



Faculty of Dental Medicine and Oral Health Sciences

Policy on DMD Absences and Leaves

Preamble

The DMD Program acknowledges that students must have the opportunity to attend to personal, familial, educational, professional, and health-related responsibilities. Therefore, the DMD Program is committed to providing students with the capacity and flexibility to take short-term absences while ensuring the successful completion of the Program's requirements.

This is a general policy for absences and leaves from the Foundations of Dentistry, Fundamentals of Dentistry (FMD), Pre-clinical Studies (DMD II) and Clinical Studies (DMD III and IV).

Policy

1. Punctuality and attendance at academic activities are expected professional behaviors for all activities in the Fundamentals of Dentistry, Pre-clinical Studies (DMD II) and Clinical Studies (DMD III and IV).
2. Attendance is considered mandatory and is monitored for the following learning activities:
 - The day of an examination (e.g. written examinations, oral examinations, OSCE's, quizzes), including the examination itself and any other learning activities scheduled the same day.
 - When a student's absence may have a negative impact on peers (e.g. small group sessions).
When a student's absence may have a negative impact on patients (e.g. clinical activities; this includes all Rotations, etc.
When equivalent make-up activities are not available or missing the activity will make the course incomplete.
3. All absences from mandatory activities require approval from the Associate Dean Undergraduate Program Medicine (FMD) or Associate Dean Undergraduate Program Dentistry (DMD II, III & IV). Absences and the procedures for requesting them are described in later sections of this policy for the following circumstances:
 - Short term absences (0.5-5 consecutive days) from learning activities. This may include *Sick Days* for acute or chronic illness, *Flex Days* and *Personal Days* (see below) for personal or academic activities.
 - Medium term leaves (6 days – 8 weeks) or long term leaves (> 8 weeks) from the DMD Program for personal or professional reasons.
 - Long-term absences (>8 weeks), particularly for pregnant students and students caring for dependents, as outlined in McGill University's Undergraduate Leave of Absence Policy.
4. Students facing an urgent personal or medical crisis should consult with the Student Affairs Officer, Associate Dean or the Student Wellness Hub
5. If there is a concern that a student's absences may adversely impact their progress in the DMD program, the student may be asked to meet with the Associate Dean. The student may also be referred to the Student Wellness Office.

Short Term Absences (0.5-5 consecutive days)

Sick Days, Flex Days and Personal Days

Specific Principles

1. Short term absences are divided into sick days, flex days or personal days.

- Personal days provide students with the ability to attend to personal and/or professional development commitments that would otherwise not be a sick or flex day. This includes attending weddings, family events or conferences. Students are not required to provide justification or documentation for personal days.
 - Engagement and participation in the academic program must be a priority.
2. Students must follow the correct procedure outlined below to request a short-term absence.
 3. The Student Affairs Office will refuse any request that would make a course incomplete; this includes missing more than 25% of any course requirement.
 4. Students facing exceptional circumstances should discuss their situation with the Associate Dean.
 5. When an absence from a mandatory activity is approved, student is responsible for all learning objectives and activities occurring during their absence.
 - The student is responsible for course material from both non-mandatory and mandatory academic activities.
 - The student is expected to arrange to make up for missed experiences independently (notes from peers, additional reading, independent study, etc.).
 - When formal make-up activities are required by the course director, this may involve additional assignments, online cases and/or simulation or clinical activities scheduled on evenings, weekend, statutory holidays or vacation days.
 - The student is assessed according to the same standards as all other students. The student may not use an absence as a justification for appealing the results of an assessment.
 6. It is a professional obligation for students in the clinical setting to notify the site direction, site administrator and/or direct supervisor of their absence.
 7. A student who misses a mandatory activity without an approved absence is considered to have an unauthorized absence. They may receive a 0 for a missed graded activity or may have a note of professionalism documented their assessment for the affected course. This will be specified in the Course Outline. An unauthorized absence from a non-graded activity may be referred to the Associate Dean as a possible lapse of the Code of Conduct.
 8. Students making travel plans prior to an absence being approved do so at their own risk. Should the absence request not be approved, the student will have to cancel his/her travel plans at his/her own expense.
 9. Students no longer requiring a previously approved absence must submit a request by email to have the absence withdrawn no later than 7 days after the absence.

