

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### Overview

The University at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine (UB SDM) experience is based on a curriculum that provides opportunities for students to develop the knowledge, skills, and values to become a competent general dentist. Most of the learning in the program is conducted through a collaborative process.

University at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine students are admitted in part because of the experiences they bring to the school community and what they can add to class discussions and patient care activities. As such, participation in scheduled classes and assigned pre-clinic and clinic sessions is an **essential aspect** of the University at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine student commitment.

The health, well-being, and safety, of students, faculty, and staff are paramount. The absence guidelines presented below are to be used as a general reference. Our administration understands that each individual situation is unique and will work with our students in good faith on all attendance policy issues. The Offices of Academic and Student Affairs are the designated attendance authorities.

### Attendance Policy

Attendance at scheduled classes, laboratory sessions, clinical assignments, community rotations, and examinations is mandatory, unless expressly indicated otherwise by the course director in the written syllabus. Absence can affect knowledge, clinical skills, grades, and timeliness of graduation. Failure to attend classes, laboratory sessions, and clinical assignments will jeopardize student progress.

Students who are unable to attend are expected and required to report their absence, along with the reason for the absence, as outlined in this policy. Regardless of the type of absence, it is the student's responsibility to contact the Course Directors and/or the Senior Dental Assistant / Rotation Director regarding their absences.

UB SDM considers the only valid reasons for student absences from quizzes, tests, examinations, and clinic activities to be documented illness, injury, or a serious personal problem (unscheduled "approved absence") or very limited special circumstances (scheduled "approved absences") if pre-arranged and approved as outlined in this policy.

If a student misses an excessive amount of time due to an absence, evaluation of their academic status upon return may be needed between the student, and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Associate Dean for Student Affairs, and if appropriate, Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs.

## Approved Absences

Approved absences fall into three categories:

### Unscheduled Excused Absences

- Illness
- Family emergency
- Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
- Death in the family (bereavement)
- Inclement weather (when the school is not closed, but a student is unable to attend due to hazardous weather conditions)

### Scheduled Excused Absences (Two-week notice required)

- Professional meetings as a representative of the University at Buffalo School of Dental Medicine and/or invited scientific/educational presentations (maximum of 5).
- Post-graduate interviews, clinical licensure examinations, and the day of National Board examinations (maximum of 10 days annually)
- Religious observance
- Jury duty, Subpoenas, and Military duty

### Mental Health Days (unscheduled)

- The SDM recognizes and supports positive mental health amongst its student body. To promote well-being, each student receives two mental health days per semester that can be used at the student's discretion.
- **Student cannot use Mental Health Days to avoid taking an exam, quiz or pre-clinical competency or practical.**
- Students are responsible for all missed work while taking a mental health day.

### Other Types of Absences

Examples of scheduled or **unexcused absences** that will be evaluated on an individual basis include, but are not limited to:

- Early departures or late arrivals due to travel arrangements
- Weddings
- Family Events
- Attending professional meetings or conventions
- Non-school sponsored humanitarian service missions
- Outside employment
- Other School-sanctioned and sponsored activities (such as outreach or research)

## Unscheduled Excused Absences: General Guidelines

### Illness, Family/Personal Emergency and Family Medical Leave Absences

Students who are ill, are involved in a serious personal/family emergency, and/or qualify for family medical leave will be approved for an unscheduled absence provided documentation justifying the absence is given upon the student's return. Students dealing with an emergency should contact the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Associate Dean of Student Affairs, when they are in a position to do so.

### Bereavement Absences

In unfortunate circumstances, students should contact the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Associate Dean of Student Affairs. The Associate Deans will work all students who require time away from school on an individual basis.

### Inclement Weather

In situations where weather conditions are hazardous to a student's travel safety and the school remains open, an approved absence may be given.

## Unscheduled Excused Absences: Reporting

Dental students who will not be attending school due to an **unscheduled absence** should follow these procedures ***only when they are in a position to do so***:

1. Submit the online Formstack absence form:  
<https://dental.buffalo.edu/attendance>
2. Students missing didactic and/or pre-clinical courses should contact their course director(s).
3. Students missing a clinic session or rotation, should contact the Senior Dental Assistant, the Welcome Center Supervisor, and/or rotation director.

## Scheduled Excused Absences: General Guidelines

### Professional Meetings and Invited Scientific/Educational Presentations

Absences approved for professional meetings will only be allowed for students serving as representatives of the school or when an invited presenter at a scientific/educational meeting. Representatives include named individuals to committees or as officers attending a regional or national meeting. Students choosing to attend a professional meeting for continuing education purposes or professional development will be evaluated on an individual basis.

### Post Graduate Interviews (GPR/AEGD/Specialty Program), Student Externship Programs, Clinical Licensure Examinations, and National Board Examinations

Students may be granted an approved absence for post graduate interviews, formal student externships with post graduate programs, clinical licensure examinations, and National Board

examinations up to a maximum allowable 10 days/academic year. Note that this includes reasonable travel time associated with such activities but does not include study or preparation time. Students must provide appropriate documentation as requested.

