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Absence and Attendance Policy: Undergraduate Medicine

School of Medicine

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Last updated	December 2024
Version number	10



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Absence reporting

Students should report all absences, including unforeseen (on-the-day) absences, planned and flexible leave (Clinical Phase only) using the relevant forms in a timely manner.

This will ensure the correct personnel are notified and the provision of additional support from the School and the Wellbeing team where required.

In instances where you are going to be late, it is courteous and professional to let the person who is expecting you know, as soon as possible. Repeated instances of lateness or failure to let personnel know that you are going to be late may be considered as a professionalism issue.

Students are also expected to inform any additional personnel who may need to be aware of an absence, and to liaise with teachers, module convenors, and Local Education Providers (Clinical Phase) regarding any work missed.

When returning to studies after any unforeseen absence it is the student's responsibility to also complete a **Return to Studies Form** which will be sent via email. Completion of this form will ensure attendance records are up to date.

Unforeseen absences should be reported no later than 9:00 am via the [Absence Reporting Form](#).

Reporting Different Types of Absence

Undergraduate Medicine at the University of Nottingham is comprised of **several** different programmes with differing course structures and holiday periods across Early Years (BMedSci, GEM, Foundation Year) and Clinical Phases.

Access to the Absence reporting forms are via the [School of Medicine Student Intranet](#).

Unforeseen (on-the-day) Absences

Students should report all Unforeseen absences on the relevant section of the online Absence Reporting Form and notify any additional relevant personnel as appropriate. It is the student's responsibility to catch up on any work missed. Students may also contact the [Student Support and Wellbeing team](#) for guidance and support.

Unforeseen Absence	Guidance	Action for student
Sickness Absence (up to and including 7 days)	Sickness Absence refers to illness related to both physical and/or mental wellbeing.	<p>Report as a Sickness Absence (self-certified up to and including 7 days) using the absence reporting form.</p> <p>A return to studies form will need to be completed. This will be included on the automatic email you receive when you submit an unforeseen absence.</p>
Sickness Absence (more than 7 days)	Sickness Absence refers to illness related to both physical and/or mental wellbeing	<p>Report as a Sickness Absence (> 7 days) using the absence reporting form.</p> <p>For health-related absences beyond 7 continuous days (including weekends) or an extended period preventing students catching up, students must obtain a Medical Certificate signed by a medical practitioner and send a copy of this to the relevant school administrator:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GEM/Foundation Year: ms-gem-mpt@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk BMedSci: ms-early-years@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk Clinical Placements: ms-ugstud-absent@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk <p>A return to studies form will need to be completed. A link to this can be found in the automatic email you receive when you submit an unforeseen absence. Where the Sickness Absence affects an assessment deadline, the student will need to consider whether the Policy on Circumstances Affecting Students' Ability to Study and Complete Assessments also applies.</p>

Unforeseen Absence	Guidance	Action for student
Personal / domestic emergencies	Emergency leave for Personal (e.g. carer) and / or Domestic (e.g., home, flood, fire, theft)	Report Unforeseen Absence as a Personal/Domestic Emergency on the Absence Reporting Form
Compassionate Leave	Bereavement and/or Funeral leave for immediate and/or extended family or friends should be reported under Compassionate Leave.	Report Unforeseen Absence as Compassionate Leave on the Absence Reporting Form

Planned Absences – Early Years only (Foundation Year with Medicine, BMedSci and GEM programmes)

Planned Absence should be submitted using the absence reporting form a minimum of 5 working days in advance. Any Planned Absence should not cover Mandatory Teaching Sessions.

Early Years Programmes include a generous holiday allowance as part of their course structure. “Holidays” should not be taken in term time. Planned Absences should not exceed 2 days. Requests which do not provide sufficient reasoning for their absence will be declined.

Planned Absences – Clinical Phase

Examples of planned absences and what is required from the student before the absence can be approved can be found in the absence reference guide and FAQ document.

Flexible Leave - Clinical Phases only (FFP/AP)- General Principles & Exclusion Periods

Prior to requesting flexible leave, students should seek advice from their placement provider regarding catching up on any missed clinical teaching sessions/learning outcomes to ensure they have access to the correct support and materials required to guarantee completion and sign-off of their placement.

The School/Clinical Placement may not be able to reschedule clinical learning opportunities.

Flexible leave during the Clinical Phase is subject to the following exclusion periods:

1. Teaching sessions centrally delivered by the School of Medicine
2. Centrally and locally delivered induction events
3. Your individual Formative OSCE session
4. Summative assessments

Flexible Leave Allowance

If the request for flexible leave is greater than the agreed allowance, the clinical phase lead will need to review the request before it can be approved.

The student will need to provide information/evidence for consideration by the phase lead. Students and their placement provider will be notified of the decision via email.

Clinical Phase	Allowance	Flexible leave requests allowed
Foundations for Practice (FFP)	5 days**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum 2 days in any 6-week attachment Maximum 1 day in any 2-week attachment: Specialty Skills (ENT/Dermatology/Ophthalmology)
Advanced Practice (AP)	5 days**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum 2 days in any 4 or 6-week attachment Maximum 1 day in any 2-week attachment: HCOLL (Old Age Psychiatry)

** If you submit a request taking you over the agreed total allowance the leave request will be denied.

Flexible Leave – Notice Periods

Students must complete flexible leave requests with a minimum of 5 full working days' notice for all attachments. These notice periods do not include the date of flexible leave itself. Working days do not include weekends or bank holidays. If the required notice is not adhered to, the request for leave will not be authorised.

