

NEOMED ACADEMIC POLICY	Policy No: 3349-AC-418
ACADEMIC POLICY TITLE: College of Medicine Attendance at Instructional Sessions	EFFECTIVE DATE: 01/01/2019 REVISED: 6/27/2023
RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT: Medical Education, College of Medicine	Approval Authority: Dean, College of Medicine Responsible Office: Office of the Dean and Medical Education, College of Medicine

(A) PURPOSE

Course attendance guidelines and requirements must be established in compliance with the elements specified in this Policy including the LCME and University Academic Policies. The LCME requires that a “medical school has policies and procedures in place that permit students to be excused from [educational] experiences to seek needed care” (LCME Functions and Structure of a Medical School, effective July 1, 2023). The relevant LCME element is as follows:

- Element 12.4 Student Access to Health Care Services

(B) SCOPE

This Policy applies to all required and elective credit-bearing courses contained in the College of Medicine curriculum, M1 through M4 years, in which a Final Grade is assigned to the student and appears on the student’s official transcript.

(C) DEFINITIONS

- (1) “Credit-bearing Course: refers to a course, hereafter referred to as “Course,” offered by the College of Medicine in which a student is enrolled, the Course appears on the student’s official transcript with either contact hours or credit-bearing acknowledgment, and a Final Grade is assigned.
- (2) “Course Director” refers to appointed faculty members who are responsible for the overall design, conduct, student assessment within, and evaluation of a credit-bearing course. Course directors have different names depending on which courses they direct; clerkship experiential directors are types of course directors.
- (3) “Clinical Experience” refers to any course or component of a course that involves assignment to clinical care settings, often involving various clinical partners (ambulatory practices, hospitals, etc.) and involving real and sometimes simulated patient experiences.

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- (4) "Absence" refers to missing or not attending a mandatory class activity. Remote observation of a peer instruction session still constitutes an absence. Certain courses in M1/M2 allow a maximum number of combined absences without notification (Automatic Excuses Absences – see definition below).
- (5) "Automatic Excused Absence" ("AEA") refers to a permitted absence in some courses in the M1/M2 curriculum. AEAs do not require prior notification and may be used for any reason, including but not limited to accessing health care for yourself or a family member, major family event, professional conferences, and/or medical illness and do not require prior notification. M1 and M2 students are permitted to miss a pre-determined number of in-class sessions in certain courses without notice and without adverse impact on course scores from the missed activity.
- (6) "Final Engaged Learning Score" refers to a cumulative numerical course score of engaged learning activities (e.g., Peer Instruction, problem-based learning, case-based learning and others) in which the faculty has assigned a score. The final engaged learning score is a weighted component of the final grade (see Academic Policy 3349-AC-429: Standardized Scoring Policy for M1 and M2 Biomedical Sciences Courses).
- (7) "Final Grade" refers to the cumulative assessment of a student's performance in a single Course. The Final Grade is assigned by the faculty course or rotation director at the conclusion of the course offering. Final Grades are posted to the student record/official transcript by academic year and term. A student's course grade is considered to be a Final Grade when it is posted in Banner Self-Service ("Banner").
- (8) "Grade Posting." A student's grade is considered to be posted when the Final Grade itself appears for the student to view in Banner. For M3 clerkships and M4 electives, Grade Posting includes the letter grade as well as the final grade report form.

(D) POLICY STATEMENT

- (1) Attendance and full participation is expected of students in all courses throughout the M1 through M4 curriculum. The COM believes integrity and professionalism are core

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values for physicians thus faculty will rely on a student’s honesty when presenting a compelling reason why they must miss an activity.

- (2) Establishing attendance guidelines for a course is the responsibility of the Course Director with final approval by the Curriculum Committee.
 - (a) Students should consult course syllabi for identification of attendance procedures and the Course Directors or individuals who have authority for decisions and management of attendance.
 - (b) All attempts will be made to establish guidelines for required attendance that are consistent within an academic year and to articulate attendance guidelines in course syllabi.
- (3) In all instances of absences, students shall be responsible for all material covered in the curriculum and completing any work assigned during their absence. In no case is an absence from the curriculum to be interpreted as a release from curricular responsibilities.
- (4) Health Services: Students may be excused from instructional sessions to access health services.
 - (a) Students needing non-emergent health services are expected to schedule such services, whenever possible, outside of scheduled class hours regardless of whether attendance is mandatory or not. Students should inform the Course Directors of any planned absence from a mandatory session due to a health care appointment, giving as much advanced notice as possible. Students do not need to provide the reason for accessing health services.
 - (b) Students may request to be excused to accompany a family member who is accessing health services. All other requirements regarding an absence are applicable.

