



D.O. PROGRAM PROCEDURE FOR INSTITUTIONAL POLICY E-09: ATTENDANCE

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to implement and clarify Institutional Policy E-09: Attendance for the D.O. Program.

2. APPLICABILITY

- 2.1 This procedure applies to all West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine (WVSOM) students enrolled in the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine Program.
- 2.2 WVSOM reserves the right to amend this procedure at any time.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 "Appropriate Associate Dean" means the Associate Dean of Preclerkship Education for Year 1 and Year 2 students and the Associate Dean of Clinical Education for Year 3 and Year 4 students.
- 3.2 "Instructor of Record" means the course director who is responsible for a particular course. For Year 3 and Year 4 students this would be your Preceptor.

4. EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

4.1 Excused Absences

4.1.1 Year 1 and Year 2 students must provide an excused absence request via e-mail to the Associate Dean of Preclerkship Education (adpreclin@osteowvsom.edu). Year 3 and Year 4 students must provide a request to their Instructor of Record and Regional Assistant Dean to be excused from mandatory activities. The Associate Dean of Preclerkship Education, or in the case of Year 3 and Year 4 students, their Regional Assistant Dean, will determine if the student may be excused and will provide a written excused absence to the office or notify the preceptor for Year 3 and Year 4 students and will copy the student. The student must follow up with the Course Director or Year 3 or Year 4 preceptor to make up the required activity. In the event that the mandatory activity is an exam, the Associate Dean of Preclerkship Education, or in the case of Year 3 and Year 4 students, their Regional Assistant Dean, in conjunction with the Office of National Boards and Exam Center, will determine the make-up date for the exam.

4.1.2 A limited number of excuses may be granted for certain occurrences, such as the following:

- a. **Illness:** A student illness and illness in the immediate family that prevent the student from attending any mandatory activity. If the student misses a graded activity in Year 1 or Year 2 for medical reasons, the student may subsequently be required to present to the Associate Dean of Preclerkship Education a written confirmation of his/her illness from a physician, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner, none of whom may be in a familial relationship with the student, stating that the student was "too ill to attend on the day of the activity" and specifying the date that the student is to return to class. Year 3 and Year 4 students are required to be present during all of the clinical rotation and must inform their preceptor and Statewide Campus office if they are unable to attend a day of rotation due to illness to avoid failing the rotation.
- b. **Transportation Problems:** A student may be excused if they physically cannot be present due to a documented transportation problem; ex. car broke down, interstate closed down, flight delayed.

- c. Weather Problems: A student who is unable to make it to campus because of a documented weather condition, ex. ice or snow storm, may be excused at the discretion of the Appropriate Associate Dean.
- d. Weddings: A student participating in a wedding is expected to make every reasonable effort to attend classes as scheduled. However, a student who has an immediate family member being married may be excused in Year 1 and Year 2 at the discretion of the Associate Dean of Preclerkship Education. Documentation of the wedding is required for excused absences. Students in Year 3 and Year 4 will need to schedule vacation time to attend a wedding.
- e. Funerals: A student may be excused for funerals of a family member or close friend.
- f. Religious Observance: A student may be excused for up to five (5) days for observance of religious holy days. Absences from graded activities should be avoided. Students in Year 3 and Year 4 should consult their statewide campus office regarding being excused for the observance of religious holidays.
- g. Off Campus Professional Meetings: A student may be excused for attending an off campus professional meeting if they meet academic criteria and are a club officer. The student must submit the "Off campus meeting form" to the Associate Dean of Preclerkship Education or, in Year 3 and Year 4, to their Regional Assistant Dean.
- h. D.O. Day on the Hill: All Year 1 and Year 2 students, unless on Academically-at-Risk 2, are eligible to be excused for D.O. Day on the Hill in Washington, D.C. Year 3 and Year 4 students may be excused from rotations, providing that participation does not detract from the cumulative number of days on rotation. Year 3 and Year 4 students will need to submit an exception request form to their Regional Assistant Dean for approval.

