

University of Washington School of Medicine Clinical Clerkship Absentee Policy

Effective July 1, 2017

This policy covers all students in required and elective clerkships.

General Absentee Policy

1. It is in the student's best interest to be present for all days during clerkships. For most clerkships, that includes overnight call and weekends. Please try to anticipate personal events and fit them into breaks or elective time off. There are no vacation days during clerkships so please schedule vacation time during school breaks or elective time off.
2. Anticipated Absences: This policy allows for up to 2 days of anticipated excused time away from the learning environment in 4 to 12-week clerkships. Absences cannot be permitted during orientation, the final examination or other required elements of the clerkship (please review the individual clerkship website for the list of required elements).
 - a. This policy should not be interpreted to mean you can or should take 2 days off on every clerkship. The intent of this policy is to provide guidance about how to approach significant personal events that occur during scheduled clerkships.
 - b. Please also consider that time away from the clerkship may affect your grade without any intention to do so. For example, your preceptor may have fewer days in which to evaluate your work or there may not be enough time for you to receive feedback and improve your skills.
 - c. If you desire any time off you should consult with the appropriate clerkship director/administrator at least six weeks prior to the beginning of the clerkship to limit the negative impact on the clerkship experience.
3. Unanticipated Absences: In case of an illness, personal emergency or personal healthcare appointments, you must directly contact the team you are working with as early as possible. Please also see below about contacting the clerkship director/administrator.
4. If you are absent without permission you may receive a Fail grade and may be required to repeat the clerkship. In addition, you will receive a professionalism concern on the final evaluation.
5. No anticipated time off is permitted during two-week elective clerkships and four-week sub-internships.

Anticipated Absences

1. Significant Personal Events
Personal event examples include weddings, graduations, presenting papers at conferences, receiving awards, and necessary health care appointments. If any days off for significant personal events are requested during a clerkship, you must consult with the clerkship director/administrator at least six weeks prior to the beginning of the clerkship, before making travel arrangements, as it is not always possible to grant these requests. If more than two days off are needed for chronic health issues and/or appointments, you should contact Disability Resources for Students (DRS) to pursue possible accommodations.
2. National or Religious Holidays

As a member of a health care team during a clerkship, there is no guaranteed time off for University of Washington holidays, traditional observances, or major days of religious significance, just as there won't be when you are a practicing physician. You are expected to follow the holiday practice of the clinic/hospital/site at which they are rotating. Meaning, if it is a holiday at your site, you may get the day off. If it is a working day for your site, you must show up. Clinical responsibilities such as night call and rounding take precedence over holiday schedules. To plan ahead for national holidays, you may wish to call the clerkship administrator or practice site in advance and inquire.

You are encouraged to work together with faculty to accommodate your scheduling constraints in observing your religious and cultural practices. Similar to when you are in practice, you must take responsibility and plan ahead. If you have religious holidays that require you to miss or modify work, consult with the clerkship director/administrator well in advance to see what accommodations can and can't be made.

3. Residency Interviews

You are required to schedule off at least four weeks for residency interviews and every effort should be made to schedule interviews during that time. If residency interviews are offered when you are already scheduled for clerkships, you should work directly with the clerkship director/administrator immediately to see what interview accommodations can and can't be made.

4. Match Day

All graduating students are allowed to attend the Match Day celebration with no clerkship responsibility starting at 8AM on Match Day until the next morning (variable start time depending on the clerkship). If you are on a WWAMI clerkship, additional travel time the day prior to the celebration may also be needed.

Unanticipated Absences

1. Unanticipated Illness, Personal Emergency or Urgent Health Care Appointments

If you miss ANY days, you must speak with the site director as well as the attending or resident in charge prior to the start of the shift. It is not acceptable to leave only a phone or email message or to contact only administrative staff. You should receive confirmation (direct conversation, return email or phone call) from the site director and/or the attending/resident in charge indicating that the team is aware of your absence. The specific person and his/her contact information are available on the individual clerkship websites.

For ANY time away from the clerkship, you are also required to tell the clerkship director/administrator who will determine if make-up time is needed for unanticipated absences or if the entire clerkship needs to be rescheduled. Grades may be delayed or you may receive an "incomplete" until the time is made up.

2. An absence for the purpose of seeking treatment for a suspected infectious or occupational exposure (including needle stick injury) will be accommodated as an unanticipated medical absence.

3. Inclement Weather

The inclement weather policy for clerkships matches the policy for holidays. If your team is working in the hospital or the clinic is open, you are expected to show up. If you are unable to access the hospital/clinic due to hazardous travel, you must notify your team as described above under “unanticipated absences.”

4. SOAP (Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program)

In the event that you do not match and you are participating in SOAP in order to secure a residency position, you are immediately excused from clerkship duties. Student Affairs will contact the clerkship director/administrator who will notify your site. Prior to returning to your clerkship after SOAPing, contact the clerkship director/administrator to discuss your return and the impact of days missed. Make-up time may be needed especially for 2-week electives.

LIC/WRITE Clerkship Absences

LIC and WRITE clerkship students will follow all of the same rules as listed above with the following modifications.

Anticipated Absences

1. Significant personal events are described above under “anticipated absences.” Because of the different scheduling model for LIC/WRITE, this policy allows for up to 2 days away from the learning environment every 12-weeks of the clerkship.
2. The request should be directed to the LIC/WRITE program director(s).
3. The requested dates need to follow the General Absentee Policy.

Unanticipated Absences

1. For ANY time away from the clerkship, you are required to tell the LIC/WRITE program director(s) who will determine, in consultation with the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and the affected clerkship directors, if make-up time is needed.

Approved by UW School of Medicine Patient Care Committee July 17, 2017

Approved by UW School of Medicine Curriculum Committee September 11, 2017