



SCHOOL of
OSTEOPATHIC
MEDICINE

Policy Title: Learner Attendance
Functional Area: ACADEMIC/ADMINISTRATIVE

Status: Final
Effective: January 2020
Approved by: SOM Leadership Council
Policy Contact: Office of Admissions and Student Affairs
Responsible Office: Office of Admissions and Student Affairs
Last Reviewed/Updated: 7/2019

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to state the guidelines for learner attendance both short term absences and long term leaves of absence.

Learners pursuing the DO degree at the University of the Incarnate Word School of Osteopathic Medicine (UIWSOM) are physicians in training who must meet standards of professional conduct and responsibility to develop into effective physicians. Developing competency and professionalism to practice medicine requires attendance and punctuality.

At the UIWSOM, all learners are encouraged to attend all scheduled activities. Certain activities *require* attendance, including SIGS, DOCS, STRX, CEP, Clerkships and other sessions as deemed mandatory by the Dean. Unless acutely ill, students must request approval in advance and in writing for *ANY* missed days or switches in the schedule (including religious observances).

The request is not considered approved until receipt of an affirmative response from the Office of Admissions and Student Affairs. *See Leave of Absence policy.*

Short-Term Absence – When an absence is imminent, learners are to submit the online *short-term absence form* for approval by the Office of Admissions and Student Affairs. This form must be completed at least 10 business days prior to the event. When an absence is the result of an unexpected occurrence, students must complete a short-term absence form as soon as possible, but no later than the first date of return to campus. Only situations involving true emergencies receive retroactive excusal. A learner may request an excused absence from class for medical issues (self or immediate family), military obligation, civic duties, professional activities (see below), funerals (immediate family), traffic accidents, and other exceptional situations considered on a case-by-case basis. Examples of unexcused absences include weddings, vacations, birthday, and other family non-emergency events. This list is not inclusive of all circumstances. The request is *not considered approved* until receipt of an affirmative response from the Office of Admissions and Student Affairs. Learners having more than five single day excused absences (per academic year) or any unexcused absences will be referred to the Office of Admissions and Student Affairs and may also be referred to the Student Progress Committee. All unexcused absences will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to determine the most appropriate course of action.

Learners are also permitted to take two personal days per academic year which do not count as absences. Personal days are not to be taken during an assessment period. Learners must complete the *personal day form* and submit to the Office of Admissions and Student Affairs.

In the event of an acute illness, any absence must be reported via the Absence Reporting Form to the Office of Admissions and Student Affairs as soon as possible. The learner is responsible for notifying the Unit Director (s), relevant Clerkship Director(s), and Director of Clinical Rotations. In addition, the learner is responsible for notifying his or her clinical preceptor. UIWSOM may require a doctor's note from the learner's primary care

provider, for absences in certain situations, such as an absence that results in missing an examination. OMS III and OMS IV learners must abide by additional policies set forth by the UIWSOM Clerkship Handbook [CLICK HERE](#).

Learners should refer to the academic calendar on the SOM website and consult with the Office of Admissions and Student Affairs before planning any travel.

SOM Holidays The UIWSOM publishes a calendar of official and major holidays for the year. The list includes holidays recognized by the SOM for the academic year when educational sessions will **not** be scheduled during Phase I.

Professional Meetings Professional development is essential in medicine. As learners engage in UIWSOM's curriculum, it is important for learners to explore and expand their interests to support their engagement in service, research, advocacy, and encourage life-long learning. For a learner to receive approval to attend a professional meeting, the learner must be in satisfactory academic progress and follow the process as outlined by the Office of Student Affairs. Due to the novel nature of the DO curriculum, learners are prohibited from attending professional conferences during the first two units of year 1 or during assessment days.

Religious Observances Policy statements for absence for religious observances may be found [CLICK HERE](#). In addition see [Attendance Policy](#) and [Leave of Absence Policy](#)

Extended Leave of Absence-- An absence of four or more consecutive days is considered an extended leave of absence. An extended leave of absence may be requested for medical reasons, finances, family leave, active military deployment and other exceptional situations considered on a case-by case basis. A formal request for a leave of absence must be submitted in writing to the Associate Dean of Admissions and Student Affairs and include the reason for the leave, date of leave, and expected date of return.

Any learner who requests a leave of absence for physical or psychiatric medical reasons must provide clearance to return to school. The physician's letter should contain statements indicating any recommendations, specific limitations, or restrictions in consideration of the UIWSOM scheduled educational sessions.

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Subpart E and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the University ensures accessibility to its programs, services and activities for students with documented disabilities. Accessibility is accomplished through the provision of a wide variety of services tailored to each student's documented needs and strengths. To qualify for services, the student must provide the UIW Office of Student Disability Services with the appropriate documentation of his or her disability at the time services and/or accommodations are requested.

Request for reentry following a leave of absence may require approval from the SPC. *A leave of absence greater than 15 school days may result in a learner becoming inactive and may require an application for readmission.* Depending on the total number of days absent from scheduled curricular activities, learners who have been granted a leave of absence may be at risk of losing financial assistance or delayed disbursements. Learners are advised to meet with officers from the UIW Office of Financial Assistance and Business Office to discuss financial responsibilities.

Failure to follow the absence policies may result in a referral to the SPC. Consequences may include but are not limited to the requirement to make up missed time, inability to sit for an assessment, repeating the academic year, removal from any leadership position or membership in student organizations, delay in graduation, and formal filing of a complaint of a breach in professionalism, with its associated processes and consequences. This includes possible notation in the Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE). In extreme cases, absenteeism or tardiness may result in dismissal from the program.

This policy/procedure will be distributed to all learners, faculty, and staff and be effective immediately.

The UIWSOM DO Student Handbook will be updated to reflect this new and/or any newer policy in its next published revision.