



# **California Health Sciences University**

## **COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE (COM)**

### **STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND LEAVES OF ABSENCE POLICY**

#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of CHSU COM's Attendance Policy is to establish clear guidelines as to expectations for student attendance, identify circumstances in which students can request an excused absence from learning activities that are mandatory, and describe the ramifications of violating this, Policy.

#### **SCOPE**

The Policy is applicable to all students enrolled at CHSU COM.

#### **DEFINITIONS**

- A.** Unplanned Absences - absences that occur because of unexpected events. Please refer to the unplanned absences section of this document.
- B.** Planned Absences - absences that occur because of known or anticipated circumstances. For example, attendance at a national conference or a planned medical procedure may be a Planned Absence.

#### **POLICY STATEMENT**

##### **A. Attendance Requirements**

##### **1. OMS-I & OMS-II**

The California Health Sciences University College of Osteopathic Medicine expects students in the OMS I and OMS II years to attend all scheduled course activities including, but not limited to, classroom lectures, discussion groups/interactive sessions, laboratory activities, and clinical assignments. Attendance is monitored by the College.



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Students should refer to course syllabi for specific grading policies and attendance requirements for individual classes. If there are requirements identified in a course document/syllabus, then those requirements control.

It is recognized that there may be isolated instances when students must be absent. However, students who miss didactic sessions, laboratory sessions, or clinical activities, are not excused from learning the subject materials or activities of that session.

Students may be required to make-up the missed educational session(s) during off-hours. Make-up laboratories are conducted only in extreme situations and at the discretion of the Course Director or the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Students should reference the attendance policy in the course syllabus for each course they may be missing.

### **2. OMS-III & OMS-IV**

Daily attendance by third- and fourth-year students is required for all requisite clinical duties of the rotation to which they are assigned. Any time away from the rotation must be approved through the process outlined in the clinical clerkship manual.

Students on rotation are expected to be on time for all assigned activities associated with that rotation. Violations of the attendance requirement policy may result in disciplinary action through the SPC Committee, including, but not limited to, removal from current rotation which would result in the failing of the rotation.

Students who miss time from a rotation are required to submit the request for approved absences through the procedure identified in the Clinical Clerkship Manual. Through this method both the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) and the Office of Clinical Education will be notified. Students do not need to submit two requests. The form must include details of how the student will make-up the time missed in order for the absence request to be approved.



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During the OMS-III and OMS-IV years, missed and/or failed core clerkships may need to be made up during future elective clerkship time, or by extending that year of enrollment. This may result in either 1) a student needing a longer duration of time to complete their OMS-III requirements, and therefore having less opportunity for elective clerkship rotations in their OMS-IV year, or 2) extension of their OMS-IV year beyond the typical graduation date for their class

### **B. Late Arrivals**

Promptness is a trait that physicians must display and is a component of the Core Competency of Professionalism. Tardiness in class disturbs both the faculty/lecturer and the other students in the class. Repeated tardiness is considered unprofessional behavior and may result in the student being referred to the SPC. Specific requirements will be identified in the COM student handbook and clerkship manual.

### **C. Planned Absences**

#### **1. Pre-planned Medical Absences**

For an absence to be considered excused for pre-planned medical reasons, notice must be received by CHSU-COM prior to the missed class or activity. Students must submit an "Absence Request Form", along with documentation supporting the future medical absence. This should include proof of appointment. This form must be approved by the Director of Student Services or the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs.

Where possible students should make an effort to schedule medical appointments during non-instructional time.

Pre-planned absences that are expected to be 3 days or more, must be approved by both the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Assistant Dean of Student Affairs. Students are still required to submit an Absence Request Form, along with a note from the treating healthcare provider confirming duration of absence.



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Students in third- and fourth-year rotations with pre-planned medical absences must abide by the additional requirements contained in the CHSU-COM Clinical Clerkship Manual.

### **2. Scheduled Conferences and Student Organizations**

Students may receive excused absences to attend pre-planned CHSU-COM-related activities or national meetings of student clubs and organizations. Exemptions to the criteria for conference travel may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Requests for exemptions should be made to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Assistant Dean of Student Affairs.

Students must be in good academic standing with a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 to be considered for an excused absence for CHSU-COM-related activities. Travel arrangements should not be made until approval has been granted.

### **3. Other Planned Absences**

- i. Planned Religious holidays not already included in the list of the University holiday
- ii. Planned Military Duty.
- iii. Planned Immigration & Naturalization Appointments (supporting documentation is required).
- iv. Planned Legal Proceedings at which the student is required to attend as a party or witness (supporting documentation is required).

### **4. Excused Absence Form**

All absence requests for travel must be submitted using the excused absence form and should be submitted after the following steps have been completed:

- i. Submit a travel request,
- ii. Receive confirmation from OSA stating the student is in good academic standing,
- iii. Receive email from the OSA approving the request.

Planned professional development leave (e.g., attending medical conferences) requires at least 30-days advance notice and approvals. Failure to submit the excused absence request form may result in the absence being treated as unexcused.



