

NEOMED ACADEMIC POLICY	Policy No: 3349-AC-418
ACADEMIC POLICY TITLE: College of Medicine Attendance at Instructional Sessions	EFFECTIVE DATE: 01/01/2019 REVISED: 10/13/2025
RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT: Medical Education, College of Medicine	Approval Authority: Dean, College of Medicine Responsible Office: Office of the Dean and Medical Education, College of Medicine

(A) PURPOSE

Course attendance guidelines and requirements must be established in compliance with the elements specified in this Policy, including the LCME and University Academic Policies. The LCME requires that a “medical school has policies and procedures in place that permit students to be excused from [educational] experiences to seek needed care” (LCME Functions and Structure of a Medical School, effective July 1, 2023). The relevant LCME element is Element 12.4 Student Access to Health Care Services.

(B) SCOPE

This Policy applies to all required and elective credit-bearing courses contained in the College of Medicine curriculum, M1 through M4 years, in which a Final Grade is assigned to the student and appears on the student’s official transcript.

(C) DEFINITIONS

- (1) “Absence” refers to missing or not attending a mandatory class activity. Remote observation of an engaged learning session still constitutes an absence. Certain courses in M1/M2 allow a maximum number of combined Automatic Excuses Absences (see definition below).
- (2) “Automatic Excused Absence” (“AEA”) refers to a permitted absence in some courses in the M1/M2 curriculum. AEAs may be used for any reason, including but not limited to accessing health care for yourself or a family member, a major family event, and/or a medical illness. M1 and M2 students are permitted to miss a pre-determined number of in-class days in certain courses without adverse impact on course scores from the missed activity.
- (3) “Credit-bearing Course” refers to a course, hereafter referred to as “Course,” offered by the College of Medicine in which a student is enrolled, the Course appears on the student’s official transcript with credit-bearing acknowledgment, and a Final Grade is assigned.
- (4) “Course Director” refers to appointed faculty members who are responsible for the overall design, conduct, student assessment within, and evaluation of a credit-bearing course. Course directors have different titles depending on which courses they direct; clerkship experiential directors are types of course directors.

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- (5) "Clinical Experience" refers to any course or component of a course that involves assignment to clinical care settings, often involving various clinical partners (ambulatory practices, hospitals, etc.) and involving real and sometimes simulated patient experiences.
- (6) "Final Grade" refers to the cumulative assessment of a student's performance in a single Course. The Final Grade is assigned by the faculty course or rotation director at the conclusion of the course offering. Final Grades are posted to the student record/official transcript by academic year and term. A student's course grade is considered to be a Final Grade when it is posted in Banner Self-Service ("Banner").
- (7) "Grade Posting." refers to the process a student's grade is considered to be posted when the Final Grade itself appears for the student to view in Banner. For M3 clerkships and M4 electives, Grade Posting includes the letter grade as well as the Student Performance Evaluation (SPEF) form.

(D) POLICY STATEMENT

- (1) Attendance Expectations: Attendance, punctuality, and full participation is expected of students in all courses throughout the M1 through M4 curriculum. The COM believes integrity and professionalism are core values for physicians; thus, faculty will rely on a student's honesty when presenting a compelling reason why they must miss an activity.
- (2) Attendance Guidelines and Records: Establishing attendance guidelines for a course is the responsibility of the Course Director with final approval by the Curriculum Committee.
 - (a) All attempts will be made to establish guidelines for required attendance that are consistent within an academic year and to articulate attendance guidelines in course syllabi.
 - (b) Verification of attendance must be maintained until the end of the initial grade dispute period, which is ten (10) days following the date on which the Final Grade is posted in Banner, or when a grade dispute has reached a resolution.

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- (3) Absence Notification Form: All absences, including Automatic Excused Absences, must be communicated using the Absence Notification Form (<https://www.neomed.edu/sa/forms/>), which documents the details of the absence, dates, classes or clinical dates missed, and the make-up plan.
- (a) Additional direct communication with Course Directors or clinical site may be required, as per instructions in the course syllabus.
 - (b) In all instances of absences, students shall be responsible for all material covered in the curriculum and for completing any work assigned during their absence. In no case is an absence from the curriculum to be interpreted as a release from curricular responsibilities.
 - (c) Students who have excessive excused absences (i.e., miss greater than 20% of the mandatory days of a course) may be required to meet with Course Directors to discuss course performance and determine whether there are any concerns in completing the course. Excessive absences may result in a referral to the Committee on Academic and Professional Progress.
 - (d) Information about extended absences is provided in the “Interruptions of Education” section of the *NEOMED Compass* and is beyond the scope of this Policy.
- (4) Health Services: Students may be excused from instructional sessions to access health services, which will count against allotted limits for Automatic Excused Absences in M1/M2.
- (a) Students needing non-emergent health services are expected to schedule such services, whenever possible, outside of scheduled class hours, regardless of whether attendance is mandatory or not.
 - (b) Students may request to be excused to accompany a family member who is accessing health services. All other requirements regarding an absence are applicable.
 - (c) Students who miss a mandatory session because of emergent health care needs must submit an absence notification form as soon as circumstances allow. Corroborating documentation of an illness or situation may be requested at the

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discretion of the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs, or designee.

