

**BURRELL COLLEGE
OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE
POLICY MANUAL**

SECTION: General – Student Administration

BCOM Policy 3102

TOPIC: Attendance Policies

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Attendance Policies

Medical Student education involves many aspects of personal growth that requires students to work collaboratively with fellow classmates, other students, staff and faculty on a regular basis. The nature of the work of a physician requires that notification of the appropriate persons when absence is inevitable, so that patient care is not compromised. Therefore, BCOM strongly encourages all students to be present for *all* educational activities. Students are responsible for *all* curricular activities and content, regardless of student attendance. Specific course attendance requirements will be addressed in each course syllabus and enforced at the discretion of each course director; these may include requirements for mandatory attendance. Any student having excessive absences from curricular activities or laboratories may be deemed in violation of the Professionalism Core Competency and may be referred to SPC for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from BCOM.

Excused Absence

BCOM Administration and faculty realize that various circumstances, emergent or otherwise, will require that members of our community need to be absent from required events. The BCOM community is expected to work together and be mutually supportive during circumstances that take a colleague away from required events. An excused absence is defined as any absence approved by the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs and Course Director(s). Any student anticipating absence from a required activity must submit a written request to the Office of Student Affairs prior to the start of the session in question, and the Office of Student Affairs will consult with the course director as to the propriety of the excused absence. A request for an excused absence does not guarantee that an excused absence will be granted.

Examples of excused absences can include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Appointments for medical care that cannot be rescheduled at another time
2. Medical illness or family emergency
3. Scholarly presentation at an academically relevant national meeting with previous approval
4. Running for or holding national office in a professionally relevant national organization
5. Religious observances
6. Residency interviews

Several of the categories of excused absence mentioned will require submission of additional information as detailed below:

Excused Absences for Personal or Family Members Medical Care – Medical students are strongly encouraged to promote and maintain their own health and well-being. Whenever possible, students should schedule non-emergent healthcare appointments during times that do not conflict with required curricular activities. In the event an appointment must be scheduled during a required curricular activity, students must request permission through the Office of Student Affairs, who will consult with the Course Director. Requests must be submitted at least 48 hours in advance to be considered. With the student's well-being in mind, it is essential for any student who misses a required class because of illness to notify the Office of Student Affairs as soon as possible and must provide documentation from a health care provider on the day of the illness.

Religious Observances – BCOM recognizes and respects the significance of student spiritual and religious beliefs and practices. While the College calendar can only include certain religious observances recognized as U.S. federal holidays, the College wants to accommodate students' religious needs reasonably within the requirements of the academic schedule. There shall be no adverse or prejudicial effect resulting to any student requesting excused absences for religious observances. Professional judgement may be exercised by course directors and the

Assistant Dean of Student Affairs in cases where there is an excess of absences is being requested. As stated above, it is the student's responsibility to make sure all required academic work missed as part of an excused absence be completed to the satisfaction of the course director.

Residency Interviews – During third and fourth year clinical clerkships, students may be granted one day excused absence for residency interviews per two weeks of each clinical rotation. Prior to submitting such requests to the Office of Student Affairs or the Assistant Dean for Preclinical Education, students should not schedule interviews during required clerkship events and should discuss any requests with the Clerkship Director. Regardless of absences for interviews, students must complete the requirements of the rotation by the last day of the rotation. Any deviation from this policy must be approved by the Clerkship Director and the Assistant Dean for Clinical Education.

First- and second-year students need to notify the appropriate course director or the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs prior to the event, if possible; third- and fourth-year students need to notify the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Clinical Education in writing. An unexcused absence from a clerkship can result in the immediate end to that clerkship and a directive to immediately return to campus for a meeting with the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Clinical Education.

As professionals, students are expected to adhere to the BCOM attendance policy with diligence. Excused absences should not be requested for the following: weddings, vacations, birthdays, non-family special events, etc. Medical school marks the beginning of a student's medical career, and as such students should understand the priority of a practicing physician.

The Course Director will meet with the student to arrange an appropriate time and time frame to remediate any missed time/assignments. Failure to remediate any missed time/assignments will result in no points being earned for that graded activity. The Course Director is responsible for ensuring that the grading policy is uniformly applied within the course.

Policy Details

Excused absence requests are submitted through the Office of Student Affairs. Students should obtain an excused absence request through the Office of Student Affairs by completing the Absence Request Form and return it to the Office of Student Affairs. Requests will be reviewed by the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs who will consult with the appropriate Course Director(s) as needed. A decision on the request will be forwarded to the student within 3 working days of the submission.

