

MD PROGRAM ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES – PHASE 1

1. OVERVIEW

The MD Program at UQ is a full-time program. Classes commence in January/February each year and conclude in November. Key dates relating to the [academic calendar for the MD Program](#) are published on the Program website.

Phase 1 comprises the first two years of the MD Program. A number of teaching and learning activities in this phase occur in small groups and involve the development of skills such as working as part of a team and collaborative learning, which cannot be acquired in other ways. Many activities are offered only once a year. For these reasons, absences can impede a student's academic performance and progression, and have a negative impact on other students' learning.

These guidelines detail attendance requirements in Phase 1 of the MD Program, as well as procedures for requesting a Leave of Absence.

These guidelines do NOT apply to absences that prevent a student from completing a scheduled assessment. In such cases, please refer to the [deferred examination guidelines](#) and/or to the relevant Electronic Course Profile (ECP).

2. BACKGROUND

In accordance with the [UQ Student Charter](#) the University expects you to:

- *acquaint yourself with University policies and procedures relevant to your enrolment and studies and observe the statutes, rules and policies of the University;*
- *not engage in conduct which disrupts the teaching, learning or research activities of other students and staff, or which interferes with others performing their duties;*
- *attend classes, maintain steady progress in courses undertaken and submit required work on time (except in unforeseen or exceptional circumstances, in which case an approved extension is obtained);*
- *conduct yourself in a professional manner while undertaking all activities on University of Queensland premises and all external activities directly related to your study and research;*
- *conduct yourself in a professional manner while undertaking industrial placements or other forms of clinical or practice-based experience, and respect the confidentiality of patient, client or commercial information made available to you as part of your practical learning activities;*
- *incorporate feedback on assessment into your learning and make sure you use the assessment criteria with which you are provided; and*
- *inform your course coordinator or school as soon as possible of anything which might affect your studies.*

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the standards of behaviour set out in the Student Charter. Accordingly, students are required to abide by the attendance and leave processes outlined in these guidelines.

At the same time, we acknowledge that there are genuine reasons for non-attendance and the intent of these guidelines is not to penalise students who may miss an activity for legitimate reasons.

3. ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

- a) Students are expected to be punctual and to attend or otherwise engage with all Scheduled Learning Activities, some of which may be after hours or on weekends.
- b) Attendance at certain Scheduled Learning Activities will be recorded at the discretion of the Course Coordinator, and participation in key activities may form part of each course assessment. Examples include (but are not limited to) Case-based Learning (CBL) tutorials and Clinical Coaching sessions. In such cases, the minimum attendance requirements, including the groups or sequences of scheduled learning activities to which they apply, will be clearly spelled out in the electronic course profile (ECP). **It is the student's responsibility to read the ECP for each course and be aware of such requirements.**
- c) When a student knows in advance that they will not be able to attend a small-group activity such as a CBL tutorial or Clinical Coaching session, they are expected as a matter of courtesy to advise their CBL tutor or Clinical Coach of their planned absence.
- d) A student must attend the learning activity to which they are allocated. Failure to do so may result in being recorded as a non-attendance, even if the student attended another session.
- e) A student who is routinely and/or significantly late may be recorded as a non-attendeo or otherwise fail any assessment where participation is assessed.
- f) **If a student misses any days** of scheduled learning activities for a medical condition or other exceptional circumstances (as described under rules for [deferred examinations](#)), they are advised to retain any relevant documentation, and must be able to present them if they receive an **Attendance Warning**.
- g) In courses where participation is assessed, an **Attendance Warning** will be sent to a student's official UQ email address once non-attendance reaches a point at which the student is considered to be at risk of failing to meet attendance requirements for the whole course.

4. LEAVE OF ABSENCE

- a) Students who miss three (3) or more consecutive days of scheduled learning activities should apply for a 'Leave of Absence' (LOA) for Planned or Unplanned Leave in accordance with the criteria set out in subsections 4.1 and 4.2. Where an LOA application is approved, then those days will not be counted as non-attendance days, unless they fall under the provisions of an Interruption to Studies, refer to section 5 below.
Nevertheless, students who are granted a LOA are NOT exempt from attending examinations or other assessable activities.
- b) Students must apply for leave by completing the on-line form found on the [MD Program](#) website.
- c) The criteria for approved leave are the same as those for [deferred examinations](#). Applications for leave will not be approved where they fail to meet these criteria, as determined by the Phase 1 Academic Lead or their delegate.
- d) A maximum of ten (10) days of Planned or Unplanned Leave will be granted per calendar year of enrolment. Students who take in excess of ten (10) days of Planned or Unplanned Leave may be required to take an 'Interruption to Studies' as described in Section 5. Requests for Planned or Unplanned Leave in excess of ten (10) calendar days per year will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and will be determined at the sole discretion of the Phase 1 Academic Lead or delegate.

4.1 PLANNED LEAVE

- 4.1.1 An application for Planned Leave should be submitted **at least four (4) weeks** prior to the leave event. Approval will be made by the Phase 1 Academic Lead or delegate on a case-by-case basis.

- 4.1.2 Applications submitted less than four (4) weeks prior to the first day of Planned Leave must include a personal statement and documentation that adequately explains why the application was not submitted on time.
- 4.1.3 All applications for Planned Leave must include:
- a) A personal statement outlining the reason/s for the request;
 - b) Appropriate supporting documentation (for example, an application for conference leave must include evidence of the dates of the conference and registration/payment details, or a letter of invitation to present at the conference).
- 4.1.4 Students issued with an Attendance Warning must have an application for Planned Leave approved before committing to any activities which may see them at risk of failing to meet attendance requirements.

