

Approved by Educational Affairs Group Leadership (EAGLs) on August 6, 2019. Revised on February 5, 2020.

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Attendance as an Element of Professional Engagement

Physicians in practice are expected to engage fully in their professional responsibilities to maintain the trust of the public they serve. Attendance and punctuality are particularly important reflections of this professional engagement. The MD Program at the University of Illinois College of Medicine maintains firm attendance policies for several reasons:

- Punctuality and participation during medical school instill the habits that learners will need as clinicians in practice;
- Anticipating and communicating the need to be absent from activities for which learners have responsibility is a demonstration of learners' good judgment; framing this need in the form of a request (e.g., asking permission) is a demonstration of learners' respect for the professionals providing learning opportunities;

- The majority of learner classroom time is in active learning formats. Learner participation is an essential element for both individual learning and learning of peers as collaborative teams;
- In many learning activities, specific resources (e.g., cadavers) or services (patient instructors, patients) have been provided and scheduled for learners.

The faculty consider learners' presence at required class sessions to be a fundamental part of the academic expectations of the MD program. As in professional practice, a pattern of tardiness or unexcused absences is not acceptable.

College-wide Policy and Procedures

The Attendance Policy is consistent in the Illinois Medicine curriculum for all campuses and is approved by the College Committee on Instruction and Appraisal.

This companion Attendance Procedures document also is consistent in the Illinois Medicine curriculum for all campuses and is approved by the Educational Affairs Group Leadership.

Attendance Policy Synopsis:

This synopsis is provided here as a quick guide to the policy but is not intended to replace it.

1. Whether the student arrives late to a session forgets to sign in, or misses the session entirely, the event is recorded as an absence and will be either excused or unexcused.
2. An absence will be tracked by a student not signing into a session. Not signing in within a 10 minute window counts as an absence in the course and will be either excused or unexcused.
3. Students are permitted to "fail to sign in" without penalty for an unexcused absence a designated number of times depending on the course (see table).
4. The "failure to sign in" without penalty for an unexcused absence only applies to individual sessions on different days. Failing to sign in to more than one mandatory session in the same day results in one lost Professional Engagement point in those courses that count PE points in grading (Blocks 1-7).
5. One unexcused absence equals one lost Professional Engagement point in those courses that count PE points in grading (Blocks 1-7).
6. Students will be allowed three days of unexcused absence before failing a Block course. The number of days allowed is prorated for the DoCS courses and

corresponds to the length of each DoCS course. These allowances do not apply to days in which assessment takes place.

7. DoCS courses, Medical Colloquia, Synthesis and Transition to Clerkships are not graded by a point system. See “Absence Implications” sections below for details.

8.	Professional Engagement points included in the final grading?	Number of “failure to sign in” events permitted prior to being counted as an unexcused absence	Number of unexcused absences permitted before course failure
Blocks 1 – 7	yes	2 sessions per block	3 days
DoCS (see DoCS below)	no	2 sessions per term	1, 2 or 3 days per term
Transition to Clerkships	no	1 session per course 1 session per term with one Synthesis week	See section below
Synthesis Weeks	no	2 sessions per term with more than one Synthesis week	See section below
Synthesis 8 Capstone	no	2 sessions per block	See section below
Medical Colloquia	no	none	See section below

Learning activities with required attendance

All graded assessments (exams, Readiness Assurance Tests [RATs], quizzes, and Objective Structured Clinical Examinations [OSCEs], etc.) are mandatory.

Class sessions that require in-person attendance are listed as mandatory in the schedule. Sessions that are not listed as mandatory in the schedule do not require attendance, however students remain responsible for all material covered. Absence may be excused if the reason for the absence meets the criteria listed below, and is requested and approved in advance.

Class attendance is taken *electronically through Benware software using a unique password posted at the start of each session. Students are considered on-time and present if they sign into Benware within the first 10 minutes of class. **Those who miss the 10 minute “window” for sign in will be considered absent even if they are physically present.**

Students are permitted:

- two failures to sign in to a session without penalty for an unexcused absence on different days in each of Blocks 1 through 8
- one failure to sign in to a session without penalty for an unexcused absence in the Transition to Clerkship course
- two failures to sign in to a session without penalty for an unexcused absence on different days **per term** in DoCS.
- one failure to sign in to a session without penalty for an unexcused absence in Synthesis for any term that includes one Synthesis week.
- two failures to sign in to a session without penalty for an unexcused absence in Synthesis for any term that includes more than one Synthesis Week.