Requesting Flexible Leave

To request flexible leave, use the Clinical Phase Absence Reporting [form](#).

Following submission of the form students will receive an email of acknowledgement. It is the student's responsibility to check that the form is completed correctly and to ensure that Flexible Leave requests are not used during Exclusion Periods are adhered to.

Taking Flexible Leave

Submission of a flexible leave form automatically informs the School and placement provider. You must liaise with the Trust to discuss missed teaching sessions but there is no obligation on the Trusts to reschedule clinical learning opportunities.

An extended period of absence away from a placement could put you at risk of not being signed off as you may not have met all the learning requirements. Before taking flexible leave, it is the responsibility of the student to let other key individuals know. This may include**:

Undergraduate Coordinator	Clinical Supervisor
Clinical Teaching Fellow	SSM Provider (FFP only)
GP Placement Provider	Clinical Group members

**Please note this is not an exhaustive list.

Flexible Leave Records

The School record and monitor flexible leave taken to ensure that the allocated allowance for the year is not exceeded.

If you submit a late request for flexible leave and take it without authorisation or you report flexible leave retrospectively, your leave will still be recorded but the absence will remain unauthorised.

Any instances where flexible leave is not used responsibly or does not adhere to the rules outlined in this policy, will be reported to the relevant year phase lead.

Cancelling Flexible Leave

Due to operational changes in the clinical environment, if the clinical placement **must** make a last-minute change to a teaching session due to clinical or operational issues, students will be allowed to cancel their flexible leave request.

If your circumstances change and need to amend/cancel your flexible leave you must provide inform the Education Centre as soon as possible or a minimum of 24 hours notice.



Planned Absences – Religious Observance

Students must inform the Education Centre, on the commencement of their programme, if they require an absence for religious observance. All requests for leave will be considered. Given the complexity of the curriculum it is not possible to design the timetable for all religious observance. Students can seek additional advice from the Director of Equality and Diversity in the Medical School about specific arrangements that are available. Certain course/placement components are regarded as compulsory, therefore permitting students to be absent may disadvantage them when it comes to examinations or signoff for attachments on placement.

The University's guidance for religious observance during placements can be found in the Quality Manual: [Adjustment to placement on religious grounds](#).

Students who are unable to take **examinations or assessments** on a particular day during published examination periods for reasons of religious observance, should follow the University's reporting protocol at the earliest opportunity: [Religious Observance in examinations](#).

The Medical School's Education Centre will follow the following principles:

- Request for leave for religious purposes should be for a limited period; normally one or two days in a given year**
- The request must be made using the absence reporting form.
- Advise the Medical School's Education Centre, via the Transfer of Information (TOI) form of any religious observance/festivals you would engage with during your studies.
- Requests for leave must be made at least **14 days** prior to the date of the event. Some religious festivals are based on the lunar cycle and that the exact date is only known shortly beforehand. However, the date is predictable within one or two days and the request should indicate this.
- Requests submitted less than fourteen days prior to an event will not be approved.
- Students who miss any sessions because of religious observance, without prior approval will be deemed to have unauthorised absence.

**Leave for Religious observance cannot be combined with flexi leave.

Absences for Essential Military Training

Students in receipt of sponsorship from the armed forces require periods of mandatory military training prior to graduation. The University has signed the military covenant which grants students in this situation an additional 10 days of leave to attend these training activities. The School will support to arrange these types of absences, however students must inform the School upon

receipt their training timetable in order for adequate plans to be put in place. Evidence of sponsorship will be required.

Absences for High Performance Athletes (HPA)

Students classed as high-performance athletes may require additional periods of time off for training and competing. The University is committed to supporting all students that it classes as high-performance athletes (HPA). The School will support to arrange these types of absences, however students must inform the School upon receipt of their timetable and must meet with the clinical phase lead in order for adequate plans to be put in place. The School works closely with the UoN Department of Sport each year, to confirm formal lists of HPA students.

Attendance at a Conference or External Leadership Activity

If you have been invited to deliver your own university work at a conference or to represent the University in an external leadership/management activity, you can apply for conference leave. This means you will not use your flexible leave allowance, but you still need to formally request this leave. All requests will be reviewed and approved by the phase lead. It is the student's responsibility to have a discussion with the placement provider regarding their absence.

Evidence is required upon completing the absence form.

If you wish to attend a conference or an external leadership/management activity, but you are not delivering your own university work or representing the University at the event, then please request your absence as flexible leave.

Attendance Monitoring

Student attendance and engagement are monitored and governed by university regulations. Students must attend all teaching activities necessary for the pursuit and successful completion of their studies, undertake all associated assessments and attend meetings and other activities as required.

The School of Medicine operate a University QR code system for capturing attendance at physical teaching sessions. This attendance data will also feed into the University of Nottingham Engagement Dashboard.

During the Clinical Phase, Local Education Providers will also capture student attendance at teaching and clinical sessions. Attendance data from placement sites will be shared with the School.

Engagement

The Student Engagement Dashboard is a welfare initiative that helps enable staff to identify students who are struggling and reach out with an offer of academic or wellbeing support. The dashboard collates data on student use of digital learning tools, as well as attendance data for in-person teaching, to provide key members of academic and support staff with an overview of each student's academic engagement.

If a member of staff notices a significant change in the levels of a student's academic engagement, the student will be contacted regarding their welfare and their personal tutor or a member of the Support and Wellbeing team will reach out with an offer of support.

Further details can be found at: [Student Engagement Dashboard](#).