



DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF MEDICINE

UGME Illness + Leave

Frequently Asked Questions

Dalhousie University Faculty of Medicine, UGME

Last Updated: November 2023

IMPORTANT LINKS:

- [Pre-Clerkship Absence Form](#) (for *all* absences – single day or longer)
- [Clerkship Absence Form](#) (for *all* absences – single day or longer)
- [Dalhousie UGME Policies and Regulations](#)
 - Here you will find the forms listed above as well as policies and procedures on: absences due to illness, Pre-Clerkship leave policy and procedure, Clerkship short- and long-term leave of absence protocol, Exam Deferral form, etc.!

IMPORTANT NOTES:

Please note that the parameters around missed time, forms, and approval process are different for pre-clerkship and clerkship. Please review the [forms, policies, and procedures](#) carefully for your respective Med year. If you require clarification, contact UGME@Dal.ca.

For urgent, short-term medical leave (for example: flu, stomach bug, or other unexpected short-term illness):

- Notify your preceptors and/or tutors of your absence
- Fill out the appropriate form ([Pre-Clerkship Absence](#) or [Clerkship Absence](#) form) when you are able to do so. If you are unable to submit the form on the day of your illness, please ensure it is submitted as soon as possible after the absence has occurred.

For short-notice medical leave (for example: you have been given an appointment for diagnostic testing with only 1-2 weeks notice):

- Notify your preceptors and/or tutors of your absence
- Fill out the appropriate UGME leave form ([Pre-Clerkship Absence](#) or [Clerkship Absence](#) form) with as much notice as possible.

For expected medical leave (for example: you have a pre-planned surgery and require time off):

- Connect with Student Affairs
- Notify any tutors, preceptors, or departmental administration
- Fill out the appropriate UGME leave form ([Pre-Clerkship Absence](#) or [Clerkship Absence](#) form) with as much notice as possible.
- Specify how you plan to meet the objectives or any sessions that will be missed and connect with facilitators to operationalize your plan

For unexpected medical leave, the appropriate form must be filled out when the student is able to do so (even if it is filled out after the absence has occurred).

- Notify any tutors or preceptors
- Fill out the appropriate UGME leave form ([Pre-Clerkship Absence](#) or [Clerkship Absence](#) form) with as much notice as possible.
- Specify how you plan to meet the objectives or any sessions that will be missed and connect with facilitators to operationalize your plan

For Non-Medical or Personal leave, students must:

- Fill out and submit the appropriate UGME leave form ([Pre-Clerkship Absence](#) or [Clerkship Absence](#) form) at *least 6 weeks in advance. For an urgent personal matter, no advance notice is required, however Student Affairs support is required.*
- Specify how you plan to meet the objectives or any sessions that will be missed.
- Note that all requests are pending until reviewed by the respective Associate or Assistant Dean in UGME at DMNS or DMNB (and, additionally, the clinical department for clerks) and may not be approved. **Do not make travel plans or book any travel within curriculum time prior to obtaining appropriate approvals.**
- Pre-clerkship:
 - Upon receipt of an approval notification from UGME, contact tutors and preceptors to inform them of any absences and connect with facilitators to operationalize your plan to meet the missed session objectives.

- Clerkship:
 - During clerkship, leave requires final approval by the clinical department; approval by UGME does not constitute final approval of a request for leave
 - Upon receipt of an approval notification from UGME *and* the clinical department, contact tutors and preceptors to inform them of any absences and connect with facilitators to operationalize your plan to meet the missed session objectives’.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I CONTACT STUDENT AFFAIRS WITH QUESTIONS REGARDING POSSIBLE LEAVE?

The Assistant Dean or staff in your Student Affairs office you contact will arrange a meeting to discuss your needs *in confidence*. No details are shared with UGME or your supervisor beyond that it is a leave supported by Student Affairs.

Please speak with Student Affairs regarding medical leave of more than one day to ensure that you have quick access to a confidential source that can connect you to any necessary supports to aid your recovery.

A leave, an accommodation, or both may be options. If your request is supported by Student Affairs, staff will assist you in reaching out to UGME for next steps. Student Affairs cannot approve your leave; UGME (and ultimately clinical departments in clerkship) are responsible for the approval process. Student Affairs will discuss, support and advocate for requests that require leave and meet leave policy. UGME will then take academic standing and amount of time off already granted into consideration to consider leave requests fairly and determine the disposition of the request.

If you are receiving medical or psychological care, Student Affairs staff will request that you provide a brief letter from the relevant health care practitioner supporting your accommodation or leave if it is for a total of three days or longer or in the event an exam will be deferred. This may be paper or electronic. It is kept at the Student Affairs office in a locked file or password-protected account.

I AM PRESENTING AT A CONFERENCE, HOW MUCH TIME CAN I APPLY TO TAKE OFF?

