

IUSM Policy: Required Clinical Clerkship Absence Policy

General Principles

Students must attend all required clerkship activities as assigned. It is necessary to monitor total absence time to ensure adequate exposure to the clerkship is maintained. It is expected that students will regard clerkship assigned activities as requiring professionalism and that absences will be handled in a professional manner. Absences from activities require notification and appropriate action. Absences fall into two categories, unanticipated and anticipated. The primary difference between an “unanticipated” and “anticipated” absence is the realistic inability to foresee the absence prior to the event. This policy covers both categories. Time away for religious observations will be considered anticipated absences.

Definitions

Unanticipated absences occur when a change in the student’s ability to participate in a required educational activity occurs shortly prior to the event. Examples include but are not limited to: sudden onset of illness, car accidents, death of a close family member.

Anticipated absences are those that may realistically be foreseen and may be accommodated for significant and appropriate reasons. Examples of anticipated absences that are generally permissible include but are not limited to: jury duty, doctor’s appointments that cannot be scheduled around clinical duties/hours, representing IUSM as a member of a committee or task force or presenting research at a meeting/conference.

Total Absences is the number of days absent from an individual clerkship

Policy: Unanticipated Absence from Required Clerkship Activities

1. Student requests for resolution of scheduling conflicts during required patient care responsibilities will be addressed in a manner similar to those used in clinical practice.
2. Statewide clerkship directors should make every effort to respect students' reasonable requests. When scheduling conflicts cannot be resolved, however, the student has the responsibility to make sure patient care and on-call responsibilities are met in full.
3. The student is responsible for notifying all parties as described in the Procedure below.
4. Absences for illnesses lasting more than one day will require a note from a qualified health care provider certifying that the student is fit both to resume course work and to return to contact with patients
5. If a student is out more than two contiguous days or three total days the student will be required to receive approval from the MSA office prior to returning to the clerkship.
6. If a student has a pattern of recurrent or prolonged absence from required clerkship activities the student will be at risk for failing the clerkship.
7. Depending on the circumstances, the statewide clerkship director may require the student to complete missed activities in order to successfully complete the educational goals of the clerkship.
 - a. The student will be notified within 7 days of their return to the clerkship if the student is required to make up the activities missed.
 - b. Time, location and nature of the make-up activities are at the statewide clerkship director’s discretion.
 - c.

Note: Family members for which an absence may be accommodated include: spouse or domestic partner, child, grandchild, parent, sibling, grandparent, in-law, step relatives or domestic partners of the same degree, or other relatives of whom the student is the sole survivor.

Procedure: Unanticipated Absence

In situations involving Unanticipated Absences from required clerkship activities students must:

1. Contact their resident/faculty team and make them aware of the absence, preferably before the start of the shift, **AND, at the same time.**
2. Contact via e-mail the statewide clerkship coordinator (and regional coordinator, if applicable) and statewide clerkship director and send the following information:
 - a. The reason for and anticipated length of the absence,
 - b. Which member of the resident/faculty team that was contacted regarding the absence, note the time and what method of communication (e.g., e-mail, phone, etc.), and
 - c. What hospital, hospital service, or clinic the student was scheduled to be at and the experience that may have been missed because of the absence.
3. If the student will be out more than one day for a personal illness, present a Return to Clinical Duty note provided by a health care provider to the statewide clerkship director. On the day of return to the clerkship, before the start of a clinical shift, e-mail the clerkship coordinator and statewide clerkship director the completed [Clerkship Time Away Request Form](#).

Policy: Anticipated Absence from Required Clerkship Activities

1. Anticipated absence requests from required clinical duties are approved only at the discretion of the statewide clerkship director.
2. The statewide clerkship director will approve/disapprove the absence based on the circumstances including the reason for the request and the student's academic standing.
3. Depending on the circumstances and activities missed, the statewide clerkship director may require the student to complete activities missed on a clerkship in order to successfully complete the clerkship.
4. Anticipated Absence for Religious Holidays: IUSM abides by the [IUPUI Policy on Religious Holidays](#).

Note: Justifications that generally are not approved include social considerations (e.g., weddings, birthdays, anniversaries, graduations, etc.), involvement in IUSM specialty-related organizations or events that are not affiliated with the current course/clerkship rotation (e.g., SIG fundraisers/events, research conferences where the student is an attendee only etc.) vacations or other reasons related to convenience.

Procedure: Anticipated Absences:

The student will submit a [Clerkship Time Away Request Form](#) as far in advance as possible and no less than TWO weeks before the START of the clerkship to the clerkship coordinator and statewide clerkship director.

1. Be notified of the decision within 7 days.

2. Be informed of the time and location of the make-up session(s), if necessary, as determined by the statewide clerkship director.
3. Students seeking schedule modifications for major religious observances must follow the procedures for anticipated absence #1 above.

Policy: Total Absence Occurrence

1. The maximum number of absences that may be granted is TWO days per clerkship.
2. Requests for prolonged or repeated absences may require rescheduling of the clerkship.
3. Certain experiences, however, cannot be duplicated, and a need for prolonged or repeated absences may best be handled with a [leave of absence](#).
4. Leave of absences can ONLY be granted by the Associate Dean for Medical Student Affairs.

Procedures: Total Absence Occurrence

1. All completed absence forms, whether approved or denied, will be kept on file as part of the student's record.
2. Students considering a Leave of Absence should contact the office of the Associate Dean of Medical Student Affairs

Policy: Appeals

Students may appeal a decision made by the statewide clerkship director for an absence request or occurrence.

Procedure: Appeals

If a student wishes to appeal the statewide clerkship director's decision(s) she/he should:

1. Contact the statewide clerkship director in writing explaining the rationale for the appeal.
2. The statewide clerkship director will notify the student of their final decision within 7 days. (If the student's appeal is approved, the appeal ends.)
3. If the appeal is not approved, the student may file an appeal with the Assistant Dean of Curriculum in Clinical Sciences within 7 days of the Statewide Clerkship Director's decision.