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Absence and Attendance Policy: Undergraduate Medicine

School of Medicine

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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.

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.	Report as a Sickness Absence (self-certified up to and including 7 days) using the absence reporting form.
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>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](#) appendices.

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 Student engagement and attendance system (SEAtS) engagement tool or alternative School monitoring mechanism for Placement Students.

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.

If you are a student Visa holder, you must notify the Visa team if you are absent from the course. Please refer to the [UK Visas and Immigration \(UKVI\) Academic Engagement Monitoring Code of Practice Section 12](#) for more information.

Engagement

The Student engagement and attendance system (SEAtS) is a welfare initiative that helps enable University of Nottingham staff to identify students who are struggling and reach out with an offer of wellbeing support.

The dashboard collates data on student use of digital learning tools, as well as attendance data for in-person teaching through the use of QR Codes.

Further details can be found at: [Student engagement and attendance system](#)

Appendices

Appendix item 1 – Absence Reference Guide for Undergraduate Medicine

Attendance and Engagement

This appendix is a reference guide for students and provides several examples of unforeseen and planned absences, followed by appendix two with a list of [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQ). Students should use this guide alongside the [School of Medicine absence & attendance policy](#) to help them report any unforeseen or planned absences in a timely manner. This not only demonstrates professionalism but also helps the School to identify where students may need any additional academic and/or wellbeing/pastoral support.

Notification of Lateness

Students should conduct themselves in a professional manner, and this includes being punctual. If you expect to be severely late or may not be able to attend for the whole day, then you must submit an absence reporting form and state the reason why you were unable to attend.

Unforeseen Absence

Below are some examples of unforeseen (unexpected) absences. These are unavoidable reasons that would not have been known until the day of the absence.

Example	Action	Comments
Physical/mental illness/ distress/sickness	Report unforeseen absence as a Personal Emergency, using the Absence Reporting Form	Additional support may be sought from Wellbeing
Illness of a dependent (e.g: child, spouse, family member)	Report unforeseen absence as a Personal Emergency, using the Absence Reporting Form	Additional support may be sought from Wellbeing
Domestic emergency (e.g., flood/fire/theft)	Report unforeseen absence as a Personal Emergency, using the Absence Reporting Form	Additional support may be sought from Wellbeing
Bereavement of a family member/relative/friend	Report unforeseen absence as Compassionate Leave, using the Absence Reporting Form If you are a student Visa holder, you must notify the Visa team if you intend to travel outside of the UK for Compassionate Leave. Review the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) Academic Engagement Monitoring Code of Practice Section 12 for more information.	Additional support may be sought from Wellbeing

Planned Absence

Below are some examples of instances where students may wish to be absent from the course that can be anticipated/planned in advance:

- Early Years students (pre-clinical) should report known absences as a Planned Absence via their Absence Reporting Form.
- For Clinical Phase students, a planned absence should be reported as “Flexible Leave” as outlined in the School of Medicine Absence and Attendance Policy.

Example	Early Years (BMedSci, GEM and Foundation Year students)	Clinical Phase students	Comments
Armed forces / military interviews	Report absence as Planned Leave	Report absence as Flexible Leave	Use appropriate absence report form for your year group
Attendance at a funeral	Report absence as Compassionate leave	Report absence as Compassionate leave	Use appropriate absence report form for your year group
Attendance at a wedding	Report absence as Planned Leave	Report absence as Flexible Leave	Use appropriate absence report form for your year group
Attendance at a conference	Report absence as Planned Leave	Report absence as Flexible Leave	Use appropriate absence report form for your year group



Example	Early Years (BMedSci, GEM and Foundation Year students)	Clinical Phase students	Comments
Presenting own University work at a conference	Report absence as Planned Leave	Report absence as Conference Leave You will need to provide evidence via the absence reporting form, so your request can be considered by your Phase Lead.	Complete School of Medicine Absence Reporting Form
Clinical Phase students only: resit examinations scheduled to occur during placements.	Other students (BMedSci and non-clinical) will not require this part of the form.	Report absence as Academic Absence, using Absence Reporting Form	
Counselling or Mental health appointments	Due to more flexibility in timetables it is expected that students will make appointments when they are not due to attend in-person sessions.	Can be agreed informally with where the student is placed at the time.	If the appointment requires a full day of absence, then absence reporting form will be required. Students can seek further support from their Personal Tutor and/or the Wellbeing team: SS-Sup-MedHealthSci@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk
Duke of Edinburgh Award	Report absence as Planned Leave	Report absence as Flexible Leave	Complete School of Medicine Absence Reporting Form