- (d) Students are required to attend all assessment events, e.g., tests. Students who miss an assessment event or test due to an emergency must submit an absence notification form as soon as circumstances allow.
- (i) Excused absence and delay of an assessment event is only permitted for unanticipated acute and serious healthcare needs.
 - (ii) Repeated delays and rescheduling of assessment events are not permitted.
- (5) Professional Conference: Attendance to present and/or fulfill a professional obligation at a professional conference does not count against allotted limits for Automatic Excused Absences in M1/M2 except when prior approval was not obtained per below. No travel plans should be made until permission has been granted.
- (a) At least four (4) weeks in advance of the conference or professional obligation, the student must submit an absence notification request and provide evidence of acceptance to present at the conference or of the professional obligation. These requests with corroborating evidence will be forwarded to the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs or designee for approval.
 - (b) Absence requests submitted within the four (4) week timeframe from travel will not be approved and will require the use of AEA day(s).
 - (c) The student should expect to make up any missed mandatory sessions and missed assignments, at the discretion of the Course Director.
- (6) Religious Observance: Religious observation days do not count against allotted limits for Automatic Excused Absences in M1/M2 except when prior approval was not obtained per policy. For Religious Observance absences, see the University policy 3349-5-77: Accommodations for Student Religious Observations.
- (7) Inclement Weather: NEOMED closing due to inclement weather pertains to Rootstown Campus activities only. All other students are expected to report for clinical activities as scheduled unless otherwise notified.

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- (a) Any student who does not feel he/she can safely reach a clinical site or NEOMED campus (if open) due to inclement weather should notify his/her clinical teaching site, if applicable, as well as submit an absence notification form.
 - (b) In the circumstance that the NEOMED campus is open but inclement weather impacts safe travel to and from campus, students should fill out the standard absence notification form (<https://www.neomed.edu/sa/forms/>), and it will count against allotted limits for Automatic Excused Absences in M1/M2.
- (8) Attendance and Absences in M1 and M2
- (a) Automatic Excused Absences (AEAs) may be used in all M1 and M2 courses, excluding the Practice of Medicine (POM) course series.
 - (i) Maximum number of AEAs per course:
 - (a) Courses \leq 4 weeks (1)
 - (b) Courses 5-8 weeks (2)
 - (c) Courses 9-16 weeks (3) (Courses divided into discrete modules may distribute the 3 AEAs across the modules)
 - (ii) Absences needed beyond these days will require approval by the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Admissions, or designee. Corroborating documentation of an illness or situation may be requested at the discretion of the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Admissions or designee. An excused absence may or may not be granted.
 - (iii) AEAs will be applied to all absences except pre-approved absences to attend a professional conference, religious observation days, and examinations. Refer to the course syllabi for Examination Absences.
 - (b) Consequences for an excessive number of absences or unexcused absences.

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- (i) For any additional absences beyond the maximum allowed in each course or for any absences that have not been approved by the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Admissions, or designee, students will receive a score of zero (0) for that activity. A [Student Conduct/Professionalism Referral Form](#) will be executed after the first unexcused absence, and a CAPP referral will be made for each subsequent unexcused absence. Patterns of professionalism concerns across courses will be monitored by the Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Admissions, or designee, and may result in referral to CAPP.
- (ii) Absences exceeding three (3) consecutive days without prior approval will be referred to the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, who may conduct a wellness check to ensure the student is not in distress.

(9) Attendance and absences in M3 and M4

Attendance is mandatory for all clinical and M3 PPC experiences. Students experiencing an illness, a death in the family, or other serious situation, must contact the M3 curriculum manager at NEOMED and their Clinical Site Director and coordinator as soon as circumstances allow. If an absence will impact any M3 PPC requirements, students should also notify the M3 PPC Course Director(s) and/or coordinator. Students may also be excused from clinical and M3 PPC experiences for emergent and routine health care needs using the previously described procedure. Students should schedule routine appointments in such a way as to minimize disruption to clinical and course requirements, giving as much advanced notice as possible to the clerkship site director and/or M3 PPC faculty/staff.

- (a) When illness might interfere with a subject examination, communication with the Course Director and coordinators is required, as well as communication with the assessment team. See Attachment 1 for more details.
- (b) Consideration for missing clinical experiences and/or course experiences may be made for students who have been accepted for a presentation at a professional conference or to fulfill a professional obligation. Students should not make travel plans until permission has been granted by the Course Director (i.e., Clerkship Site Director).

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- (c) Absences must be discussed with the Course Director or Clinical Site Director, and an Absence Notification Form must be completed by the student and submitted to NEOMED in all instances of absence. Documentation that corroborates the illness or situation may be requested. The Absence Notification Form documents the details of the absence, dates, and classes or clinical dates missed, and the make-up plan.
- (d) The Course Director or Clinical Site Director determines if the work can be made up. This is specific for each course and is indicated in the course syllabus.
- (e) Multiple absences during a course or rotation may result in a final grade of incomplete or failure of the course/experience. Excessive absences during a course or clerkship may necessitate that the student repeat the course in its entirety. Students should refer to the course syllabus or equivalent documentation for specific attendance requirements.
- (f) Any planned absences for educational purposes, e.g., a residency interview or a scheduled Step 2 examination, must be documented using an Absence Notification Form and approved by the Core Rotation Director or Elective Director in advance of the time the rotation/elective begins. Corroborating documentation may be required. The Rotation/Elective Director will decide whether to approve the absence.
- (g) M4 students may not exceed two (2) days off for an approved purpose for each M4 clinical rotation/elective block. An exception is made for periods M4-4 through M4-7 during which students are allowed a maximum of four (4) days off per rotation to accommodate the potential for attending residency interviews; the first day of a rotation/elective block cannot be missed.