Students will typically be allowed to take academic leave to attend conferences; in most cases, this will constitute reasonable travel time to and from the conference, as well as the day of the actual presentation. Proof of acceptance for a presentation or an invitation to attend in an official capacity is typically required. The amount of time granted may differ depending on the location of the specific meeting.

To qualify for academic leave, students must be presenting (either in person or a poster) or officially representing the University (e.g. CFMS position-holders). Leave is not granted to attend conferences for the purposes of networking. Please note that conference leave will not be granted during PIER.

OTHER MEDICAL SCHOOLS GIVE A SET NUMBER OF PERSONAL DAYS. WHY IS THIS DONE DIFFERENTLY AT DAL MED?

The leave policies at Dal are designed to promote and teach professionalism skills that you will need as you have increasing levels of responsibility in patient care. When you are a resident and staff physician, you will need to arrange coverage for your clinical and academic commitments to cover requests for time off, and requests would often need to be discussed with your department leadership for approval. For scheduled personal time or vacation, many clinical departments require up to 3 months' notice of the request.

PRE-CLERKSHIP STUDENTS (MED 1 AND 2)

I NEED TO MISS A SINGLE DAY. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Fill out the [Pre-Clerkship Absence form](#) no less than 1 hour in advance of sessions. If “*I will be missing Skilled Clinician Sessions*” is selected, a notification is automatically sent to skilled clinician coordinators when the form is submitted. It is the student’s responsibility to notify preceptors or tutors of any absences. This is not to be done via a classmate on your behalf unless you are unable to make the notifications yourself.

I UNEXPECTEDLY HAD TO LEAVE DURING A MANDATORY SESSION. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Fill out the [Pre-Clerkship Absence form](#) and indicate how you intend to meet the session objectives. It is the student’s responsibility to notify preceptors or tutors of any absences and develop a learning plan to make up missed mandatory curriculum. If you had to leave a session due to triggering content, we strongly encourage you to reach out to Student Affairs for support.

I HAVE TO MISS MORE THAN ONE DAY FOR MEDICAL REASONS. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

If your request will extend past one day and is due to medical reasons, please contact a Student Affairs resource for support. After connecting with Student Affairs, please fill out the [Pre-Clerkship Absence form](#). After you fill out the Absence form, it goes to the relevant Assistant or Associate Dean within UGME for approval. Following approval, you will receive an approval notification and the curriculum coordinators will also receive notification. It is the student’s responsibility to notify preceptors or tutors of any absences. It is also the student’s responsibility to develop a learning plan to make up all missed objectives.

Example: If a student has an unexpected short-term illness, they can take time off; however, students are asked to contact Student Affairs for any absences beyond 1 day and would require Student Affairs support and /or medical documentation.

I WOULD LIKE TO REQUEST MORE THAN ONE DAY OFF FOR ACADEMIC OR NON-ACADEMIC REASONS. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

If your request is due to Academic reasons (presentation at a conference, receipt of an award, etc.) or Non-academic reasons (social event, wedding, sport events), please fill out the [Pre-Clerkship Absence form](#) at least *6 weeks* in advance. Clearly define the reason for your request and how you propose to master the objectives of missed sections. Failure to adequately fill out these forms will cause a delay in processing your request as UGME requires this information. Do not book or plan travel until you have received approval.

After you fill out the Absence form, it goes to the Associate Dean UGME (DMNB or DMNS) for review. If approved, you will receive an approval notification and the curriculum coordinators will also receive notification. It is the student's responsibility to notify preceptors or tutors of any absences and make up missed objectives.

Students should consider their leave request as pending until they receive approval from the Associate Dean. Missed time that has not been approved will be considered an unexcused absence.

Various factors may be taken into consideration when deciding whether short-term leave may be granted, and may include the reason for the leave, the ability of the student to ensure that any missed curriculum is adequately made up, the length of leave requested, prior periods of leave requested and/or granted, and the student's academic record.

I HAVE TO MISS SKILLED CLINICIAN OR PROCEDURAL SKILLS. WHAT CAN I DO?

Students should make every effort to schedule any routine appointments around mandatory sessions. If you have an emergent or urgent appointment, please reach out to Student Affairs for support and fill out and submit the [Pre-Clerkship Absence form](#). The request will then proceed through the review and possible approval steps outlined above.

PRE-CLERKSHIP ABSENCE FORM (use for all absences, single day or longer)

Save Cancel

New item

* Campus Location

New Brunswick
 Nova Scotia


* Med Year

Med 1
 Med 2


* Leave type

Academic
 Non-Academic
 Medical

* Start date

8/14/2023  00 : 00

* End date

 00 : 00

* I will be missing Skilled Clinician Sessions

Find items

* I will be missing IPE Sessions

Find items

* Describe how you will master the objectives of the missed sessions

Additional student comments

* I would like additional help to make up the objectives.

