



PRECLERKSHIP ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES

Overview:

Osteopathic medical education requires the student to attend and participate in scheduled course events, as well as to keep pace with instruction and assessments. Attendance and participation in MSUCOM courses are expected for student success, and unexcused absences may be reflected in the faculty's assessment of student performance.

As future osteopathic physicians, MSUCOM students will enter careers in which attendance and participation are integral to the functioning of the healthcare team. Students are expected to demonstrate personal responsibility in participating in coursework and integrity in seeking excused absences. Communication regarding planned or unplanned absences must be communicated in a timely, professional, and honest manner.

For required courses in the MSUCOM curriculum, the student must follow the requirements outlined in the course syllabus. Students whose request for an excused absence is approved will still be responsible for course content and expected to meet the course requirements as outlined in the course syllabus.

The following policy addresses the current expectations regarding attendance and absences during years one and two of the curriculum (preclerkship). A separate policy exists for absences during years three and four of the program (clerkship).

Note: This policy is currently under review and will be updated during the 2024-25 academic year.

Mandatory class sessions and examinations

1. Students are expected to attend all scheduled class sessions (e.g., lectures, laboratories) and take all examinations during their posted times. Each course may determine the number of excused or unexcused absences that are allowable and may define whether a makeup opportunity will be offered.
2. If a student is unable to attend a mandatory session or examination due to illness, emergency, or planned event, the student may request an excused absence through the process described below. If the request is approved, the absence will be considered "excused." Refer to the course syllabus for details on excused absences and makeup opportunities.
3. An absence from a mandatory class session or examination will be considered "unexcused" if an excused absence request is not made in a timely fashion, or if the excused absence request is denied. Refer to the course syllabus for outcomes associated with an unexcused absence. In most cases, a request should be submitted within 24-48 hours.

Process for excused absence requests

1. To request an excused absence, the student must complete an *Excused Absence Request Form*

prior to the scheduled mandatory class session or examination, or as soon as possible after the event (see below). The form is available online through the Student Portal.

2. Supporting documentation may be requested, e.g., note from healthcare provider.
3. Excused absence requests will be reviewed by college personnel. In some courses, additional approval may be required, such as by the course coordinator.
4. If the student is unable to access the student portal due to illness or injury, a family member or other designee may contact the site by telephone or email.
5. If a student has three excused or unexcused absences in one semester, they will be required to meet with the administration. In addition, the student's participation in extracurricular activities/eboards will be evaluated.

Emergencies

1. In the event of an emergency, the student should submit the Excused Absence Request Form as soon as possible, and preferably prior to the start of the mandatory session or examination.
2. Requests for an excused absence should be submitted as soon as possible but no later than 24-48 hours after the missed event. In most cases Failure to request an excused absence within this time may result in denial of an excused absence.
3. Examples of emergencies include:
 - acute medical illness of the student or family member for whom the student is a primary caregiver
 - traffic accident or car trouble
 - family emergency related to illness or childcare
 - death of a family member/bereavement

When there is advance notice of absence

1. When a student has a planned event that conflicts with a mandatory session or examination, a request for an excused absence may be submitted. Such requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the nature of the event, the potential for rescheduling, and the timeliness of the request. Students will be expected to plan appointments and events around their academic schedule whenever possible.
2. Examples of non-emergency excused absence requests include:
 - Scheduled major medical or surgical procedure or birth of a child – request should be submitted with as much advance notice as possible.
 - Major personal or family event – request must be submitted **one month** in advance, providing details and supporting documentation. Additional documentation may be requested.
3. The student should refer to the course syllabus for details on excused absences and allowances for makeup opportunities. Unit examinations will not be offered early due to a conflicting event.

Religious holidays and observances

1. MSUCOM abides by MSU policies on permitting students to request excused absences for religious observances. In the event that a religious observance conflicts with a mandatory session or examination administration time, a student may submit an excused absence request prior to the event.
2. Students should consult the course syllabus for details on availability of makeup opportunities.

Conferences, conventions, meetings, and college sponsored activities

1. MSUCOM students are encouraged to participate locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally with osteopathic organizations and other medically related groups. The college recognizes the student's academic program to be the priority and it is the student's responsibility to fulfill all course requirements. The student should refer to the course syllabus for details on excused absences and allowances for makeup opportunities.
2. A student who wishes to attend a conference, convention, meeting, or college-sponsored activity that will cause them to miss a mandatory session or examination must submit an Excused Absence Request Form at least **one month** prior to the expected absence period. Details and supporting documentation, including the conference, convention, meeting or college sponsored activity announcement, or agenda, will be required.
3. The following scenarios will be acceptable reasons for an excused absence:
 - The student is an officer in a student organization and is expected to attend the meeting or conference on behalf of MSUCOM.
 - The student is presenting research or scholarly activity.
 - The student is attending a specialized student section of a professional conference.
4. A student who wishes to attend a conference, convention, or meeting for a reason not listed above, e.g., general interest, networking, etc., will not qualify for an excused absence. The student may still choose to attend the event but may not be eligible for makeup opportunities without approval of the absence request.
5. Unit examinations will not be offered early due to a conflicting event.
6. Students may request travel sponsorships through both SOMA and SGA by completing a travel expenditure request form. Students must also submit an excused absence request based on the criteria above. Receiving travel sponsorship does not imply approval of an excused absence request.