*Attendance is taken on paper for some courses. The 10-minute, on-time window still applies.

Block Courses 1-7

Professional Engagement represents 10% of the total grade for a Block course and is primarily based on attendance. (See [Assessment Policies and Procedures](#) for additional information on Professional Engagement.) Unexcused absence negatively impacts the Professional Engagement element of the grade. **One unexcused absence (one day) results in a deduction of one point of 10 total Professional Engagement points. An “unexcused day” is one or more sessions missed in the same course on the same day.** (There is no option to split up the point if only missing one out of the multiple mandatory sessions in a day.) The “fail to sign in” without penalty for an unexcused absence only applies to individual sessions on different days. Failing to sign in to more than one mandatory session in the same day results in one lost Professional Engagement point in those courses that count PE points in grading (Blocks 1-7).

An unexcused absence in a Block session missed on the same day as an unexcused absence session in a DoCS course results in a deduction of one point of 10 total Professional Engagement points in the Block course and counts as one unexcused absence day in the DoCS course. So if a student misses a core case session in Block 1 in the morning, and then misses a mandatory DoCS session in the afternoon, the student will lose one Professional Engagement point in Block 1, and the occurrence will be counted as one unexcused absence day in DoCS, unless the “fail to sign in” applies.

For Block courses 1-7, if students have **more than three unexcused absences (days) within the same course, they will receive a failing grade.** (See below for absence implications as they apply to DoCS, Medical Colloquia, Synthesis, and Transition to Clerkships.)

Professional Engagement points are deducted within the current block/course/term only; points do not accrue from block to block, course to course, or term to term.

Excused absence

Students must contact the academic advisors IN WRITING in advance of any anticipated absence — excused or unexcused — via the absence request process outlined below. Advance notice is required even if the reason for the absence is not included in the criteria for excused absence. (See Absence Request Process below.)

HOW TO NOTIFY YOUR ADVISOR IN WRITING OF AN UPCOMING ABSENCE

- Go to <https://peoria.medicine.uic.edu/education/educational-policies/>.
- Click the absence button.
- Enter your information/request & submit.

If an absence meets the criteria listed for excused absences but was not requested in advance, the absence is considered unexcused except in case of emergency.

Examples of absence requests that **are often approved** at the discretion of the course coordinator in consultation with the campus-designated curricular administration team.

- illness of student, significant other or family member
- funeral
- healthcare provider appointment for student
- religious holidays* (See [UIC Senate Policy on Religious Holidays](#))
- own wedding
- jury duty
- court date
- student representation on a College of Medicine Committee

Examples of absence requests that **may be approved** at the discretion of the course coordinator in consultation with the campus-designated curricular administration team:

- illness of a friend
- healthcare provider appointment for significant other, family member
- another's wedding (maximum of two days based on location and date of wedding)
- presenting at or attending a medical conference or other professional organization meeting with prior approval by the campus-designated curricular administration team

- Introduction to Patient Care (IPC) Visit if no other scheduling options are available
- other circumstances of an extreme, unanticipated, and compelling nature

Documentation of Excused Absences

Documentation is required for approval and must be submitted within seven days following the absence for any session with graded assessment including:

- an examination
- the RATs in a TBL session
- a *quiz
- an OSCE

*Approval to be excused from a weekly “take-home” quiz will be handled on a case-by-case basis due to the extended length of time the quiz is available.

No documentation is required for absence approval from any session with mandatory attendance due to:

- observation of a religious holiday (see [*UIC Senate Policy on Religious Holidays*](#))
- attendance at a funeral
- illness of one or two days for student, significant other or immediate family member (Documentation is always required for absence due to illness from any graded assessment regardless of duration, and absence of three or more days from any session due to illness.)