4.2 Unexcused Absences

- 4.2.1 Year 1 and Year 2 students with an unexcused absence for a mandatory activity will have points or a percentage of their grade deducted.
- 4.2.2 Students who miss a mandatory activity will be required to make up the activity whether the absence is excused or unexcused. For Year 1 and Year 2 students, the course director or designee will determine the makeup activity. All courses are required to develop a mechanism for documenting attendance at mandatory activities.
- 4.2.3 An absence from any rotation without approval will be regarded as an unexcused absence. In the event of an unexcused absence, a written explanation from the student must be sent to their Regional Assistant Dean, who will handle the problem. A student who leaves a rotation site without authorization of WVSOM's Statewide Campus office will automatically receive a failing grade. The student will not be permitted to participate in any future rotations until their Regional Assistant Dean has authorized the return to clinical rotations.

4.3 Chronic Lateness

- 4.3.1 Documented chronic lateness is considered unprofessional behavior. Progressive discipline will be used to address students who are late to mandatory activities, which includes all Year 3 and Year 4 rotations. Verbal feedback will initially occur followed by a written warning. Chronic lateness will be reported to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs as unprofessional behavior and may result in further action in accordance with Institutional Policy DO-01: Academic and Professional Standards and applicable procedures.
- 4.3.2 Year 1 and Year 2 students who do not complete all course assignments, including makeup activities, according to the due date on the syllabus will receive a grade penalty unless there are extenuating circumstances in the judgment of the Instructor of Record that prevented the

student from completing all course work. Students with documented and approved extenuating circumstances will receive an Incomplete (I) until the course assignment(s) has been completed within the time frame determined by the Instructor of Record.

5. OFF-CAMPUS MEETING ATTENDANCE

5.1 The following procedure pertains to all student leave from classes/rotations to attend off-campus meetings even if no classes/rotations will be missed. It recognizes that the medical student's major responsibility should be to attend class, labs, and other designated activities in order to gain the mastery of skills and knowledge that is necessary to practice medicine. While attending national meetings can be instructive and add to a student's overall knowledge base, students must first gain basic skills and information from the classroom. Thus, while it is recognized that students have discretion to attend certain classes, it is also recognized that it is a privilege, not a right, for a medical student to be allowed to attend national meetings. Therefore, students will be required to adhere to the following procedure whether or not they would be missing a required class or exam.

5.2 Criteria for Meeting Leave Approval

5.2.1 Students must meet the appropriate Class Eligibility Requirements noted below.

5.2.2 Students must be in good academic standing.

5.2.3 Students must have a cumulative overall grade point average of 80 or greater.

5.2.4 The meeting must have a student educational component (e.g., there must be an educational program at the meeting specifically for students, such as the student programs at the AOA, AAO, ACOFP, or SOMA); **or** the student must hold an office which must be represented at a board meeting (e.g., representative to the SGA meeting).

5.2.5 The meeting leave must first be approved by the student's Regional Assistant Dean, if applicable, and the Appropriate Associate Dean.

5.2.6 The meeting leave must also be approved by the Instructor of Record where appropriate. (See below.)

5.2.7 Depending on the nature of the meeting attended, the student may be required to provide an oral report on the meeting to an appropriate constituent group.

5.3 Process for Applying for Meeting Leave

5.3.1 Students must initiate the process by filling out the Off-Campus Meeting Attendance Request Form, which is available at the Statewide Campus offices or at the Appropriate Associate Dean's office. Approval must be obtained at least **three weeks** prior to the commencement of the trip. Forms must be filled out by each individual student. This form will only be given to students who are eligible to ask for meeting leave. Students **must** fill out this form whether or not they are missing any required course work. Failure to fill out this form will result in revoking permission to go to other meetings during student years and may result in other academic sanctions, including, for Year 1 and Year 2 students, the mention of this unprofessional behavior in the Medical Student Performance Evaluation. **Students must also verify that their health insurance provides coverage in the state they wish to travel.**

5.3.2 Year 3 and Year 4 students must next seek approval for the trip from the appropriate Regional Assistant Dean and then from the Associate Dean of Clinical Education by obtaining his/her signature on the form.

5.3.3 Once the trip has been pre-approved by the Appropriate Associate Dean, if the student is going to miss any mandatory activities (e.g., classes, exams, quizzes, labs, TBLs, presentation wrap-

ups or other activities), he/she must also receive written approval from the involved Instructor(s) of Record. The Instructor(s) of Record will not sign off on any trip until the Appropriate Associate Dean has signed the form. NOTE: Although the Appropriate Associate Dean may approve student meeting leave, the Instructor(s) of Record may be aware of specific performance issues, or have other concerns which would preclude them from approving a student's trip. Therefore, under the circumstances above, both must sign off in order for the trip to be approved.

