



Policy: Short-Term Absences Policy

Approved By: MDCM Program Committee

Approved On: January 27, 2020

Updated On: July 15, 2024

Purpose: Outline the details of short-term absences from the MDCM Program

Preamble

The Short-Term Absences Policy outlines the circumstances under which the MDCM Program approves and denies Short-Term Absences. The MDCM Program acknowledges that students must have the opportunity to attend to personal, familial, educational, professional, and health-related responsibilities. Therefore, the MDCM Program is committed to providing students with the capacity and flexibility to take short-term absences while simultaneously ensuring the successful completion of the Program's requirements by encouraging attendance and active participation at all mandatory activities.

Policy

1. Attendance and active participation at learning activities in the MDCM Program as specified in course outlines is required to meet the MDCM Program learning objectives and attain the competencies required of a graduating medical student.
2. Students remain responsible for all learning objectives despite absences and assume the responsibility for missing time from scheduled clinical and non-clinical learning activities.
 - Students are responsible for course material from both non-mandatory and mandatory learning activities
 - Students are expected to compensate for missed academic learning activities independently (e.g., notes from peers, additional reading, independent studying)
 - All students are assessed according to the same standards
3. Mandatory activities are established by the MDCM Program Committee and indicated in the course outlines found on myCourses. In order for students to be excused from a mandatory activity, a short-term absence request must be submitted via [the online platform](#).



4. The MDCM Program recognizes that some students are the caregivers of dependents and may require health-related absences to support their dependents. The following individuals are considered dependents:
 - A student's children
 - A student's spouse's children
 - A student's relative for whom the student is the primary caregiver. For the purposes of this section, "relative" has the meaning assigned by section 79.6.1 of the [Act respecting labour standards \(chapter N-1.1\)](#)
5. Absences that fall on an examination day can only be approved by the Associate Dean UGME or the Assistant Dean Student Affairs. If approved, the student will be granted an examination deferral.
6. Absences that render a course incomplete, including missing more than 20% of a course or a specific mandatory course requirement (see the [Assessment and Promotion Policy](#), point 5.3.2), will not be considered, though some absences listed in the tables below may be approved at the discretion of either the Associate Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education (UGME) or the Assistant Dean, Student Affairs. If the absence leads to an incomplete course or incomplete course requirement and assessment, there will be a make-up activity required. When make-up activities are required, this may involve additional assignments, online cases, simulation and/or clinical activities. These may be scheduled on evenings, weekends, or vacation days, in excess of the usual [Workload Policy](#).
7. Students no longer requiring a previously approved absence must submit a request by email to have the absence withdrawn no later than the day of the absence. Requests for absence withdrawal after this timeline will not be considered and the absence will be deducted from the student's allotted days off.
8. Absences are not permitted for registration and orientation week activities at the beginning of the MDCM Program. If an absence is required for an emergency (sick day or urgent crises), students must contact the Assistant Dean, Student Affairs at the Office of Medical Learner Affairs.
9. A student who misses a mandatory activity without an approved absence is considered to have an unauthorized absence. An unauthorized absence from a graded activity will result in a grade of '0' or 'fail'. An unauthorized absence from a non-graded activity will be referred to the UGME Professionalism Advisor as a possible lapse in professional behaviour, as per the [UGME Policy on Student Professional Behaviours](#). For clinical courses with narrative feedback, the absence may be documented in their assessment for the affected course.
10. Students are encouraged to submit an absence request and wait for approval before making travel plans. Should the absence request not be approved, the student will have to cancel their travel plans at their own expense.