Documentation is required for approval and must be submitted within seven days following the absence from any session with mandatory attendance due to:

- own or another’s wedding
- a healthcare provider appointment for self, significant other, or family member
- an illness of three days or more for student, significant other, or family member
- an IPC visit
- a presentation or attendance at a conference
- jury duty or a court date
- student representation on College of Medicine Committee
- circumstances of an extreme, unanticipated, and compelling nature

Examples of Proper Documentation for Excused Absences:

- healthcare provider's note
- police report
- wedding invitation with date and location
- email exchange showing scheduling difficulty with IPC preceptor
- traffic ticket
- public transportation delay receipt
- email notice for College of Medicine committee meeting
- jury duty summons

Unexcused absence

*Students must contact the academic advisors **IN WRITING** in advance of any anticipated absence — excused or unexcused — via the absence request process outlined below. Advance notice is required even if the reason for the absence is not included in the criteria for excused absence. (See Absence Request Process below.)*

HOW TO NOTIFY YOUR ADVISOR IN WRITING OF AN UPCOMING ABSENCE

- **Go to** <https://peoria.medicine.uic.edu/education/educational-policies/>.
- **Click the absence button.**
- **Enter your information/request & submit.**

Failure to notify the advisors in advance— even if the absence meets the criteria for excused absence—will result in an unexcused absence.

Failure to provide satisfactory written documentation within seven days following an absence will result in an unexcused absence.

Reasons for absences that are considered unexcused:

- employment conflict
- missed ride
- missed bus/train
- overslept/forgot to set alarm
- out of town
- listed wrong date on personal calendar
- travel booked before schedule is finalized
- time off request not made in advance or absent after request disapproved

*** Religious Holidays**

Per [UIC Senate Policy on religious holidays](#), students who wish to observe their religious holidays shall notify the course coordinator **by the tenth day of the semester** of the date(s) when they will be absent unless the religious holiday is observed on or before the tenth day of the semester. In such cases, the student shall notify the coordinator at least five days in advance of the date when he/she will be absent. The full policy and a list of religious days of special observance can be found on the Office of Access and Equity web site at: <http://oae.uic.edu/religious-calendar/> (The posted list is NOT all-inclusive and customs may use a variation of the dates listed. If a holiday is not listed, that does not mean the holiday is not observed.)

Request process:

*Students must contact the academic advisors **IN WRITING** in advance of any anticipated absence — excused or unexcused — via the absence request process outlined below. Advance notice is required even if the reason for the absence is not included in the criteria for excused absence.*

HOW TO NOTIFY YOUR ADVISOR IN WRITING OF AN UPCOMING ABSENCE

- Go to <https://peoria.medicine.uic.edu/education/educational-policies/>.
- Click the absence button.
- Enter your information/request & submit.

NOTE: A request for an “excused absence” does not guarantee acceptance. The student is responsible for following up and confirming whether the absence is excused or unexcused. No expectation of prior notification will apply in the case of an emergency. Once a student knows of an impending absence, the student should contact the course coordinator as soon as possible. The absence will be deemed **excused** or **unexcused** by the course coordinator in consultation with the campus curricular administration team.

Multiple Absences

If a situation leads to missing multiple class sessions (TBL, EBM, Core Case, Lab, Synthesis, DoCS, Medical Colloquia, or Transition to Clerkships) and completing the course becomes difficult, the student should contact the course coordinator as soon as possible to explore options such as a make-up plan, remediation plan, leave of absence, etc. The time period for this make-up will be consistent with UI-COM Academic Policies.

NOTE: Both excused and unexcused absences are tracked across the curriculum. Students with repeated absences may be asked to provide a higher level of

documentation. Such absences may affect the student's professionalism evaluation and grade (please see [Assessment Policies and Procedures](#) and may lead to review through the student promotions committee process. Please see the **Statement on Professional Behavior** contained in the [Academic Policies and Professional Standards](#) document posted on the [Educational Policies](#) web page.

Course directors and others may notify the campus student promotions committee of a student's pattern of late arrivals or unexcused absences for review in relation to the college's statement on professional behavior.

