



QUILLEN
COLLEGE of MEDICINE
EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Policy Name: **TRAILS Pre-Clerkship Attendance Policy**

Policy Replaces a Previous Policy [Yes/No] (*this includes change in policy name*): **Yes**
If so, list name of previous policy (*include policy number if different*): **M1/M2 Attendance Policy (MSEC 0418-21)**

Policy Number: **MSEC-0622-28**

Originator Name and/or Committee (*if a committee, include name of chair*): **Ivy Click, EdD / MSEC Chair**

Committees, Departments, or Individuals Responsible for Implementation: **Vice Dean for Academic Affairs, Pre-Clerkship Course Directors, and Course Support Staff**

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
1/17/2023 / MSEC – updated absence request form, clarified documentation for unanticipated absences, and added make-up of missed activities section
7/6/2023 / MSEC – updated time frame for completion of makeup activities
7/11/2023 / MSEC – updated to clarify expectations of completing missed work due to an approved absence or approved unanticipated absence
8/15/2023 / MSEC – added “WellFlex” days as a category under Flex Days

Effective Date(s): **7/18/2022; 1/17/2023; 7/11/2023; 9/1/2023**

Revision(s) (*briefly describe*) by Administrative Staff and Date (*these revisions do not require voting/approval by a committee and/or individual*): **7/28/2023 – deleted “bookend” and added language to clarify use of flex days for official school vacations or holidays**

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

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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 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.

Definitions

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

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

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

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. A student who needs to miss scheduled required activities must request approval for a flex day at least one week in advance.

Flex days will not be granted for the following circumstances:

1. To add day(s) before or at the end of 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).

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WellFlex Days

In addition to the regular flex days for planned absences, students are permitted one (1) wellness flex (WellFlex) day per month for unanticipated wellness needs. WellFlex days do not carry over from month to month. Out of respect, the student should notify all faculty and students involved as soon as they recognize they need to take a WellFlex day. Students must notify the course director and request approval for a WellFlex day at least 12 hours before the start of the activity. All other flex day restrictions apply to WellFlex days.

Procedure for Requesting Flex and WellFlex Days:

Students must request planned flex day absences at least one week in advance and WellFlex day absences at least 12 hours in advance. No more than two (2) flex days of any type 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/WellFlex 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.

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. 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 pre-clerkship medical education director and 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. The make-up of missed activities/experiences is at the discretion of the course director.

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.

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- 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.

Make-up of Missed Activities/Assignments

Students must be allowed a reasonable opportunity to complete assignments and examinations missed due to approved absences. Make-up assignments and examinations shall be of comparable difficulty to the original assignment or examination. Students are expected to complete missed work within one week of return to class. 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.

Consequences of Policy Violations:

Absences from teaching and learning activities can negatively affect student performance and will be monitored. 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. Students who miss required course activities or exams for an approved or unanticipated absence are expected to complete course director approved makeup activities within one week of return to class and must complete makeup activities before course conclusion. Failure to do this will result in a grade of Incomplete. The student must fulfil the course director requirements for completion within one year or the Incomplete will convert to an F, per University and College of Medicine policy.

	Policy Review and/or Revision Completed By (if applicable)	Date Policy Reviewed and Approved (if applies to that department, committee, or group)
	University Compliance	
	Office of the Dean	
X	Policy Advisory Committee	6/9/2022; 7/15/2022
X	Academic Affairs (<i>this includes the three-year reviews by administrative staff</i>)	6/7/2022; 7/28/2023; 8/29/2023
X	Associate Dean for Accreditation and Compliance	6/6/2022
	Student Affairs	
X	Medical Student Education Committee	5/17/2022; 6/7/2022; 11/8/22; 1/17/23; 7/11/2023; 8/25/2023
	Student Promotions Committee	
	Faculty Advisory Council	
	Administrative Council	
	M1/M2 Course Directors	
	M3/M4 Clerkship/Course Directors	
	Student Groups/Organizations (<i>describe</i>):	

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	Other (<i>describe</i>):	
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	Notifications of New or Revised Policy (<i>if applicable</i>)	Date and Method of Notifications
	Medical Students	
	Administrative Council	
	Faculty Advisory Council	
	All QCOM Faculty	
	All QCOM Staff	
	Admissions Office for Catalog	