Sick Days Maximum 5 days (10 half-days) per academic year (July 1 – June 30)		
	Deadline (calendar days before absence) *	Documentation Required
Illness e.g. acute illness (gastroenteritis, influenza), exacerbation of chronic illness (asthma, Crohn's Disease, depression, rheumatoid arthritis), acute illness in a dependent (child)	Prior to the start-time of the exam or mandatory activity. Students in clinical setting must inform the site director, site administrator and direct supervisor. The start and end time of the shifts should be included.	<u>3rd day of consecutive day of illness</u> Medical note only required if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day before an examination • Day of an examination • Student has already used 5 sick days in this academic year • Course would be incomplete due to absence Illness of more than 5 consecutive days requires approval of the Associate Dean.. Medical notes must be submitted to the Student Affairs Officer within 5 calendar days of the absence

Flex Days		
Maximum 6 days (12 half-days) per academic year (July 1 – June 30)		
	Deadline (calendar days before absence)*	Documentation Required
McGill University varsity athletic commitment	42 days or within 72 hours of receiving notification	Documentation from coach/manager outlining circumstances. Approval may be granted for day of event with additional travel time, if required.
Presentation of research at provincial, national or international academic conference	42 days or within 72 hours of abstract acceptance	Documentation of abstract acceptance with confirmation of presentation date and time. Approval may be granted for day of presentation with additional travel time, if
Official religious holy day	42 days	Documentation of holy day if not listed in the University list of Holy Days If an exam falls on a holy day, the student should request an absence. If approved, the exam will be deferred.
Scheduled Financial Appointment e.g. Student Aid office, bank	7 days	Documentation of appointment. However, every effort should be made to make financial appointments at times that do not interfere with mandatory activities
Health-care Related Appointment e.g. Doctor, dentist, psychologist, physiotherapist, WELL office, etc.	7 days or within 72 hours of receiving appointment confirmation	Documentation of appointment must be sent to WELL office to protect student privacy within 5 calendar days of the absence. However, every effort should be made to schedule appointments at times that do not interfere with mandatory activities
Other Urgent Reason e.g. Bereavement, unexpected medical appointment, family member illness	1 day	Documentation of funeral. Approval from the Associate Dean (through the Student Affairs Officer) is required for an absence to attend a funeral that makes a course incomplete. Documentation of emergency must be sent to Student Affairs Officer to protect student privacy within 5 calendar days of the absence. Students in clinic must also inform site director, site administrator and direct supervisor. If day of exam, notify professor before the start of the exam.
Personal Days		
Maximum 4 days (8 half-days) per academic year (July 1 – June 30)		
	Deadline to make request (calendar days before absence) *	Additional information

<p>Personal days</p>	<p>42 days</p>	<p>Students may request up to 2 personal days (4 half-days) in an 8-week course/rotation and up to 1 personal day (2 half-days) per course/rotation less than 8 weeks in duration</p> <p>Students may not request a personal day that</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Would make a course incomplete; this includes missing more than 25% of any course requirement 2. Is on the day of an exam or assessment 3. The first day of a course
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*N.B. Absence requests submitted after the deadline must be accompanied with a justification and may be refused.

Procedure for Requesting an Absence

1. To submit a request for an absence from mandatory learning activities, the student must notify the involved academic staff (i.e. course director and session instructor), and the Student Affairs Officer (Studentaffairs.dentistry@mcgill.ca).
2. The Associate Dean will consider the nature of the request, the educational activities that will be missed, and previous absence or leave requests to decide on approval or denial of a request for absence. The Associate Dean's approval is also pended upon the approval of the involved course director and/or session instructor. All absences are documented by the Student Affairs Office.
3. Notification of approval or refusal of the request will be sent to the student via email. If approval is granted, this e-mail will function as an official notification of Approval of Absence and students are responsible to forward it **immediately** to the concerned teacher(s), tutor(s), preceptor(s) or supervisor(s), and implicated administrative contacts (e.g. course coordinator) who would otherwise expect their attendance.
 - If the appropriate personnel have not received the acceptance e-mail within 48 hours of it being granted, the absence will be considered unauthorized.
 - In the case of a request for an absence or leave for an acute illness/emergency medical situation (or other unexpected situation) for which students may have not received a response from the Student Affairs Office before their mandatory learning activity, or the response is received very close in time to the activity, students should use their best judgment to attempt other means of communication with the implicated teaching/administrative staff in advance (e.g. phone call/message, e-mail) advising that a request for absence or leave has been submitted.
 - In a case where the student is not yet aware of whom the implicated supervisor will be (e.g. the request is granted before the schedule for that curricular segment has been released) the student is responsible to communicate the approval as soon as they receive their schedule.