Example	Early Years (BMedSci, GEM and Foundation Year students)	Clinical Phase students	Comments
Exams for Scholarships or similar	Can be agreed informally with where the student is placed at the time		Contact the person running the affected session(s) to inform them of the absence.
Holidays	Students are expected to schedule all holidays during non-term time.	Students should report holidays as Flexible Leave.	Complete School of Medicine Absence Reporting Form
Hospital or GP appointment	Contact the person running the session to inform of absence and review recordings of the session to catch up.	One-off, or short-term appointments can be agreed informally with the placement provider.	If the appointment requires a full day of absence, then this should be completed on the School of Medicine Absence Reporting Form. For longer term/ ongoing health issues, it is the student's responsibility to make the Medical School aware
Illness/ bereavement of a close relative friend	Report absence as Compassionate Leave	Report absence as Compassionate Leave	Complete School of Medicine Absence Reporting Form
Interview: Academic Foundation Programme/ Foundation Year	Can be agreed informally with the appropriate personnel where the student is placed at the time.		Contact the person running the affected session(s) to inform them of the absence.



Example	Early Years (BMedSci, GEM and Foundation Year students)	Clinical Phase students	Comments
Jury service	It is possible for the University to request that Jury Service is deferred. The student should contact the Education Centre team at ms-early-years@nottingham.ac.uk , who can provide a letter.	It is possible for the University to request that Jury Service is deferred. The student should contact the Education Centre team at ms-placements-admin@nottingham.ac.uk ,who can provide a letter.	
Paid work for the University of Nottingham	Half day working should be outside of academic hours. Full day/s would require an absence form to be submitted.	Students should report under Flexible Leave	Complete School of Medicine Absence Reporting Form



Example	Early Years (BMedSci, GEM and Foundation Year students)	Clinical Phase students	Comments
Planned surgery	Planned medical operations or surgeries should be discussed with the Year lead, Course Director or Director of Student Wellbeing to determine if these should be reported as a Planned Absence or Sickness Absence. Medical certification may be required.	<p>Planned medical operations or surgeries should be discussed with the Phase Lead prior to confirming a date.</p> <p>A discussion will be had to determine if any retraining is required which can only take place in a specific period of the course</p> <p>An absence form and a Medical certification may be required.</p> <p>Occupational Health clearance maybe required prior to returning to the course</p>	More significant surgery and long recuperation periods may require the student to interrupt their studies.



Example	Early Years (BMedSci, GEM and Foundation Year students)	Clinical Phase students	Comments
Religious Observance	The University's guidance is at: Religious Observance during assessments	See section in the Absence & Attendance Policy for details. If you are a student Visa holder, you must review the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) Academic Engagement Monitoring Code of Practice Section 12 for information on travelling outside of the UK.	
Sporting participation at national level	Student should consult with Year Lead/Course Director.	Student should inform the Medical School Education Centre prior to receiving their placements allocations to discuss their training timetable and the impact it will have on attendance. Flexible leave could be considered for short periods of training.	For training that will require significant commitment and time, it may be appropriate for the student to consider suspending their studies if training for an event at national/international level.



Example	Early Years (BMedSci, GEM and Foundation Year students)	Clinical Phase students	Comments
Sporting/Music/ Drama participation at university level	Students should report under Planned Leave. Students on the courses below will have Wednesday afternoons with no timetabled activity which will allow them to participate in sports or other recreational activities:	Students should report under Flexible Leave.	
Witness in court	Student to discuss with the Course Director	Student to discuss with the Phase Lead	Student Wellbeing Team is also available to provide support to the student where necessary: SS-Sup- MedHealthSci@exmail.nottingham. ac.uk



Example	Early Years (BMedSci, GEM and Foundation Year students)	Clinical Phase students	Comments
Visa renewals both within the UK and overseas	Short term absences can be agreed locally, but complex cases that may require an extended period away from the University should be highlighted to the relevant Registry and Academic Affairs (RAA) team member by the student so that an appropriate plan or level of support can be put into place by key School faculty.		RAA enquiries online Additional information at: Student Services Visas and Immigration UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) Academic Engagement Monitoring Code of Practice



Appendix item 2 – FAQs for Undergraduate Medicine

What are the attendance thresholds for the course?

Students are expected to have an excellent level of attendance, and you should be able to account for any absence, either for planned or unforeseen circumstances by completing the absence form, as per the Absence and Attendance Policy.

Attendance across the course is monitored, locally at sites and by the school. Where concerns around an individual's absence is detected, whether this has been reported through the required mechanisms or not, this will usually be followed up to establish if there are issues that require further support or intervention.

All students are required to be familiar with the University's [Regulations Governing Attendance and Engagement](#).

If you are a Student VISA holder you should refer to [UK Visas and Immigration \(UKVI\) Academic Engagement Monitoring Code of Practice](#)

What are the implications if I don't use the forms to notify of my absence?

Without using the absence reporting form, you will be advised by School staff or the local team at your clinical placement that the correct procedure needs to be followed. If this remains outstanding, an unauthorised absence will be recorded for you.

Persistent and repeated failure to submit the relevant form will be regarded as a professionalism issue and indicator of lack of engagement, which a member of staff would follow up as per the University's [Regulations Governing Attendance and Engagement](#). This could also lead to the submission of an intervention form on the grounds of professionalism.

