



## CLERKSHIP ABSENCE POLICY

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** 6/1/25

**NEXT REVIEW:**

5/1/2026

**APPROVED BY:** Academic Programs/Clerkship

**CATEGORY:** Academic Programs

**APPLIES TO:** Students in the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) Program

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### REFERENCES AND RELATED POLICIES:

- Clerkship COVID-19 Policy

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### PURPOSE

MSUCOM requires student participation in clerkship rotations and clinical activities with consistent attendance to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for successful program completion. This policy will define the policy and procedures regarding absences for clerkship activities.

### POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Any absence must follow the MSUCOM Clerkship Absence Policy.
2. MSUCOM courses/rotations may have additional absence requirements from this clerkship policy. Those requirements will be found in the course syllabus. It is the student's responsibility to know any specific absence requirements for the course in which they are enrolled at the time of any absence.
3. Specific rotation sites may have attendance policies stricter than MSUCOM. Students should be aware of those policies when confirming rotations and ensure compliance with those policies.
4. Students requesting SGA funding that includes absence(s) from clerkship rotations must complete the *Clerkship Program Excused Absence Request Form* with supervisor and student coordinator signature, then submit to the Associate Dean for Clerkship ([enright4@msu.edu](mailto:enright4@msu.edu)) for approval/signature for absence.
5. **Excused Absences**
  - a. Students must obtain documented approval via the *Clerkship Program Excused Absence Request Form* for any full- or partial-day absence from a rotation. Students should organize absences for one form per rotation only.
  - b. An excused absence is required for all absences from MSUCOM courses/rotations and is obtained by the student by:
    - i. Ensuring requested absences complies with the Clerkship Absence Policy and
    - ii. Correct completion of the *Clerkship Program Excused Absence Request Form* and
    - iii. Upload of the *Clerkship Program Excused Absence Request Form* to Medtrics.
  - c. The student must obtain the appropriate signatures on the *Clerkship Program Excused Absence Request Form* at least 30 days prior to the date of the absence. If call duties/weekend duties are required of the upcoming rotation, the student should ensure completion prior to any call/weekend duty scheduling, which may occur prior to 30 days.
    - i. An absence due to an emergency or short notice interview invitations (year 4 students) is the exception to the 30-day advance notice; however, students must notify rotation team and student coordinator for any emergent absence and complete the *Clerkship Program Excused Absence Request Form* upon return.
    - ii. All illness absences require the completion of the MSUCOM COVID Screen (see Clerkship COVID 19 Policy). If not required to isolate, student must complete the *Clerkship Program Excused Absence Request Form* as personal day absence(s).
  - d. Appropriate signatures include:
    - i. The signature of the supervising attending physician and

- ii. The student coordinator/manager at the rotation site
      - 1. This will be the student's base hospital student coordinator/manager for cores and electives at or scheduled by the base site student coordinator/manager.
      - 2. For elective rotations scheduled outside of the student's base hospital, the rotation site coordinator who organized the rotation will be the signatory.
    - iii. Additional MSUCOM signatures may also be required as described in the policy.
  - e. Uploading *Clerkship Program Excused Absence Request Form* to Medtrics:
    - i. Upload completed forms to the 'Excused Absences' folder (within the 'My Profile' section) of a student's Medtrics profile. It is recommended students also maintain a copy for their records.
- 6. **Unexcused Absences** are any absences taken in the clerkship not in compliance with the policy or taken without proper completion/upload of the *Clerkship Program Excused Absence Request Form*.
  - a. Unexcused absences are considered unprofessional and will result in a report to the Common Grounds Professionalism Committee and/or the MSUCOM Committee on Student Evaluation (COSE)
  - b. Unexcused absences may result in-
    - i. An N-grade on the rotation and/or poor evaluation.
    - ii. Additional time scheduled to complete rotation requirements.
- 7. **Clerkship Program Excused Absence Request Forms**
  - a. *Clerkship Program Excused Absence Request Forms* must be completed for all absences.
- 8. **First Day of Rotation**-Students are not allowed to be absent from the first day of any rotation due to onboarding and orientation plans at most rotation sites. Students must plan accordingly for any personal days, interview days, COMLEX, etc. to ensure no absences occur on the first day of rotations.
- 9. **Managing Absences from Rotations**
  - a. Student may request excused absences from rotations provided the maximum time off any one 4-week rotation does not exceed 2 days (maximum time off any one 2-week rotation is 0 days). Please note, this does not mean students are permitted 2 days' absence from each 4-week rotation.
    - i. Additional absences may be requested from any one rotation by contacting the Associate Dean for Clerkship Education via email ([com.clerkship@msu.edu](mailto:com.clerkship@msu.edu)) prior to the absence. The *Clerkship Program Excused Absence Request Form* completed by the attending, and student coordinator/manager must accompany the request. Additional documentation may be requested.
    - ii. Time off for taking the COMAT exam and the ½ day optional study time for the COMAT exam (for COMATs on the last Friday of the rotation only) will not count toward the maximum time off any one rotation.
- 10. **Specific clerkship absence details**
  - a. Personal day absences
    - i. Students may utilize 5 personal days per academic year (Year 3 July-June, Year 4 July-graduation) at their discretion, provided the maximum number of total excused absences utilized on any one 4-week rotation does not exceed 2 days. Personal day absences do not carry over from year 3 to year 4. Personal day absences include vacation day(s), sick time, conference time, etc. Students are not permitted to utilize personal days for clinical enrichment (see clinical enrichment policy).
  - b. COMAT study time
    - i. COMAT study time absence will be provided to any student enrolled in a COMAT examination occurring the last Friday of the rotation. Students opting to use a COMAT study time absence can leave the rotation at noon on the Thursday before the exam (or an alternate half day per the direction of the base hospital site) and are expected to return to rotation upon the completion of the COMAT. COMAT exam approved delays and COMAT exams requiring rescheduling due to emergency will not be provided COMAT study time.
  - c. COMAT examination

- i. Absence for the COMAT examination includes time to take the exam only. Students are expected to return to rotations upon completion of the examination. Students not opting for the COMAT study time are expected to be active in rotations prior to and after the COMAT exam.
- d. Year 4 Interview Absences
  - i. A fourth-year student may be absent a total of 4 days on any 4-week rotation or 2 days on any 2-week rotation during October-January, with the days utilized for interview purposes only.
    - 1. Interview absence requests must not exceed the length of the interview time. Example-Time off for a half day interview is one half day.
- e. COMLEX/USMLE examination
  - i. Absence for the COMLEX/USMLE includes time to take the examination only (1 day or 2 days with accommodations).
- f. Research Presentation
  - i. Student absence for research presentations includes the date of presentation for a maximum of 2 presentations throughout the clerkship. Additional presentations and travel to and from any research presentation would be considered personal day absences.
- g. Prolonged illness, bereavement, maternity/paternity leave
  - i. Students should contact the Associate Dean for Clerkship Education for further direction. Time missed may require make up. Documentation may be required.
- h. Jury duty
  - i. Students should contact the Associate Dean for Clerkship Education upon jury duty notice for further directions. Time missed may require make up.
- i. Other
  - i. Please inquire to the Associate Dean for Clerkship Education for further direction (com.clerkship@msu.edu).