11. If the faculty finds concern that a student's absences may adversely impact progress in the MDCM program or a specific course, even if 80% of its requirements have been completed, the student may be asked to meet with a Course Director, Component Director or the Associate Dean, UGME. Furthermore, the student may be referred to the Office of Medical Learner Affairs.
12. It is a professional obligation for students in clinical courses (LMFE, TCP & Clerkship) to notify the site director, site administrator, and direct supervisor of their absence as it can affect patient care. For planned absences, students must forward the approval from the UGME Office to the site teaching office (Site Director and Site Administrator) within 72 hours of receiving this approval, and inform their direct supervisor either at the start of the rotation or as soon as the approval is obtained. For Sick Days and Urgent Crises, students must notify their direct supervisor as soon as possible on the day of the absence for Sick Days and Urgent Crises, even if their absence request has not yet been approved by the UGME Office and must forward the approval from the UGME Office to the site teaching office (Site Director and Site Administrator) within 72 hours of receiving this approval.
13. For Clerkship Clinical Courses: Weekend days are counted as consecutive calendar days when an absence request includes a Friday and the following Monday (for example, an absence request from Friday to Tuesday inclusive is an absence request for 5 consecutive days; students cannot request short term absences for 6 or more consecutive days).
14. Clerkship students have direct patient care responsibilities and cannot refuse this responsibility for religious reasons. When a holiday (including the Sabbath) begins at sundown, a student is required to remain at the clinical service until sign-over.
15. The [Workload Policy](#) outlines the days off allotted to students during mandatory clerkship courses and clerkship elective courses during Period 7.

Short-Term Absences during Period 7

Mandatory Clerkship clinical courses: The number of days a student can miss without the course being incomplete will depend on the course. As there are already days off built into the schedule during Period 7, only requests for Health-related absences, Attending a Funeral, or Urgent Crises will be approved by the Assistant Dean, Student Affairs. Any additional missed time will need to be made up to complete the course and ensure that learning objectives are met.

Clerkship Electives: Students are permitted to take Health-related absences, Flex Days, Urgent Crises or Personal Days during period 7, as long as they will complete a minimum of 10 working days of elective time in the rotation. An elective experience less than 10 working days will be considered incomplete. A make-up activity will be required to complete the elective and may include prolongation of the elective.



16. The Short-Term Absences Policy adheres to the articles outlined in [la Loi visant à assurer la protection des stagiaires en milieu de travail](#).

Absence Categories

Category	Number of allotted days per academic year
Sick days (Health-related Absences)	10
Healthcare Appointment (Health-related Absences)	4 (or 8 half-days)
Urgent Crises	Approved days will be subtracted from total number of allotted days in other categories
Flex days	6 (or 12 half-days)
Personal days	4 (or 8 half-days)

Note the following additional details:

- 1) Students may only request a half-day absence for a “Financial Appointment”.
- 2) Consecutive day “Financial Appointment” requests will not be accepted except with the approval of Assistant Dean, Student Affairs.
- 3) For a Flex Day request when the event is confirmed later than the outlined deadline¹, students can submit their request within 72 hours of receiving notification of event date with supporting documentation showing proof of when the event/appointment/invitation was confirmed.
- 4) 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.

Students may not request a Personal Day that/on:

- Would make a course incomplete; this includes missing more than 20% of any course requirement (see the Assessment and Promotion Policy, point 5.3.2)
- The day before an examination
- An Exam / Assessment (this includes, but is not limited to, quizzes, midterm examinations, final examinations, anatomy examinations, histology examinations, OSCEs, progress tests, and oral presentations)
- The first day of a course or an orientation session
- A Simulation Centre session

