

## Illness and Leave Policy FAQ

### **Did you know:**

#### **You can request time off from a rotation for medical and dental care?**

How can you do this professionally?

- Ask your preceptor about upcoming clinical schedules
- Choose the best time for both your learning needs and that of the service
- Let your preceptor know in advance of the time and ask permission to be absent for the necessary time to attend
- Make an appointment
- Attend the appointment
- Return to the service as soon as you can after the appointment

### **FAQ**

**Q: I am a clinical clerk. My appointment is weeks away and I will be in a different rotation and on a different service by then. How do I let my preceptor know?**

**A:** You can email your preceptor once you know their name and inform them of the appointment and how much time you will need. In the email let them know that you are looking forward to working with the service and aim to minimize any time off service but need to attend an appointment.

**Q: What if my appointment falls during an interesting procedure or patient appointment?**

**A:** If you can reschedule your appointment, go ahead. If you cannot, remember that choosing to take care of your health will make you a better medical student and physician too.

**Q: My preceptor seems unhappy about this request. What should I do?**

**A:** You can let them know that you remain committed to learning. It can feel awkward to take care of your needs when patient care and service learning are also priorities. You may feel concerned that taking necessary time will impact your evaluation. If you have this concern, please contact Student Affairs.

**Q: I am in Med1/2. My Skilled Clinician or procedure session are single session or few and missing one for an appointment will impact my learning. What can I do?**

**A:** Try to schedule any routine appointment around these. If you have an emergent or urgent appointment, let the UGME coordinator know. Student Affairs can support you with this request.

Medical Students Asked & the Deans Answered:

**Q: How does the medical or wellness leave policy work in practice?**

**A:** Students who need time off for their wellness should request it, and it would typically be given.

Student Affairs will discuss and advocate for any students supporting requests that have valid rationale behind them. UGME will then take all factors into consideration to consider leave requests fairly and determine the disposition of the request.

The time off and wellness leave policy is *deliberately* flexible to give us the ability to grant leave to students that require it.

**Q: How much time can I take?**

**A:** Anything related to unexpected illness, medical/dental/counselling appointments, bereavement etc. For a single day please notify UGME via the Single Day Leave Form on Brightspace, see policy at end of this document.

*Real world example 1: If a student has a stomach bug or 48-hour flu they can take 2 days off; however, students are asked to contact Student Affairs for any absences beyond a 1-2 days and would require Student Affairs support and /or medical documentation for absence longer than three days.*

*Real world example 2: If a student is fatigued and experiencing a burnout that affects health or performance, they may request a day from their service. If this is insufficient, please contact Student Affairs to discuss whether additional supports or leave may be indicated.*

*Any COVID related absence (testing/isolation/illness) of any duration must be reported to Student Affairs and UGME.*

Short term Academic leave requests must be sent to UGME in advance - preferably 6 weeks - and are only for presentations (poster or podium) or to represent Dal Medical School (e.g. student delegates at CCME, Family Med Forum etc.)

**Q: How do I make this happen?**

**A:** Email or call the people who need to know you are away. These may include your immediate preceptor, tutor, UGME Coordinator, a Chief Resident you may be working with on rotation, depending on the sessions that will be missed, to inform them you are ill.

Fill out the appropriate leave form on Brightspace and Email [ugme@dal.ca \(DMNS\)](mailto:ugme@dal.ca), [dmnb.leave@dal.ca\(DMNB\)](mailto:dmnb.leave@dal.ca) to let them know of your absence on the day you take it.

Reach out to Student Affairs for any leave beyond 2 days or if you just want support.

**Q: What happens when I contact Student Affairs with questions regarding possible leave?**

**A:** The Assistant Dean or staff you contact will arrange a meeting to discuss your needs *in confidence*.

A leave, an accommodation, or both may be options. If approved, SA will email the relevant UGME section. No details are shared with UGME or your supervisor beyond that it is a leave supported by Student Affairs, unless you request this.

If you are receiving medical or psychological care, SA may request that you provide a brief letter from the relevant health care practitioner supporting your leave or accommodation. This may be paper or electronic. It is kept at the Student Affairs office in a locked file or password-protected account.

If you are in Med 3 or 4, Student Affairs can help you complete the Request for Time Off form, if appropriate: [https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/faculty/medicine/departments/core-units/undergrad/Med%2034%20Time%20off%20request\\_%202018.pdf](https://cdn.dal.ca/content/dam/dalhousie/pdf/faculty/medicine/departments/core-units/undergrad/Med%2034%20Time%20off%20request_%202018.pdf)

UGME Absence Policy:

[General - Absences due to illness.pdf \(dal.ca\)](#)

Pre-clerkship Leave Policy:

[Pre-Clerkship Leave Policy and Procedures DMSS Revisions SEPT2018 FINAL \(002\) \(1\).pdf \(dal.ca\)](#)

Clerkship Leave Policy:

[Clerkship - Short and Long-Term Leave of Absence Protocol.pdf \(dal.ca\)](#)

**Q:** Other medical students give a set number of personal days. Why is this done differently at Dal Med?

**A:** The illness and leave policies at Dal are designed to teach you the skills you will need while practicing medicine. As a resident and staff physician, you will need to arrange coverage for your clinical and academic commitments to take a day off and to take a longer leave, discuss it with your Department Associate Chief or Chief. A second reason, we ask that you speak with Student Affairs regarding leave of more than 1-2 days is to ensure that you have quick access to a confidential source that can connect you to any necessary supports to aid your recovery.

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