### Religious Holidays

The School of Dental Medicine respects the need for absences due to religious holidays and will cooperate in scheduling absences. Please note that the absence will be approved for the actual day(s) of observance only. Also note that this does not include participation and activities such as attending meetings or retreats.

### Jury Duty, Subpoenas and Military Duty

Absences may be approved for students with legal obligations including jury duty, subpoena, and military duty.

### Medical Procedures

In situations involving medical procedures, students should work with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs to coordinate their return on an individual basis.

### Scheduled Excused Absences: Reporting

Dental students who will not be in school due to a **scheduled absence** should follow these procedures. **A two-week notification is required:**

1. Submit the online Formstack absence form:  
<https://dental.buffalo.edu/attendance>
2. Students missing didactic and/or pre-clinical courses should contact their course director(s).
3. Students missing a clinic session or rotation, should fill out the Clinic Absence Form and contact the Senior Dental Assistant and/or rotation director.

### Assessments

Assessments are defined as quizzes, tests, practical's, OSCEs, and examinations for required classes at the School of Dental Medicine. Student must attend all assessments. The school considers valid reasons for student absences from assessments and clinic activities to be clearly documented illness, injury, or a serious personal problem (unscheduled approved absence) or very limited special circumstances (scheduled approved absence) if pre-arranged and approved as outlined in this policy.

Mental health days are **NOT** included in the excused absences for assessments.

## Excused Absences from Assessments: Scheduled or Unscheduled

**It is the student's responsibility to inform the Office of Academic Affairs via the online Absence Form and the Course Director prior to the assessment if they will be absent** due to illness, medical condition, injury, serious personal problem, religious, or other documented reasons. **Documentation of approved absences will be required to be sent to course director(s) in the case of a missed assessment.** The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, in consultation with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, will review such absences on an individual basis when needed.

## Extenuating Circumstances

In the case of illness, medical condition, or injury, the student will be required to present a valid medical certificate documenting the illness/injury to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Such notification must be given within 24 hours of returning to classes. In certain circumstances, notification may be given no later than 48 hours upon returning to classes if an explanation has been provided to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs which warrants a delay.

In the case of a serious personal problem, the student will be required to submit a confidential written statement to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, documenting the reasons for missing the assessment. Such notification must be given within 24 hours of returning to classes and no later than 48 hours upon returning to class if an explanation has been provided to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Individual circumstances may warrant an extension when needed.

## Assessment Tardiness

If a student is tardy for any scheduled or unscheduled assessment, the course director may award a score of 0 for that assessment, allow a make-up assessment, or allow the student to take the assessment late. This determination would be at the discretion of the course director.

## Students Responsibility for Absences

### Didactic Courses

Regardless of whether the absence is approved or unapproved, students are responsible for all missed course content, pre-clinical activity, assessments, and rotations. Students are required to promptly complete any missed assignments. Students are also responsible for informing their assigned patients of appointment cancellations and re-appointments in a timely manner.

### Clinical Courses

Students have 16 (sixteen) personal sessions in total to use at their own discretion for their D3 & D4 clinical courses (CLD 831, CLD 832, CLD 841, CLD 842). Follow the protocols for absences (contact the appropriate people and fill out all necessary forms)

## Instructors Responsibility for Excused Absences

Following the student's return to classes, the course director will determine the appropriate method for making up the missed assessment. The assessment must be made up no later than seven (7) class days following a student's return to school. This period can be modified upon the recommendation of the course director. Every effort will be made to schedule the make-up examination within a reasonable period that does not jeopardize the integrity of the examination or the academic progress of the student. Some recommended methods include, but are not limited to:

1. The student takes a different quiz/test/examination of the same format and length which examines the same material and has the same value.
2. The format of the make-up quiz/test/examination may be different from the original test.
3. In lieu of a retake of a quiz, the course director may award the student a point score based upon:
  - The average score of the other quizzes in the course
  - Adding to the value of the remaining quizzes in the course
  - Please note that regardless of whether the course has a "dropped quiz" policy, the student retains the right to retake the quiz or be awarded the points
4. In lieu of a retake of a test/examination, the course director may add the value of the test to the final examination of the student, providing:
  - This does not increase the value of the final examination for that student above 70% of the final course grade
  - The content of the final exam includes that of the missed test/examination

## Instructors Responsibility for Unexcused Absences

Course Directors may award a score of 0 for any assessment that is missed by a student with an unexcused absence. An absence form must be submitted for student records.

In the event the Course Director allows the student to retake the assessment, the final score awarded may be reduced by the course director at their discretion.

In regard to unexcused absences from clinic, the student may receive a salmon slip from the Tier Director or Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs if they go over their 16 (sixteen) personal sessions for their D3 & D4 clinical courses (CLD 831, CLD 832, CLD 841, CLD 842) and 2 (two) mental health days per semester. Please make all necessary attempts to avoid these absences, especially when patient care is involved.