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Students must submit an email to the OSA informing them of the travel plans and submittal of the travel request at least 30 business days prior to the anticipated absence. Students should also refer to the Student Travel Policy for additional requirements and information.

Approval for student travel and the resulting absence will be only for reasonable, associated travel time (1 day) and for only the duration of the event (e.g., conference). There will be no extensions for the excused absence beyond the dates approved by the OSA.

Students who are excused for conference travel on Fridays will not receive excused absences on the Monday following the excused absence. Requests for any excused absences must be accompanied by documentation e.g., canceled airline flight or a physician note or other documentation of good cause for the absence.

There will be times conferences coincide with scheduled exams. Exam make-up for such instances will be on the Monday following the conference with no exception.

### **D. Unplanned Absences**

Unplanned absences are those absences that are unexpected that meet the criteria below.

Unplanned absences will either be considered excused or unexcused. An unexcused absence is one that does not meet any of the criteria below.

### **E. Unplanned Excused**

The following will be strongly considered as appropriate reasons for excused absences:

1. Emergency Medical care for the Students or members of their immediate family (e.g., spouse, child, or parent), but documentation as outlined above will be required.
2. Unplanned Jury duty - If summoned for Jury Duty, students are required to promptly report the summons to the OSA.
3. Traffic Accident (supporting documentation is required).



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4. Bereavement (up to three [3] days) due to death of an immediate family member, significant other, or close relative (supporting documentation is required).
5. Unplanned Lack of Child Care (Will be monitored to avoid overuse and hardship on academic requirements).

### **F. Unexcused**

Absences for the following reasons will be considered as unexcused absences:

1. Car Breakdown
2. Employment Scheduling
3. Professional Development Leave taken without having followed the required 10-day notification & approval process outlined above.
4. Vacation
5. Personal events/ceremonies such as weddings, birthdays, showers, anniversary celebrations of life, etc. Exceptions may be made if you are part of a wedding ceremony. E.g., sibling's wedding
6. Non-Emergency pet appointments for veterinary care without supporting documentation.
7. Travel Delays without proof of flight cancellation/delay or unfavorable weather conditions that restrict travel.
8. Absence requests submitted more than 24 hours after a scheduled academic/curricular activity and/or without proper supporting documentation.
9. Absences from one (1) to three (3) consecutive days during which an examination, OSCE, or lab session occurs that is NOT approved by the Director of Student Services or Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and Enrollment or Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

### **G. Monitoring Absences**

The OSA will monitor the academic performance of students with frequent absence requests (excused and unexcused) to ensure that absences are not negatively impacting academic



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performance. The OSA may limit excused absence privileges if deemed necessary. Based on evidence of excessive unplanned absences, the University has authority to treat unexcused absences as violations of the Standard of Academic Integrity, Professionalism and Student Conduct outlined in the University Catalog.

Additionally, absences deemed unexcused by the OSA may result in a student receiving a zero for the missed coursework and may be referred to the Student at Risk Committee (StARC) or to the student progress committee.

Students are expected to attend every examination, test, or quiz. However, while excused absences are not approved for any examinations, tests, and quizzes, CHSU recognizes there may be times when a student is not able to attend. Absence requests due to illness on the day of an exam will require a physician note or supporting documentation and at least 1-hour prior notification to Directors of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, Associate Dean of OAA&A and Assistant Dean of OSA, to be considered excused.

Requests for make-up examinations or quizzes must be made in a timely manner. For an absence to be considered excused, student must complete the "Absence Request Form" online. The Office of Student Affairs will determine if the absence is approved or denied, and the student will be notified accordingly.

It is the student's responsibility to contact the Course Directors to make arrangements for making up for all missed coursework, missed laboratories or an examination/quiz where applicable.

If the student requests approval of an excused absence and will miss an exam, it is the student's responsibility to notify the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Director of Academic Affairs and Assessment, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, and the Director of Student Services via email when it is first noted that an absence will be needed. No absence will be approved if the student fails to contact the above via email and/or submit the absence request form at least 1 hour before the scheduled exam time. On return to CHSU-COM the student must complete the



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“Absence Request Form.” An unexcused absence from an examination or quiz may result in a grade of zero (0) for that assessment.

### **H. Excessive Absences.**

Excessive and/or recurring absences are deemed unprofessional behavior. In the event of excessive or recurring absences, there may be consultation with the Office Student Affairs to determine if additional interventions are needed. If the absences continue, the student’s continuing failure to comply with this policy will be referred to the Student Progress Committee and may be reported on the Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE).

### **I. Retroactive Excused Absence Requests**

Requests for retroactive approval of an excused absence will not be approved without the correct supporting documentation. Requests for retroactive approval of an excused absence will not be approved if submitted more than 24 hours after scheduled academic/curricular activity and/or without proper supporting documentation.

### **J. Leave of Absence**

A Leave of Absence is defined as a temporary interruption in a student’s program of study for a period greater than seven consecutive days. A leave of absence requires pre-approval, and the student must follow CHSU’s leave application process. All Leave of Absences are granted by the Dean.