For emergent absences, students should inform the Office of Student Affairs as soon as possible. All other requests should be made in person or by email. Any required sessions, academic assignments, clinical work, etc. that are missed must be fulfilled to the satisfaction of the Course Director. If missed work related to an excused absence cannot be made up before the end of the course, the student will be assigned a grade of "Incomplete" until the work is completed. If the student is unable to complete the missed work within a 1 year timeframe the grade will be converted to "Fail". A grade of "Fail" would require the student to repeat the course.* Failure to comply with this policy will be considered unprofessional behavior.

** A course failure could require a complete repeat of the academic year.*

Absence from Examinations

BCOM expects all students to be present and take all exams during assigned times, as listed on the course or clerkship calendar/schedule. Students are responsible for knowing any changes in the examination schedule by referring to the online calendar and/or email updates.

While examinations are stressful, the generalized anxiety, stress, or nervous agitation one might experience prior to an exam does not qualify as a medical excuse. Only a formal medical diagnosis by a qualified healthcare practitioner will be accepted. A student who does not take an examination at its scheduled time and is appropriately excused may be allowed to take a make-up examination, if eligible. Make-up examinations will be of comparable difficulty to the original examination, but may use short answer, essay, oral, multiple-choice, or any other format at

the Course Director's discretion.

Course examinations are given periodically during the academic semester. Requests for excused absences for exams must be made in writing to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs. Students who miss an exam must meet with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs who after consultation with the Course Director, will inform the student of the decision. If the decision is made that the absence is unexcused, a grade of zero (0%) will be recorded for the exam.

Examples of valid reasons for missing an examination include, but are not limited to:

1. Personal illness or other health issue (student needs to be examined personally by a health care provider and secure the necessary medical documentation).
2. Substantiated family emergency, such as significant illness of immediate family member/death in family.
3. Pre-approved attendance at osteopathic national meetings (AOA, ACOFP, AAO etc.) (See E. below) [Student will need to provide verification of attendance.].
4. Religious exemptions (requests must be made at the beginning of the semester).

Examples of unacceptable reasons for missing an examination include, but are not limited to:

1. Not feeling prepared for the examination;
2. Non-emergency travel plans, regardless of when these plans were made;
3. Not having read an email announcement of a rescheduled examination;
4. Appointment at a time that conflicts with the examination.

Absence from Standardized Patient Encounters

Clinical encounter experiences utilizing standardized patients will be administered to train and/or assess competency of a student's clinical medical knowledge, skills, and professionalism. In the case of an excused absence, the standardized patient encounter must be made up by the student in a timely manner determined by the Course Director. The student is responsible for the knowledge/skill acquired during the missed session. In the case of an unexcused absence from a standardized patient encounter, the student will receive a grade of zero (0%) for the activity.

Leave of Absence

A leave of absence may be granted from BCOM based on one of the following reasons:

1. a medical emergency;
2. a financial emergency;
3. maternity;
4. a call to active military service;
5. pursuit of an academic endeavor other than the regular classroom work, either on campus or at another recognized teaching facility;
6. Other exceptional situations may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Before requesting a leave of absence the student must meet personally with the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs to discuss the reasons for the leave, and ramifications of the decision. If the student decides to proceed with the request, a written request for the leave of absence must be submitted to the Office of the Dean, who will consider the request upon its merits. A Leave of Absence is generally granted for up to one year. A student may petition the Dean, through the Office of Student Affairs to extend the leave for no more than one additional year.

A student in **good academic standing** is one who has no academic failures on their record. Such a student who is granted a leave of absence will receive a letter from BCOM outlining any requirements about the student's return to campus. A student **not in good academic standing** is one who has one or more academic failure(s) on their record. Such a student may be granted a leave of absence to allow the student time to deal with the issue(s) that created their academic difficulty (e.g. personal serious medical issue, parent with a chronic mortal medical condition). A student not in good academic standing who requests a leave of absence must meet with the Student Progress Committee. The outcome of the SPC meeting will be transmitted to the Dean as a recommendation for their consideration related to the leave of absence. Such a student who is granted a leave of absence will receive

a letter from BCOM outlining any requirements about the student's return to campus.

Before a student's leave of absence can begin, he or she must go through BCOM's prescribed checkout procedure. The student must also meet with the Office of Financial Services to discuss how the leave will affect their financial aid status eligibility. The official date of the Leave of Absence will be the date of completion of the checkout procedure. Any tuition refunds or outstanding balances will be based on this date. Forms for this check out are available from the Office of Student affairs.

Students seeking to return from a leave of absence must ensure that all approved terms and conditions of the leave are submitted in writing before reinstatement will be granted. The submission of this paperwork is the responsibility of the student and must be submitted in writing, in accordance with the terms outlined in the letter granting the leave of absence, to the Office of Student Affairs for review. Upon approval, the student will directed to the Office of the Registrar for re-admission.

Students granted a medical leave of absence must have a licensed physician, approved by the College, certify in writing that the student's physical and/or mental health is sufficient to resume their medical education, before being allowed to return to BCOM.