Late Arrival to an Exam for any course in Phase 1

- Students are expected to arrive at or before the scheduled start time of an exam. Late arrival to exams is disruptive to faculty, staff, and classmates, and will be noted. Patterns of late arrival to exams will result in a meeting with curricular administration.
- Students who arrive late but within 20 minutes of the scheduled start of an exam are still eligible to sit for the exam.

Example: An exam is scheduled to start at 8:00am. A student whose arrival was delayed may sign in at the check-in table as late as 8:20am and sit for the exam.

- Students who arrive more than 20 minutes late will be directed to the appropriate administrator. Students without an excused absence will receive a score of zero for the exam. Students with an approved excusal will be rescheduled to take the exam at a later date.

A pattern of not meeting punctuality expectations may impact a student's ability to progress through the program. Curricular administration will meet with students to address these areas of concern.

Absence implications for Doctoring and Clinical Skills (DoCS) Sessions

DoCS is a clinical course and the same level of professionalism is expected in this course as is expected in clerkships. Assessment in DoCS is based on observation of students' practice of clinical skills and attitudes. Punctual attendance is required at all DoCS sessions. **Failure to attend an activity will affect your overall DoCS grade.**

Absence: A request for an excused absence must be communicated in advance.

HOW TO NOTIFY YOUR ADVISOR IN WRITING OF AN UPCOMING ABSENCE

- Go to <https://peoria.medicine.uic.edu/education/educational-policies/>.
- Click the absence button.
- Enter your information/request & submit.

If an absence for a DoCS session is considered excused, the student is responsible for making arrangements with the course coordinator to make up the session, which will be determined on an individual basis. Requests for excusal should be made in advance, or as soon as possible in the case of emergency.

If the absence for a DoCS session is considered unexcused, the student will receive a score of zero for the quiz (if scheduled), the absence will be counted as an unexcused absence for the day and the student will be responsible for all material covered.

Unexcused absences will result in a failing course grade if they exceed:

DoCS 1 –

- three unexcused absences in the Fall term
- two unexcused absences in the Spring term
- one unexcused absence in the Summer term

DoCS 2 –

- three unexcused absences in the Fall term
- one unexcused absence in the Spring term

Due to the clinical nature of the DoCS course, students may be required to make up the missed session(s) to avoid further penalty. As this is also considered a professionalism issue, the student may be required to meet with the campus-designated curricular administration team.

Leaving Early: Leaving a session prior to its completion without prior approval is considered a professionalism issue, and the student may be required to meet with the campus-designated curricular administration team.

If a student must leave a session due to an emergent issue, the student should contact the course coordinator as soon as feasible. The course coordinator will deem the absence to be **excused** or **unexcused** in consultation with the campus-designated curricular administration team.

Late Arrival: Since the ultimate goal of a DoCS session is to learn and contribute to the team, students are expected to go to the session even if they will be arriving past the posted start time. Students should contact the course coordinator immediately following the session to explain the reason for the late arrival. The course coordinator will deem the late arrival to be **excused** or **unexcused** in consultation with the campus-designated curricular administration team. Late arrivals will follow the same protocol for excused or unexcused absence in the paragraphs above. **An arrival is considered late 10 minutes past the posted start time for the session.**

An unexcused late arrival will result in the loss of one Professional Engagement point.

Absence Implications for Team Based Learning (TBL) Sessions

Absence: A request for an excused absence must be communicated in advance by contacting COM-Absence@uic.edu.

If a TBL absence is considered **excused**, the student must make arrangements with the course coordinator to make up the Individual Readiness Assurance Test (IRAT). To receive credit, a student must complete the IRAT within one week of the TBL session. The student's grade for the TBL will be the weighted average of their IRAT score and the team's score from the Team Readiness Assurance Test (TRAT). TBLs' application exercises do not have make-up sessions, but students are responsible for all material covered in the session.

If a TBL session absence is **unexcused**, the student will lose a Professional Engagement point, will not be allowed to make up the IRAT, and will receive a score of 0 (zero) for both the IRAT and TRAT for that TBL session. The student will be responsible for all the material covered. As this is also considered a professionalism issue, the student may be required to meet with the campus-designated curricular administration team. Please see [Assessment Policies and Procedures](#).

