time away from the course. 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. 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 an illness or emergency, including emergencies involving immediate family, must be communicated to the course director or designated course staff support person as promptly as possible. Documentation may be required. The make-up of missed activities/experiences is at the discretion of the Course Director. This policy is to be considered in conjunction with the expectations set forth of the QCOM Exam Administration Policy (MSEC-0515-11) if the absence involves missing an examination.

Students who miss required course activities or exams for an approved or unanticipated absence must complete course director approved makeup activities before course conclusion. Failure to do this 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.

Religious Observance
Course directors must accept a student’s assertion of the need to be absent from class for religious observance. Students must provide the course director of written notice of required absences within the first week of shorter courses (5-6 weeks) and within the first two weeks of longer courses (13-14 weeks).

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 by the Course Director 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 six (6) 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 six (6) 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.

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.

Consequences of Policy Violations:
Absences from teaching and learning activities will be tracked. Students may lose points for unapproved absences and course directors may specify additional consequences in the syllabus. In addition, failure by the student to comply with the policy may result in a professionalism form being submitted by course director(s).
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EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
QUILLEN COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

Pre-Clerkship Leave Request Form

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that all required signature(s) are secured in advance as per TRAILS Pre-Clerkship Attendance Policy MSEC-0622-28

Name _____________________________________________________ Date _______________________________

Course(s) during which leave is requested ______________________________________________________________

Date(s) of requested leave ______________________________________________________________________

 Requests for time off from a required course are granted only for activities as defined below.

Indicate the type of leave requested:

☐ Medical Absence: Documentation of medical necessity may be required.
   Number of hours if less than a full day___________

☐ Religious Observance Absence

☐ Education Absence: Up to three (3) days will be approved for each of the following if a written request form is submitted and approved at least six (6) weeks prior to the conference or the exam date to:
   □ present research at a conference; attach conference agenda, the conference flyer or letter of invitation documenting presentation.
   □ attend a conference as an elected institutional representative for a regional or national organization.

☐ Quillen Activity: Official QCOM committee / other teaching activity.
   Identify Activity Name ________________________________ Number of hours if less than a full day _________

☐ Other Absence Request
   Describe:  ___________________________________________ Number of hours if less than a full day _________

☐ Approved  ☐ Denied

Course Director(s): __________________________________________ Date: ______________________

If approved, at the discretion of the course director, the following make-up of missed activities/ experiences is expected:

_________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________

Submit to the Course Director and/or Course Support Staff Person
Completed forms should be forwarded to the Office of Academic Affairs

Form V. 11/8/2022