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- (c) Students who miss a mandatory session because of emergent health care needs must inform the Course Director as soon as circumstances allow.
- (d) Students are required to attend all assessment events, e.g. tests. Students who miss an assessment event or test due to an emergency must inform the Course Director and assessment team as soon as circumstances allow.
 - (i) Excused absence and delay of an assessment event is only permitted for unanticipated acute and serious healthcare needs.
 - (ii) Repeated delays and rescheduling of assessment events are not permitted.
- (5) Professional Conference: Students may request to be excused from a mandatory course activity to present at an academic conference or to fulfill a professional obligation. Absences for a professional conference must be pre-approved by the Course Director. No travel plans should be made until permission has been granted.
- (6) Religious observance days do not count against allotted limits for Automatic Excused Absences in M1/M2 except when prior approval was not obtained per policy. For Religious Observance absences, see the university policy 3349-5-77: Accommodations for Student Religious Observations.
- (7) NEOMED closing due to inclement weather pertains to Rootstown Campus activities only. All other students are expected to report for clinical activities as scheduled unless otherwise notified. Any student who does not feel he/she can safely reach a clinical site due to inclement weather should notify his/her clinical teaching site as well as the relevant Course Directors or Course Coordinator. Students should also fill out the standard absence notification form in the event they cannot attend due to inclement weather: <https://www.neomed.edu/sa/forms/>
- (8) Defining Attendance Requirements in Courses and Instructional Sessions M1 - M4
 - (a) Certain, pre-identified sessions require attendance

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- (i) Course Directors are responsible for identifying which sessions are mandatory for their course.
 - (ii) All instructional sessions for which attendance is mandatory will be clearly indicated as such on the course calendar and/or syllabus and course site.
- (9) All instances of absence from a mandatory session must be documented.
- (a) All absences are tracked across the curriculum and monitored by the College of Medicine Office of Medical Education.
 - (b) Information about extended absences is provided in the “Interruptions of Education” section of the *NEOMED Compass* and is beyond the scope of this Policy.
 - (c) Students who have excessive absences, (miss greater than 20% of a course), will be required to meet with Course Directors to discuss course performance and determine whether there are any concerns in completing the course. Excessive absences may result in a referral to the Committee on Academic and Professional Progress and may result in a repeat of the course or clerkship in its entirety.
- (10) The Course Directors and coordinators are responsible for maintaining any sign-in sheets, or other means of attendance verification for mandatory sessions if student attendance at the session(s) contributes to the determination of a student’s Final Grade.
- (a) Verification of attendance must be maintained until the end of the initial grade dispute period that is ten (10) days following the date on which the Final Grade is posted in Banner, or when a grade dispute has reached a resolution.

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- (11) Punctuality at all activities, M1 through M4, is a matter of conduct and professional commitment. If problems arise over attendance or tardiness during a clinical rotation or activity, students will be directed to meet with the Course Director. Student conduct concerns can negatively impact interim assessment and/or a Final Grade and can result in a referral to the Committee on Academic and Professional Progress.
- (12) Attendance and Absences in M1 and M2
- (a) Automatic Excused Absences (AEAs) may be used in the following courses: Population Health, Human Architecture and Composition, Cardio Pulmonary Renal (CPR), Gastroenterology Reproductive Endocrinology (GRE), Flora Pathogens, and Defense, Neurobiology, Foundations of Disease and Treatment, Diagnosis and Treatment 1/2:
- (i) Maximum number of AEAs per term: Summer (1), Fall (7), Spring (7). All absences will be counted against the allotted number of AEAs up to the maximum allowed number
 - (ii) Absences needed beyond these days will require communication with the Course Directors or a designee determined by the Course Directors. Permission may or may not be granted.
 - (iii) Individual considerations will be made for unique situations, e.g., quarantine.
 - (iv) AEAs do not apply to examination absences. Examinations are not covered by this policy. Refer to course syllabi for Examination absences.
- (b) AEAs may not be used for the following courses: Integrated Clinical Skills (ICS), Patient, Physician and Community I-V (PPC I-V) Integrated Case Exercise (ICE), and for all Clinical Experience activities.

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- (c) Prior notification of a planned absence or prompt notification of an unplanned absence is required for all absences that do not meet the definition of an AEA.
 - (i) Absences must be communicated using the Absence Notification Form (<https://www.neomed.edu/sa/forms/>.) The absence notification form documents the details of the absence, dates, classes or clinical dates missed, and the make-up plan.
 - (ii) Additional direct communication with Course Directors or clinical site may be required, as per instructions in the course syllabus. Students must consult the course syllabi for any course-specific instructions regarding other procedures for absence notification.
- (d) Professional conference absences require following the process in Attachment 1.
- (e) Consequences for missing a mandatory session in M1 or M2.
 - (i) Peer instruction and engaged learning
 - (a) Within the allowable number of AEAs, final engaged Learning Score will be adjusted to exclude these missed activities. Course Directors have the discretion, in rare circumstances, to allow more than the maximum number of absences. For allowable absences, the final points will be adjusted to exclude these approved missed days.
 - (ii) Excessive number of absences or unexcused absences
 - (a) For any additional absences beyond the maximum allowed in each term or for any absences that have not been approved by the Course Directors or proxy in Clinical Experience courses, students will receive a score of zero (0) for that activity. A Behavioral Concern Form may be executed.