- 5.3.4 Written approval by the Instructor(s) of Record required by Section 5.3.3 above must state how and when the required activities are going to be made up. Instructors of Record have the authority to specifically identify a non-negotiable time and date for all make-up exams as well as other work due. If more than one required class will be missed, students must have each Instructor of Record involved approve and sign off on the leave.
- 5.3.5 After receiving the required signatures, Year 1 and Year 2 students must return the form to the Associate Dean of Preclerkship Education's office for final approval. If the form is not returned at least **two weeks** prior to the commencement of the trip, permission to attend the meeting will be revoked. For Year 3 and Year 4 students, the form must be returned to their Statewide Campus office at least **three weeks** prior to the commencement of the trip. The Associate Dean of Clinical Education will then determine if the student may take leave.

5.4 Class Eligibility Requirements

- 5.4.1 Year 1 Students: No Year 1 student may be permitted to attend state and/or national meetings from August through December of the first year. Year 1 students will be allowed to attend one national meeting from January through May, provided they meet the criteria set forth above. All required academic activities missed must be made up. Arrangements for make-up must be made and approved in writing by the Instructor of Record a minimum of **three weeks** prior to attending the meeting. Instructors of Record have the authority to specifically identify a non-negotiable time and date for all make-up work due. A Year 1 student will not be allowed to miss exams to attend a meeting, unless their attendance is required by a national organization.
- 5.4.2 Year 2 Students: Year 2 students may be allowed to attend one meeting per year provided they meet the criteria set forth above. All required activities missed must be made up. Arrangements for make-up must be made and approved in writing by the Instructor of Record a minimum of **three weeks** prior to attending the meeting. Instructors of Record have the authority to specifically identify a non-negotiable time and date for all make-up exams as well as other work due.
- 5.4.3 Year 3 and Year 4 Students:
 - a. Year 3 students may be allowed to attend one meeting during their third year. However, students will not be permitted to attend meetings during core required rotations unless the attending preceptor is also attending the meeting. Students may not attend meetings during any two-week rotation.
 - b. Year 4 students may attend one meeting during their fourth year as long as it is not during a required rotation (unless the preceptor is also attending the meeting) or during a two-week rotation. Year 4 students may attend a second meeting if there is a valid reason and the Associate Dean of Clinical Education and the preceptor give permission.
 - c. All Year 3 and Year 4 required activities must be made up. Arrangements for make-up must be made and approved by the preceptor/Director of Medical Education and the student's Regional Assistant Dean at least **three weeks** prior to attending the meeting. Students must still meet the criteria listed in this Section 5.4.3. No student should buy a nonrefundable ticket or pay a nonrefundable conference fee before receiving final approval from the Associate Dean of Clinical Education.

5.5 Exceptions for Student Officers

- 5.5.1 Students who hold an office in a WVSOM-supported club or organization and are required to attend national meetings because of that office may be allowed to attend more than one meeting per year in order to fulfill this obligation. For example, students may still attend one meeting of their choice as well as the meetings they are required to attend by virtue of their office. Student officers must still meet all of the criteria listed above. Officers must document the necessity for their attendance.
- 5.5.2 Proxies attending required organization meetings will be permitted under unusual circumstances if permission is sought and obtained from the Associate Dean of Student Affairs. The proxy must also meet all of the criteria listed above.

5.6 Other Exceptions

- 5.6.1 A single meeting each year can be attended for the purpose of presentation of scholarly activity such as papers or posters. This exception will be considered for primary authors or presenters only. The total time away from clinical rotations cannot exceed two (2) days.
- 5.6.2 D.O. Day on the Hill in Washington, D.C., is exempt from meeting limitations listed in this procedure.
- 5.6.3 On occasion, meetings will be held back-to-back in the same place (e.g., SOMA and AOA). When this occurs, students may petition to attend both or parts of both meetings where appropriate, but must show a valid purpose for their attendance.
- 5.6.4 The Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean has the authority to deny any student request for meeting leave based on the circumstances, or grant other exceptions when appropriate.

Procedure Title: [Procedure for Institutional Policy E-09: Attendance](#)

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