Questions regarding an absence request should be sent to Studentaffairs.dentistry@mcgill.ca

Medium Term Leaves and Long Term Leaves

Specific Principles

1. Medium term (6 days – 8 weeks) and long term leaves (> 8 weeks) (i.e. Leaves of Absence) may be requested for the following circumstances:

- *Personal illness*: Address the request to the Assistant Dean – Student Affairs. A student returning from a medical leave must provide documentation from the treating physician/professional counsellor attesting to the student's readiness to resume studies.
 - *Family crisis*: This includes a serious illness or death of a close family member. Address the request to the Assistant Dean – Student Affairs.
 - *Parenthood / adoption*: Address the request to the Associate Dean within 84 days in advance of the birth/adoption to plan for the absence. For a medium term leave, a student may be excused for up to 7 consecutive days within 3 weeks of the birth/adoption of a child.
 - *Required military service*: Address the request to the Associate Dean of Dental Education within 84 days in advance of the required military service to plan for the absence.
 - *Professional development activities*, such as pursuing research or an advanced degree, holding a significant student leadership position, or a Rhodes Scholarship.
2. The Assistant Dean Student Affairs or the Associate Dean – Undergraduate Program must approve a request for a medium term leave. The Student Promotions Committee (SPC) must approve a request for a long term leave.
 3. Leaves of Absence (Medium Term or Long Term) require rescheduling of educational activities for the student to meet DMD objectives.

A medium term leave may result in a delay of graduation from the DMD Program, and a long term leave will always result in a delay of graduation

To accommodate a medium term leave, the Associate Dean – Undergraduate Program may exempt a student who is in good academic standing from a portion of a course or up to 8-weeks of elective and/or vacation requirements

4. The DMD Program reserves the right to impose a limitation on the number of leaves, as well as the total duration. The DMD Program must be completed within 7 years.
 - *Medical reasons*: A leave for *medical reasons* may be granted for up to one year. Should the student request a prolongation beyond one year, the DMD Program reserves the right to require a second opinion from a faculty-designated physician. A student returning from a medical leave must provide documentation from the treating physician/professional counsellor attesting to the student's readiness to resume studies
 - *Personal reasons/family crisis*: A leave for *personal reasons / family crisis* may be granted for up to one year. Should the student request a prolongation beyond one year, the DMD Program reserves the right to require further documentation regarding the situation
 - *Parenthood/Adoption*: In addition to the short term leave at the time of birth/reception of a new child, a leave may be granted for up to one year for parenthood/adoption. Should the student request a prolongation beyond one year, the DMD Program reserves the right to require medical documentation from the student's or child's physician

Procedure for Requesting a Medium Term or Long Term Leave (i.e. Leave of Absence)

1. The student must meet with the Associate Dean and Student Affairs Officer to discuss the leave request
2. The student must submit documentation to support the leave request (e.g. medical note, description of professional development plan, etc.) to Studentaffairs.dentistry@mcgill.ca.
3. A request for a medium term leave will be reviewed by the Associate Dean and an email will be sent to the student's McGill email address notifying him/her/them of whether the request has been approved or refused
4. A request for a long term leave will be reviewed by the Associate Dean. In exceptional circumstances (i.e. an immediate health concern), the Associate Dean may provide provisional approval for the long term however, however the Associate Dean may not provide final approval for a long term leave. The Associate Dean will present the student's request and associated documentation to the Student Promotions Committee (SPC). The Chair of the SPC will communicate the decision of the Committee to the student in writing by email to the student's McGill email address

5. When a student has an approved Leave of Absence from the DMD Program, regulations apply regarding the official McGill student record, tuition, and other university charges:
- The DMD Program does not have "part-time" status. The student must maintain a minimum of 12 credits per term to maintain full-time student status.
 - During a leave of absence, students are only permitted by the university to enroll in courses if they are admitted to another degree program (MBA, PhD, MSc).
 - The student must consult [the Student Aid Office](#) to assess the impact of the leave on student aid, e.g., government loans and bursaries. Part-time students are not eligible for government loans and bursaries
 - If a leave of absence covers the duration of a full term, the student will remain on the student record system; however, the record will show a "Leave of Absence"
 - A tuition refund will apply only if the leave is in effect prior to the official university withdrawal dates for the term. The official university withdrawal dates and refund regulations are published in the university e-calendar
 - A grade of "W" (withdrew) will be entered on the transcript for any courses not completed during the term
 - On return from the leave, the student will be registered for any deferred courses and will be assessed tuition fees for these courses
 - The students will not be assessed compulsory fees (i.e. student services and societies) if a leave starts at the beginning of the winter or summer term
 - The student is assessed fees for undergraduate supplemental health insurance and international health insurance at the beginning of the fall term. Coverage is applicable until August 31 of the following year
 - To maintain insurance coverage, Canadian students who have a leave of absence that includes the fall term must make arrangements directly through the V.P. Operations, Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) to "opt in" to the undergraduate insurance plan for the following year. As students must be active members of SSMU in order to subscribe to the student health insurance plan, they must also pay SSMU and Medical Students' Society (MSS) fees
 - International students should consult the International Health Insurance Office in the Brown Student Services Building concerning the International Health Insurance Policy
 - To access gymnasium facilities, students must make private arrangements and pay any necessary fees directly to the gymnasium (<http://www.mcgillathletics.ca>).

Approved by Executive (Dec 16th, 2022):

Chair Signature: _____

Dr. E. Emond

Approved by Faculty Council:

Chair Signature: _____

Dr. E. Emond