Leaving Early: Leaving a session prior to its completion without prior approval is considered a professionalism issue, and the student may be required to meet with the campus-designated curricular administration team.

If a student must leave a session due to an emergent issue, the student should contact the course coordinator in writing as soon as feasible. The course coordinator will deem the absence to be **excused** or **unexcused** in consultation with the campus-designated curricular administrative team.

Late Arrival: Since the ultimate goal of a TBL session is to learn and contribute to the team, students are expected to go to the session even if they will be arriving past the posted start time.

Late arrivals will be handled as follows:

- **A student who arrives late for the IRAT** may still receive any points gained within the remaining minutes allowed for the IRAT, and participate as usual in the TRAT and Application. If the arrival is more than 10 minutes past the session start time, however, the student will lose a Professional Engagement point. There is no option to retake the missed portion of the IRAT even if the reason for late arrival is excusable since the student will have viewed the questions in the TRAT.
- **A student who completely misses the IRAT and shows up late for the TRAT** may still participate in the remaining minutes of the TRAT and receive the full amount of points gained by the group but the student will receive 0% for the IRAT. Since an arrival after the completion of the IRAT is more than 10 minutes past the session start time, this will also result in the loss of a Professional Engagement point. There is no option to retake the missed portion of the IRAT even if the reason for late arrival is excusable since the student will have viewed the questions in the TRAT.
- **A student who arrives after both the IRAT and TRAT portions have ended** will participate in the application. The student should contact the course coordinator immediately following the session to explain the reason for the late arrival. The course coordinator will deem the late arrival to be excused or unexcused after consultation with the campus-designated curricular administration team. If considered excused, the student must make arrangements with the course coordinator to make up the IRAT and will receive the full amount of points gained by the group for the TRAT as detailed above. If unexcused, the student will receive 0% for the IRAT and 0% for the TRAT regardless of points earned by the team for the TRAT. The unexcused late arrival will also result in the loss of a Professional Engagement point.

Absence implications for Core Case Sessions not in TBL format (Unfolding Case Sessions), HIS Sessions, HCS Sessions, and EBM Sessions, and Lab Sessions.

Absence: A request for an excused absence must be communicated **in advance**.

HOW TO NOTIFY YOUR ADVISOR IN WRITING OF AN UPCOMING ABSENCE

- Go to <https://peoria.medicine.uic.edu/education/educational-policies/>.
- Click the absence button.
- Enter your information/request & submit.

If the absence for a session is considered **excused**, the student is responsible for all of the material covered in the session.

If the absence for a session is considered **unexcused**, the student is responsible for all material covered. As this is also considered a professionalism issue, the student may be required to meet with the campus-designated curricular administration team. Please see [Assessment Policies and Procedures](#)

If the absence for a Block core case session is considered unexcused, the student will lose a Professional Engagement point.

Late Arrival: Since the ultimate goal is to learn and contribute to the team, students are expected to go to the session even if they will be arriving past the posted start time. Students should contact the course coordinator immediately following the session to explain the reason for the late arrival. The course coordinator will deem the late arrival to be **excused** or **unexcused** in consultation with the campus-designated curricular administration team. Late arrivals will follow the same protocol for excused or unexcused absences in the paragraphs above. **An arrival is considered late 10 minutes past the posted start time for the session. As chronic lateness is considered a professionalism issue, the student may be required to meet with the campus-designated curricular administration team.**

Leaving Early: Leaving a session prior to its completion without prior approval is considered a professionalism issue, and the student may be required to meet with the campus-designated curricular administration team.

If a student must leave a session due to an emergent issue, the student should contact the course coordinator in writing as soon as feasible. The course coordinator will deem the absence to be **excused** or **unexcused** in consultation with the campus-designated curricular administration team.

Absence Implications for Synthesis and Medical Colloquia Sessions

Absence: A request for an excused absence must be communicated **in advance**.

HOW TO NOTIFY YOUR ADVISOR IN WRITING OF AN UPCOMING ABSENCE

- Go to <https://peoria.medicine.uic.edu/education/educational-policies/>.
- Click the absence button.
- Enter your information/request & submit.