A leave of absence is a temporary separation from CHSU which may not last longer than 180 calendar days. Reasons for a leave include, but not limited to, academic, personal, medical, and maternity. If a leave of absence exceeds 180 calendar days, it will become a withdrawal.

Students may request a Leave of Absence (LOA) for selected reasons including but not limited to academic, medical, maternity, parental military service, or personal circumstances.





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A leave of absence should be requested in writing, addressed to the Dean but delivered to the Asst/Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Enrollment, who then provides it to the Dean. The LOA request must also include an anticipated date of return. The Dean will make the final determination of the LOA request.

For financial aid purposes the date of the Deans approval will determine the date of the LOA.

At a minimum of no later than 30 days prior to the end of the leave period, the student doctor is required to submit written notification to the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and Enrollment of their intention to return. The student doctor will need to request and complete the readmission form. CHSU reserves the right to impose any additional conditions upon a student doctor seeking readmission after a leave of absence, and/or to refuse consideration based on the relevant time limit on Matriculation to graduation. The request and final decision on readmission will be made by the Dean. Due to the nature of the clinical curriculum students seeking to take LOA during any rotation consult with the Office of Student Affairs and the Office of Clinical Education, prior to taking the leave.

A student seeking to take a LOA will first meet with the Asst/Associate Dean of Student Affairs. During this meeting students should discuss their ability to graduate within the requirements outlined in the COM Graduation Policy. The LOA Request Form is available on the CHSU website or from the University Registrar. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from providing a prior written request, the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and Enrollment may make exceptions to this process. Whenever practical, a student should submit their written request for a LOA at least thirty (30) calendar days in advance of the start of the upcoming semester or thirty (30) calendar days before the end of the current semester. Non-attendance in classes does not constitute notification of intent to apply for a leave of absence.

Students who take a LOA that, at a minimum, extends through the end of the semester shall be considered withdrawn for the purposes of grading and tuition refund only, but not withdrawn from the University. The student's final grades will be processed as outlined in the Student



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Withdrawal Policy. As an LOAs has a significant impact on student loans and scholarships, as well as the total cost of the student's attendance at the COM, students should contact the Financial Aid Office about the implications related to their LOA. Student should also refer to the CHSU Tuition Refund Policy regarding the student's potential eligibility for a tuition refund. Students will receive a letter via email and mail once a decision has been made regarding the LOA generally within five (5) calendar days of the decision. CHSU reserves the right to impose conditions upon the student's return that will be communicated either in the initial letter to the student approving the leave or in subsequent correspondence to the student. For example, students granted a LOA for health-related purposes may be required to have a health care professional certify in writing that they are approved to return to the University prior to the student's anticipated return date.

The completed LOA form must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar before the leave of absence is granted. The date of leave of absence status is the date that the Registrar receives the signed Leave of Absence form, except in case of extenuating circumstances. Should a student wish to take a leave longer than the initial LOA granted to the student, they must re-apply for an additional new LOA following the same LOA process.

### **1. Unapproved Leave of Absence**

Any student on an Unapproved Leave of Absence is in violation of this policy and may result in consequences for the student, up to and including dismissal from the University.

### **2. Returning From a Leave of Absence**

Students approved for a leave of absence may return to the COM and to classes without reapplying to the College of Osteopathic Medicine if the return is within the approved time frame as recorded in the Leave of Absence Approval letter and any relevant University approved extensions of such leave. Prior to returning to the College of Osteopathic Medicine, students are required to comply with all conditions for the student's return as stated in correspondence to the student by the University. A student granted a LOA with conditions may be required to meet



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with the Office of Student Affairs before returning to the College of Osteopathic Medicine. For LOA, students must submit their intent to return in writing to the University Registrar within thirty (30) calendar days of the anticipated return to the pre-clinical portion of the curriculum and thirty (30) calendar days for the clinical curriculum, for leaves that are longer than thirty (30) days in length. It is the student's ultimate responsibility to duly inform the administration of any delays to their return or needs for further extensions.

Students failing to return to the College of Osteopathic Medicine following the approved timeframe for the LOA will be considered to be on an Unapproved Leave of Absence and may be dismissed from the College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Abuse of the absence or leave request process is unprofessional and violates the University's Student Conduct and Professionalism policy. Abuse of such process includes but is not limited to: (1) dishonesty regarding the need for or use of leave; submission of fraudulent documentation supporting the need for leave. Abuse of this policy may result in an appearance before the Student Progress Committee and ultimately dismissal from the University.

It should be noted that after a student returns from a leave of absence, completion of all the required elements for graduation is still necessary, to graduate and be granted the degree of Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine.

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### RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy is the responsibility of the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, Enrollment and Accreditation, who has delegated responsibility for the standards within the policy to the Dean of the College of Osteopathic Medicine.



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### **HISTORY (R\*)**

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**R:** Assistant Dean of Student Services

**A:** Director of Student Affairs

**C:** Director of Student Affairs, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, COM Dean

**I:** All CHSU Students, Office of Academic Affairs and Assessment, Director of Student Services