Student Absence Policy

Absence Definitions
Students are expected to attend all required activities. Each course and clerkship ("course") publishes its required activities. An absence is any instance when a student is not physically present at an activity. Students should not assume they are allowed any absences at their discretion or for their personal convenience. Absences are considered acceptable only when unavoidable, which include two types of circumstances:

1. When unavoidable and anticipated, as in a residency interview or presentation at a professional meeting. Students are strongly encouraged to schedule interviews during vacation periods to avoid conflict with scheduled courses.
2. When unavoidable and unanticipated, as in personal illness or family tragedy.

Actions Required by the Student
In the event of any of these absences, students must (in advance when anticipated, and as soon as possible when unanticipated):
1. Notify their supervising faculty (e.g. facilitator, clinical attending, or preceptor); and
2. Notify their course/clerkship director

Consequences of Absences
1. Absences (for approved reasons listed above) that total no more than three days in a single course are a matter between the student and the course. For the Practice of Medicine courses, this is defined as three days of absences for the entire academic year. In all cases, the student is responsible for the material missed while absent. At the discretion of the course director, the student may be required to provide documentation of the reason for absence, and be required to complete supplementary assignments to make up for missed activities, but the course is not required to provide repeat or make-up opportunities for missed assignments.
2. Absences for reasons other than those listed above, or failure to report an absence as described above, is considered unprofessional behavior and will be reflected in the student’s evaluation and may be grounds for failure of the course.
3. Absences (for approved reasons listed above) in any course that exceed three days are a matter that require consultation with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs (ADSA). In the event of excess absences, the ADSA will either:
   a. determine that a student must withdraw from the course, which will result in the course assigning a permanent transcript grade of “Withdraw”, “Withdraw Passing” or “Withdraw Failing” (any of which requires the student to repeat the course in its entirety); or
   b. defer action to the course director who will then either
      i. require the student to make-up the missed time prior to the end of the course, if feasible;
      ii. assign a temporary grade of “Incomplete” (which requires the student to complete remaining course requirements), or
      iii. assign a grade of “F” (Fail) for the course. A course failure based on excessive absences results in a requirement that the student complete a Professionalism Remediation Program as in addition to repeating the course.
4. Student absences will be tracked longitudinally. The name of any student demonstrating a pattern of multiple absences per course will be forwarded to the Office of the ADSA, who will contact the student and schedule an appointment to discuss the nature of the recurring absences.

Special Circumstances
1. **Examinations:** Because of the difficulty in rescheduling examinations, permission to be excused from high-stakes (e.g. mid-term, final, clinical skills) examinations must be obtained in advance from the ADSA, and is limited to reasons of health, personal tragedy, religious holy days (see below), or presentation at a national professional meeting. Although requests for exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis, residency interviews, family events and personal travel generally are not considered reasons for missing an examination. A student with an unapproved absence from any examination will receive a grade of zero for the examination.
2. **Other Curricular Requirements:** It may occasionally be necessary for students to complete curricular requirements while enrolled in another course. Participation in the Year 4 Integrated Curriculum Evaluation Exercise and any other school-based required activities will not be considered a course absence. Other absences, including those for USMLE licensing examinations will count toward the limits specified above.
3. **Religious Holy Days:** The Texas Education Code, Section 51.911 provides that students may be absent from class for the observation of a religious holy day. Absences for religious holy days must be excused in advance by the ADSA. The student will be allowed to take a make-up examination or complete assignments from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence as determined by the course director. Such absences will not count toward the limits specified above.