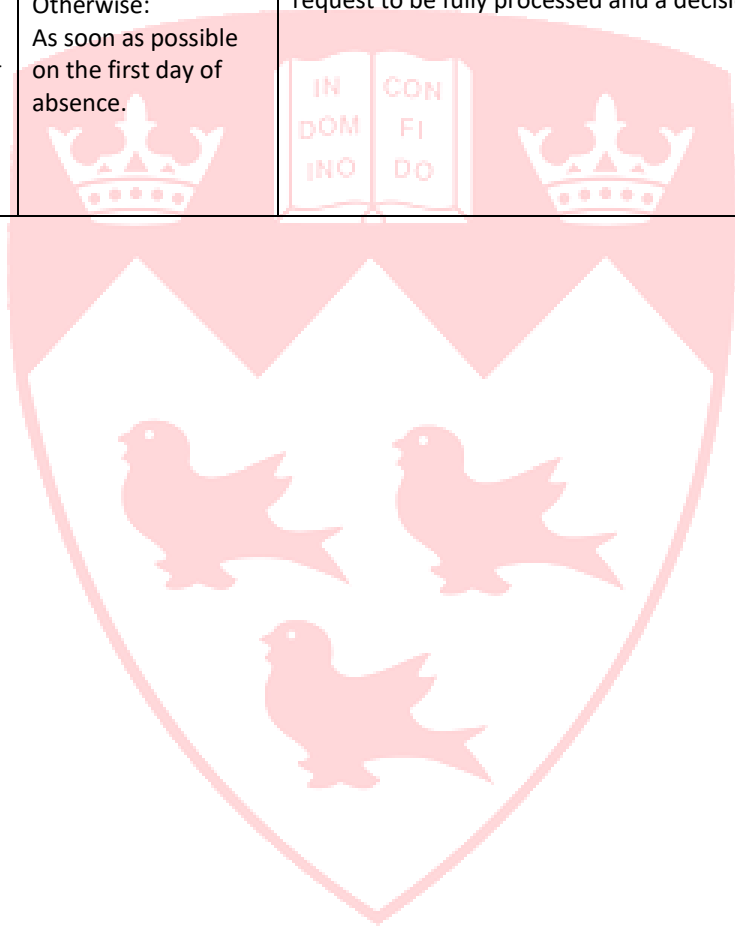
¹ This applies to the following Flex Days: Representing the Faculty of Medicine in a Medical Student Society (MSS) or in a UGME Program designated or approved role; McGill University Varsity Athletic commitment or National/International Elite Level Competition; Student presenting own research at a provincial, national or international academic conference; Appointment with UGME Academic Leadership & Office of Medical Learner Affairs Career Advisor Appointment



Health-related Absences		
Absence Type	Deadline to submit request in absences & leaves system	Justification Requirements
Exceptions for the following absences can only be approved by the Assistant Dean, Student Affairs		
Sick Day e.g., acute illness, exacerbation of chronic illness including mental health illnesses	At the latest 23h59 on the day of the absence except for exams: Prior to the start- time of the exam.	Medical note required for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day before an examination • Day of an examination (including a quiz) • 3rd consecutive day of illness • Student has already used 10 sick days in this academic year Medical notes must be submitted within 5 calendar days of the absence. To respect student privacy, medical documentation should be submitted to studentleaves.med@mcgill.ca .
Healthcare Appointment	7 days prior to the appointment.	If the appointment is booked less than 7 days from the date of the requested absence, proof of the appointment must be uploaded to the online absence platform. If a 2 nd consecutive day is booked for a healthcare appointment, medical documentation must be submitted for both days. To respect student privacy, medical documentation should be submitted to studentleaves.med@mcgill.ca .



Urgent Crises		
Absence Type	Deadline to make request in absences & leaves system	Justification Requirements
Urgent Crises e.g., robbery, car/bike accident, fire/flood in apartment, separation after long-standing relationships.	If day of an exam: Prior to the start-time of the exam. Otherwise: As soon as possible on the first day of absence.	In addition to submitting an absence request in the online system, the student must contact the Office of Medical Learner Affairs at officemedlearneraffairs@mcgill.ca (Montreal Campus) and affairesetudiantespstdocmed.co@mcgill.ca (Campus Outaouais) for the request to be fully processed and a decision rendered.