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- (b) Students with excessive or unexcused absences will raise concerns regarding the individual student well-being.
 - (i) Students whose absences exceed the maximum allowed will be referred to the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs.
 - (ii) Absences exceeding three (3) consecutive days without prior communication with Course Directors may result in a wellness check to ensure student is not in distress.
- (c) Corroborating documentation of an illness or situation may be requested at the discretion of the Course Directors.

(13) Attendance and absences in M3 and M4

Attendance is mandatory for all clinical and M3 PPC experiences. Students experiencing an illness, a death in the family, or other serious situation, must contact the M3 curriculum manager at NEOMED and their Clinical Site Director and coordinator as soon as circumstances allow. If an absence will impact any M3 PPC requirements, students should also notify the M3 PPC course director(s) and/or coordinator. Students may also be excused from clinical and M3 PPC experiences for emergent and routine health care needs using the previously described procedure. Students should schedule routine appointments in such a way as to minimize disruption to clinical and course requirements, giving as much advanced notice as possible to the clerkship site director and/or M3 PPC faculty/staff.

- (a) When illness might interfere with a subject examination, communication with the Course Director and coordinators is required as well as communication with the assessment team.

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- (b) Consideration for missing clinical experiences and/or course experiences may be made for students who have been accepted for a presentation at a professional conference or to fulfill a professional obligation.
 - (i) Student should not make travel plans until permission has been granted by the Course Director (i.e., Clerkship Site Director).
- (c) Absences must be discussed with the Course Director or Clinical Site Director, and an Absence Notification Form must be completed by the student and submitted to NEOMED in all instances of absence. Documentation that corroborates the illness or situation may be requested. The Absence Notification Form documents the details of the absence, dates, and classes or clinical dates missed, and the make-up plan.
- (d) The Course Director or Clinical Site Director determines if the work can be made up. This is specific for each course and is indicated in the course syllabus.
- (e) Multiple absences during a course or rotation may result in a final grade of incomplete or failure of the course/experience. Excessive absences during a course or clerkship may necessitate that the student repeat the course in its entirety. Students should refer to the course syllabus or equivalent documentation for specific attendance requirements.
- (f) Any planned absences for educational purposes, e.g., a residency interview or a scheduled Step 2 examination, must be documented using an Absence Notification Form and approved by the Core Rotation Director or Elective Director in advance of the time the rotation/elective begins. Corroborating documentation may be required. The Rotation/Elective Director will decide whether to approve the absence.
 - (i) M4 students may not exceed two (2) days off for an approved purpose for each M4 clinical rotation/elective block.

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- (a) An exception is made for periods M4-4 through M4-7 during which students are allowed a maximum of four (4) days off per rotation to accommodate the potential for attending residency interviews; the first day cannot be missed.

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ATTACHMENT 1

Process for Professional Conferences

- (a) At least six (6) weeks in advance of the conference or professional obligation, the student must submit a request to be excused to attend a professional conference by completing the [University Student Absence](#) form with accompanying documentation to the Office of the Dean that will track the request and forward it to the Course Directors for consideration.
 - (i) The student must provide evidence of acceptance to present at the conference or of the professional obligation.
 - (ii) Absences due to travel to or presentation at an academic conference or to fulfill a professional obligation will count against the allotment of AEA (in applicable courses in M1/M2) for that semester.
- (b) Course Director permission to be excused is required.
 - (i) Course Directors may deny permission for justifiable reasons that can include, but are not limited to, the inability to offer a course activity or an examination at an alternate time, such as a laboratory examination, availability of a comparable/equivalent assessment, or student low performance in the class.
- (c) The student should expect to make up any missed mandatory sessions and missed assignments, at the discretion of the Course Director.

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ATTACHMENT 2

NBME Subject Examination and Illness Protocol

- (a) If significantly ill on the day of an M3 subject examination and unable to take the examination, notification is required. Do not take the exam or wait for a response. Notification of illness must be completed by 8 AM the day of the examination to the following:
- (i) The Associate Dean of Experiential Education who is acting in the position of M3 course director, Dr. Nofziger, snofziger@neomed.edu
 - (ii) The M3 Coordinator Team through the M3 Clerkships email: m3clerkships@neomed.edu
 - (iii) The assessments team assessments@neomed.edu
- (b) If ill during the week of an examination, contact the following individuals to discuss a plan to move forward.
- (i) The Associate Dean of Experiential Education who is acting in the position of M3 Course Director, Dr. Nofziger, snofziger@neomed.edu
 - (ii) The M3 Coordinator Team through the M3 Clerkships email: m3clerkships@neomed.edu

Subject examinations are not offered during the weekends or during subsequent clerkships. Students that do not take their examination at the originally scheduled time will need to reschedule the examination during designated breaks. These time periods include winter break, the elective period and after the final clerkship is complete. All retake/remediation examinations are on the Rootstown campus unless they fall during winter break when the campus is closed.