If the absence for a session is considered **excused**, the student is responsible for all of the material covered in the session.

Synthesis and Medical Colloquia do not include *graded* assessments; course expectations are based on attendance, participation, and completion of assignments.

Unexcused absence or failure to complete an assignment may result in a failing grade for the course. (See the [Assessment Policies and Procedures](#)). Unexcused absences are considered a professionalism issue and the student may be required to meet with the campus-designated curricular administration team.

Late Arrival: Students should always plan to arrive 10 minutes prior to the session start time. Students should contact the course coordinator in advance or immediately following the session to explain the reason for the late arrival. Late arrivals will follow the same protocol for excused or unexcused absences as in the paragraphs above. An arrival is considered late 10 minutes past the posted start time for the session.

Leaving Early: Leaving a session prior to its completion without prior approval is considered a professionalism issue, and the student may be required to meet with the campus-designated curricular administration team.

If a student must leave a session due to an emergent issue, the student should contact the course coordinator as soon as feasible. The course coordinator will deem the absence to be **excused** or **unexcused** in consultation with the campus-designated curricular administration team.

Absence implications for Transition to Clerkships Sessions

Although the Transition to Clerkships (TTC) course is included in the Phase 1 curriculum, it is considered the orientation for Phase 2 and the foundation for the longitudinal Clinical Connections and Competencies course that spans Phases 2 and 3. All rising M3 students are scheduled for TTC in the spring semester prior to the start of Phase 2. Students should not schedule any outside activities during the two weeks of Transition to Clerkship and should be available from 7am-6pm until the final schedule is posted. ALL segments of TTC must be completed for satisfactory completion of this

course. This includes ALL scheduled activities such as workshops, TBLs, small group sessions, and large group sessions.

Making up missed time: Any missed time, whether excused or unexcused, must be made-up before a passing course grade will be submitted.

Requesting excusal in TTC: Remember that planning ahead for any time off is very important, especially as you enter your clinical training. Note that you must ask permission in your written requests; you should never assume that your request will be granted automatically.

Absence: Although the TTC course is situated in Phase 1 and follows the Phase 1 Attendance and Late Arrival Policy, **absence requests SHOULD NO LONGER BE SENT to the Absence listserv**. The reporting of absences for this course and any other experience going forward should be reported to the designate identified by the course or clerkship. Documentation may be required with the exception of absences due to the observance of religious holidays.

Late Arrival: Students should always plan to arrive 10 minutes prior to the session start time. Students should contact the course coordinator in advance or immediately following the session to explain the reason for the late arrival. Late arrivals will follow the same protocol for excused or unexcused absences as in the paragraphs above. An arrival is considered late 10 minutes past the posted start time for the session.

Leaving Early: Leaving a session prior to its completion without prior approval is considered a professionalism issue, and the student may be required to meet with the campus-designated curricular administration team.

If a student must leave a session due to an emergent issue, the student should contact the course coordinator as soon as feasible. The course coordinator will deem the absence to be **excused** or **unexcused** in consultation with the campus-designated curricular administration team.

Unexcused absences and unexcused late arrivals: Unexcused absences and late arrivals are never acceptable in TTC. An unexcused absence and/or late arrival may elicit a "Professional Development Concerns" form. If a pattern of late behavior or unexcused absences is detected, or if a serious professionalism breach is reported, the student will meet with the Curricular Dean, the course Director and/or course coordinator and the Student Affairs Dean and/or the student's advisor.

Some Transition to Clerkships sessions are required (to meet clinical site compliance requirements) prior to starting your first clinical rotation (i.e., Occupational Exposures, CPR/BLS Certification, and the Phlebotomy Intro, etc.); Students cannot begin

clerkships without satisfactory completion of these sessions and may have to make changes in their clerkship schedule if they cannot meet requirements. Students with an excused absence for sessions that are required prior to starting clerkships should contact the course coordinator regarding limited make-up options. Students with an unexcused absence for BLS Certification are still required to complete the required certification course before starting clerkships but at their own expense.