Flex Days		
Absence Type	Deadline to make request in absences & leaves system	Justification Requirements
Exceptions for the following absences can only be approved by the Associate Dean, UGME		
Representing the Faculty of Medicine in a Medical Student Society (MSS) or in a UGME Program designated or approved role e.g., Official roles for the MSS, FMEQ, CFMS and IFMSA e.g., Participating in UGME Committees, MMIs, Physician Apprenticeship Co- Leader activities, US tutor	30 days in advance. If elected to role < 30 days in advance or if activity scheduled < 30 days in advance: Within 72 hours of being elected/receiving notification of activity date with supporting documentation showing proof of when the event/appointment/invitation was confirmed.	None
Official religious holy day	30 days in advance. <u>Note for Eid ul-Fitr: absence request(s) for the dates listed in the University calendar of Holy Days should be submitted 30 days in advance.</u> As soon as the exact date is known, the student should ask for any unnecessary absence requests to be cancelled by contacting studentleaves.med@mcgillca .	Name of the religious holy day if not listed in the University list of Holy Days . Name of religious holy day must be uploaded in the system at the time the request is made online.
McGill University Varsity Athletic commitment or National/International Elite Level	30 days in advance. If varsity event scheduled < 30 days in advance: Within 72 hours of receiving notification of activity date with	Documentation from coach/manager outlining circumstances. Documentation must be uploaded to the system at the time the request is made online.



<p>Competition</p> <p>Approval may be granted for the day of the commitment, a day to travel to the destination and a day to travel back.</p>	<p>supporting documentation showing proof of when the event/appointment/invitation was confirmed.</p>	
<p>Student presenting own research at a provincial, national or international academic conference</p> <p>Approval may be granted for the day of the presentation, a day to travel to the destination and a day to travel back.</p>	<p>30 days in advance of conference.</p> <p>If abstract accepted < 30 days before the conference: Within 72 hours of receiving notification of abstract acceptance with supporting documentation showing proof of when the event/appointment/invitation was confirmed.</p>	<p>Documentation of abstract acceptance with confirmation of start and end time of presentation.</p> <p>Documentation must be uploaded in the system at the time the request is made online.</p>
<p>Exceptions for the following absences can only be approved by the Assistant Dean, Student Affairs</p>		
<p>Marriage/Civil Union</p> <p>A student may be absent for up to 5 days for their marriage or civil union. A student may also be absent from the rotation on the day of the marriage or civil partnership of a child, father, mother, brother, sister or stepchild. If the marriage is a destination wedding, approval may be granted for the day of the wedding, a day to travel to the destination and a day to travel back.</p>	<p>30 days in advance.</p>	<p>Documentation of event.</p> <p>Documentation must be uploaded to the system at the time the request is made online.</p>



<p>Acute Loss/Attending a Funeral</p> <p>A student may be absent for five days on the occasion of the death or the funeral of a family member and/or loved one.</p>	<p>1 day in advance of funeral.</p>	<p>Approval from the Assistant Dean Student Affairs (through the Office of Medical Learner Affairs is required for an absence to attend a funeral that makes a course incomplete.</p>
<p>Financial Appointment</p>	<p>30 days in advance of appointment.</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Exceptions for the following absences will not be considered.</p>		
<p>Appointment with UGME Academic Leadership</p>	<p>7 days in advance.</p> <p>If appointment confirmed < 7 days in advance: Within 72 hours of receiving confirmation of the appointment with supporting documentation showing proof of when the event/appointment/invitation was confirmed.</p>	<p>If the request is made past the deadline, the uploaded documentation must include the confirmation of appointment with visible date and timestamp.</p>
<p>Office of Medical Learner Affairs Career Advisor Appointment</p>	<p>7 days in advance.</p> <p>If appointment confirmed < 7 days in advance: Within 72 hours of receiving confirmation of the appointment with supporting documentation showing proof of when the event/appointment/invitation was confirmed.</p>	<p>If the request is made past the deadline, the uploaded documentation must include the confirmation of appointment with visible date and timestamp.</p>



Personal Days		
Absence Type	Deadline to make request in absences & leaves system	Justification Requirements
Exceptions for the following absence will not be considered.		
Personal Day	30 days in advance.	None