Find items

CLERKSHIP STUDENTS (MED 3, 4, 5)

You may request time off from a rotation for medical care. This can be done professionally by:

- Asking your preceptor about upcoming clinical schedules
- Choosing the best time for both your learning needs and that of the service including best efforts to not disrupt call schedules
- Letting your preceptor know in advance of the time and ask permission to be absent for the necessary time to attend
- Ensure handover of patients for the period of time that you may be absent if within a workday
- Informing your preceptor of your expected return time and returning to the service as soon as you can after the appointment.

You may request time off from a rotation for other reasons, however all time-off requests will be carefully considered and may not be granted. All requests for time off during clerkship must be approved by UGME and the supervising department of the rotation affected.

Please note that the following step differs from pre-clerkship leave; the final approval for time off requests lies with the department. Even if your leave is approved by UGME, the department may decline your request (especially on certain rotations).

Requests for time off during mandatory sessions (such as PIER) will be denied unless there is an emergent medical concern, as attendance for all skills and lecture sessions is compulsory.

I UNEXPECTEDLY OR DUE TO ILLNESS HAVE TO MISS A SINGLE DAY. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Fill out the [Clerkship Absence Form](#) no less than 1 hour in advance the beginning of your clinical experience and notify all preceptors of your absence.

Email or call the people who need to know you will be absent. These may include your immediate preceptor, tutor, UGME Clerkship Coordinator, a Chief Resident you may be working with on rotation, and relevant departmental administrators. Ensure with these communications that there is a plan for any on-call duties that you may miss to be covered.

This is especially important for clerks who may require being excused from being on call on an emergent basis.

Example: If a student is fatigued and experiencing a burnout that affects health or performance, they may request a day off. If this is insufficient, please contact Student Affairs to discuss whether additional supports or leave may be indicated.

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

I HAVE TO MISS A SINGLE DAY FOR A FUTURE MEDICAL APPOINTMENT. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Fill out the [Clerkship Absence Form](#) as far in advance as possible. It is the student's responsibility to notify preceptors as far in advance as possible of your planned and approved absences.

MY MEDICAL APPOINTMENT IS WEEKS AWAY AND HAS BEEN APPROVED, I WILL BE ON A DIFFERENT ROTATION AND ON A DIFFERENT SERVICE BY THEN. HOW DO I LET MY PRECEPTOR KNOW?

You can email the rotation administrator and 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.

WHAT IF MY APPOINTMENT OCCURS DURING AN INTERESTING PROCEDURE OR PATIENT APPOINTMENT?

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. Ensure that you have followed through with appropriate communication and notification of your absence to your service to ensure ongoing coverage of patient care.

MY PRECEPTOR SEEMS UNHAPPY ABOUT THIS REQUEST. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

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 the necessary time will impact your evaluation or the quality of your learning. If you have this concern, please contact Student Affairs.

I WOULD LIKE TO REQUEST TIME OFF (SINGLE DAY OR LONGER) TO ATTEND A PERSONAL EVENT. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Fill out the [Clerkship Absence Form](#) at least 6 weeks in advance. The request will be reviewed by UGME and should be considered pending until you receive notification that it is approved or denied. If the request is supported by UGME, it will then be forwarded to the clinical department for final approval.

HOW MUCH TIME CAN I REQUEST IF I AM PRESENTING AT A CONFERENCE?

Each request will be considered on an individual basis, with consideration of conference location, travel, etc. being taken into account.

I AM WRITING MY MCC EXAM - CAN I REQUEST TIME OFF TO DO THIS DURING PIER?

No. The MCC exam is not a university exam and has flexibility for when students may write. Requests for leave to write the MCC exam during PIER will not be granted as PIER attendance is compulsory.

CLERKSHIP ABSENCE FORM (use for all absences, single day or longer)

Undergraduate Medical Education Program- Clerkship Absence Form

Please note: Prior to completion of this form, you are required to read the approved time off policy document posted under 'Clerkship' on the [UGME Policies & Regulations](#) page.

I confirm that I have read and understand this document.

Student Name:

Date Submitted:

Dates Requested:

Students are required to submit time off requests no later than six weeks prior to the start of the affected rotation. If this request has not been submitted by this time, please indicate the reason(s) why:

Please note: Statutory Holidays and weekends are not assumed days off during Clerkship. Clerks must indicate the complete period of time off requested. If you are being released from call on the weekend before or after your requested time off, please include all of those dates. PIER sessions and COE are mandatory.

Reason(s) for request: Academic Personal

Please attach any/all relevant documentation in support of this request- i.e. conference program, pertinent invitation(s) etc.

Indicate the rotation that will be affected if this request is approved - i.e. supply the location and preceptor's name.

Office information only:

Received by:

Date:

Approved: Yes

Date student notified of decision:

No

Reason if unapproved:

Please complete this form electronically and send to:

DMNS students: ugme@dal.ca

DMNB students: dmnb.leave@dal.ca