Does an absence form need to be submitted if I request time to be away for part of the day (e.g., a doctor's appointment)?

No. Unforeseen, planned leave (early years) and flexible leave (clinical years) forms only need to be submitted if a half or full day's attendance is going to be affected.

If a student is unable to attend a particular session that has been timetabled, please discuss this with either the person taking the lecture or teaching and/or the administrative team at your placement site so that they are aware.



Repeated instances of part-day absences may have an impact on students' ability to successfully complete a placement or the requirements of a module and may be viewed as a professionalism issue. Therefore, any ongoing issues that affects attendance should be discussed with relevant personnel, such as the Wellbeing team, personal tutor, senior tutor/clinical sub dean, or the Course Director/Director for Student Wellbeing.

What happens if I am going to be late or need to leave early? Do I need to complete a form?

Generally, if you are going to be late or must leave early, a form isn't required but you would need to let the relevant person know in good time.

The Unforeseen absence form asks me to approximate how many days I will be absent for – I am not sure how much time I will need?

Please estimate to the best of your ability based on the nature of your unforeseen absence. If the duration of your absence changes, please submit a new absence form to report any additional days taken.

Once you return to your studies you will need to fill in a 'Return to Studies Form' that will be emailed to you on completion of the absence reporting form.

If you are on a clinical placement, you may need to consult the guidance given regarding each Trust's policy on contagious and infectious illnesses.

Flexible leave – Clinical Phase Students only

I have booked Flexible leave, but I've been unexpectedly away for other unforeseen reasons. Should I still take my Flexible Leave?

If a combination of unforeseen absence and flexible leave has a significant impact on your attendance on a placement as a whole, you should consider whether this places you at risk of failing your attachment. It is advised that you should discuss this with your supervisor or an appropriate member of staff at your placement. You can also speak with the Wellbeing team if you require extra support: SS-Sup-MedHealthSci@exmail.nottingham.ac.uk

Are there any restrictions as to how much Flexible Leave I can take within an attachment?

There is a fixed allowance of Flexible leave across each clinical phase. These are listed in the Absence/Attendance policy.

Please note, an extended period of absence away from a clinical phase placement could put you at risk of not being signed off as you may not have met all the learning requirements. If you are not signed off by the end of a rotation, plans to re-train may have to be put in place.

How much notice do I need to give to book Flexible Leave?

Attachment Type	Notice Period
All clinical attachments	At least 5 working days

How will I know if my Flexible Leave has been approved?

When submitting the Absence Reporting Form, your Flexible Leave will automatically be approved if it meets the criteria specified on the form and the Absence and Attendance policy. You may receive a message that your flexible leave is rejected if the form is incomplete, enough notice has not been provided, you have reached your flexi leave allowance limit or if your request clashes with a listed exclusion period and cannot be authorised.

Please ensure that you have let the relevant people at your placement site know that you will not be in attendance for their sessions.



What happens if I am not able to use the Flexible Leave that had been booked in advance?

Due to operational changes in the clinical environment, it is sometimes necessary to make changes to student timetables at relatively short notice. Whilst the School and Clinical Placements will endeavour to keep these changes to a minimum, such changes may result in students missing something they were not aware of when they booked their leave.

If a placement has had to 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 as long as they request the change in advance of the session taking place.

If your request for Flexible Leave has been approved, and you are unable to take it for reasons that are outside of your control e.g., sickness, please let us know: MS-UGStud-Absent@nottingham.ac.uk

How do I book Flexible Leave or report an unforeseen absence during SSMs?

Please submit a flexible leave form or report your unforeseen absence.

You will need to ensure you have also informed your SSM supervisor/team directly. Their contact details are available via the SSM catalogue on Moodle. The form you submit will ask you to confirm you have liaised with your SSM supervisor directly over your absence and you will need to do this, as the form does not automatically inform individual SSM supervisors.

Are there any restrictions as to how much conference leave I can take within an attachment?

There is no fixed allowance for leave to deliver university work at conferences, but you should consider whether a concentrated period of absence, planned or unplanned is likely to place you at risk of failing an attachment.



Appendix item 3 – Additional information and useful links

School of Medicine Policies relating to attendance and engagement:

- Absence and Attendance Policy: [SoM Policies and Regulations Webpage](#)
- Extenuating Circumstances: [Extenuating Circumstances Guidance](#)
- Policy and support for Pregnant students and students with very young children: [Pregnant students and students with very young children](#)
- Quality Manual – Regulations Governing Attendance and Engagement: [Registration Attendance and Study](#)
- Visa Conditions (International Students): [UK Visas and Immigration \(UKVI\) Academic Engagement Monitoring Code of Practice](#)
- Services for students – Religious Observance:
 - [Religious Observance during assessments](#)
 - [Religious Observance during placements](#)