4.2 UNPLANNED LEAVE

- 4.2.1 Where a student is absent for **three (3) or more consecutive days** of scheduled learning activities due to illness or other exceptional circumstances, they must provide a medical certificate and/or other relevant supporting documentation. Any medical certificate provided as supporting documentation must cover the period of absence.
- 4.2.2 Students with a permanent or temporary disability which is likely to impact on their attendance must see a [Disability Advisor at Student Services](#) in order to ensure appropriate adjustments are put in place in a timely manner.

Please Note: Students who are unwell on the day of an examination or assessment may apply for a deferred examination under a separate process. Please see [my.UQ](#) for information on the deferred examination criteria.

5. INTERRUPTION TO STUDIES

- a) The [MD](#) and [MD Ochsner](#) program rules require that unless approved by the Executive Dean (or delegate), a student must enroll as a full-time student and undertake the program without interruption.
- b) Where a student has ceased study for more than ten (10) days of scheduled learning activities per calendar year after starting the MD Program; whether continuous or accumulative, and regardless of its status as approved Planned or Unplanned Leave, then they must seek formal approval for interruption of their studies.
- c) Students may only request to interrupt their studies on medical grounds, or exceptional circumstances, as evidenced by appropriate supporting documentation.

IMPORTANT: Student visa holders who interrupt their studies are also required to complete an [‘International Student – Withdrawal from Program’](#) form. Please note that the University is required by law to notify the [Department of Immigration and Border Protection](#) when international students withdraw from their studies.

6. DEFINITIONS

Unless otherwise stated, definitions used in assessing applications for Leave of Absence and examples of supporting documentation are the same as those for assessing applications for deferred examinations. [Refer to my.UQ Deferring an exam.](#)

Attendance Warning: A notice sent to a student's official UQ email address asking them to explain the reasons for their non-attendance after missing a certain number and type of scheduled learning activities, as defined in the ECPs.

Immediate Family: means parents, partners, siblings and children.

Planned Leave: is leave that may be approved for a student who requests permission to be absent from Scheduled Learning Activities for three or more consecutive days for matters relating to:

- Medical grounds (appointments, procedures)
- Significant personal problems
- Registered elite athlete (sporting event) or performer
- Significant family or social commitment
- Defence forces or emergency services
- Jury Duty
- Academic commitments

Determination in each application will be made on a case-by-case basis and is at the sole discretion of the Phase 1 Academic Lead or their delegate.

Scheduled Learning Activities: courses in Phase 1 of the MD Program include a wide range of learning activities. These activities are timetabled for individual students and although some teaching activities are held consistently week-by-week, others are scheduled on an irregular or *ad hoc* basis. It is each student's responsibility to check their timetable and attend classes as required.

Unplanned Leave: is leave that may be approved for a student that is absent from timetabled learning activities for three (3) or more consecutive days due to:

- Medical grounds
- Unexpected serious illness or injury of a family member or close relative
- Death or bereavement
- Defence forces or emergency services
- Vehicle accident (not involving medical injury)
- Major public transport or traffic delay
- Other unforeseen, extenuating circumstances

Determination in each application will be made on a case-by-case basis and is at the sole discretion of the Phase 1 Academic Lead or delegate. Unplanned leave will not be approved for:

- Holiday arrangements
- Employment commitments
- Social or leisure events including family commitments other than significant family events, see section 7.

Interruption to Studies: is leave that may be approved for a student that is absent from study for more than ten (10) days of scheduled study per calendar year; whether continuous or accumulative, and regardless of its status as approved Planned or Unplanned Leave. Interruption to studies may only be approved to students based on medical grounds or exceptional circumstances.

7. EXAMPLES:

NOTE: These are indicative examples only; please refer to individual ECPs for specific requirements.

Situation	Leave of Absence required?
A student has been invited to present at a conference interstate on a topic related to their studies. They will miss more than three days of scheduled learning activities BUT no assessment.	YES. This student should submit a Leave of Absence application at least four (4) weeks ahead of the planned absence. This absence will be exempted from attendance records.
A student is an elite athlete representing an Australian state at an event which is scheduled on the same day as a mid-semester exam.	NO. However the student should keep any necessary documentation in case an Attendance Warning is issued at a later date for other absences. Rather, they should read the deferred exam criteria and apply, which is likely to be approved.
A student has a respiratory infection and misses one (1) day of classes. They have not received an Attendance Warning.	NO.
The above student's condition worsens and they miss three (3) consecutive days of classes. They also miss a scheduled examination.	YES, with medical certificate, written within two (2) day, covering missed days. They also need to apply for a deferred exam within five (5) days of the date of the exam.
A student has a sick child and there are no other care options for that day; however they have already been issued with an Attendance Warning after missing several compulsory activities.	YES.
A student attends the funeral of a close friend or family member and misses two (2) days of classes.	NO. However student should consider seeking support from one of the many options available.
A student is absent for one (1) week to attend a friend's wedding overseas.	NO. This does not meet the criteria for approved leave, and the LOA will be denied. Absence will be regarded as non-attendance at activities where participation is a requirement for passing a course.
If the student above is an important member of a wedding party (e.g. bridesmaid, groomsman, or equivalent).	Yes. A copy of the wedding invitation must be provided and clearly state that you are a member of the wedding party.
A student is absent for four (4) days due to a family crisis.	YES. Student should also consider seeking support from the many options available.

Review Schedules	
Date Last Amended/Approved:	9 March 2017
Related Policies, Rules and Guidelines:	The University of Queensland Student Charter ; Doctor of Medicine Program Rules Doctor of Medicine (Ochsner) Program Rules PPL 3.50.07 Programs and Assessment for Elite Athletes PPL 3.50.06 Academic Adjustments General Award Rules Enrolment and Academic Progression Rules