



School of Medicine: Absence and Attendance Policy - Undergraduate Medicine

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Background

This policy has been formulated to address two key issues:

- a) Providing a clear process for students to report on-the-day **unplanned absence** (which could not have been foreseen in advance, such as illness) to the relevant personnel. In addition, it provides a basic framework to deal with short and long term absences for students and for University and non-University staff so that such instances are dealt with appropriately and consistently. The policy also outlines how to report if individuals are displaying symptoms of Covid, have tested positive and students who need to self-isolate.
- b) To recognise that the clinical phases are intensive and that the current course structure provides students with very few holiday periods. In response to student feedback, a process for taking **flexible leave** has been developed. This will also allow these students to request leave for **foreseen absences**. The **Absence Reference Guide** document details examples of foreseen absences.

Overview

This policy recognises that the different courses that make up the undergraduate Medicine degree have different structures and requirements and therefore different strategies need to be applied, particularly for the clinical phases.

The table below accompanies the **Absence Reference Guide** document and details the process required for each course with regards to Unplanned and Planned absence from the course.

Course	Unplanned (<i>not foreseen/on the day absence</i>)	Planned (<i>known about in advance</i>)
Foundation Year with Medicine	<u>Derby:</u> Online Absence report form to be completed Self-isolating and/or COVID – follow University process <u>Lincoln:</u> Follow the process in the Course handbook	Planned Absence Request form to be completed



Course	Unplanned (<i>not foreseen/on the day absence</i>)	Planned (<i>known about in advance</i>)
BMedSci	<p><u>Nottingham:</u> Self-isolating and/or COVID – follow University process</p> <p>Minor illnesses/absence <7 days– Please complete the School absence reporting online form</p> <p>Significant and ongoing illness and medical conditions >7 days+</p> <p>Please contact the Student Support and Wellbeing team or your personal tutor.</p> <p><u>Lincoln:</u> Follow the process as stated in the course handbook</p>	Planned Absence Request form to be completed
GEM	<p>Online Absence report form to be completed</p> <p>Self-isolating and/or COVID – follow University process</p>	Planned absence Request form to be completed
Clinical Phases	<p>Online Absence report form to be completed</p> <p>Self-isolating and/or COVID – follow University process</p>	Flexible Leave form to be completed



Unplanned Absence (e.g. illness)

From September 2020 - COVID-19: Reporting systems

Students experiencing the symptoms of COVID-19 must also follow the University's process for reporting. Test outcomes should also be submitted.

Other forms of illness

Students should report unplanned absence where specified below using the **Absence Reporting form**.

Students on clinical placements will be responsible for reporting their absence to the relevant person for their attachment at the LEP where they are based in addition to notifying the University via the online form. They must also state the anticipated duration of their absence. If this changes, it is the student's responsibility to submit a new form to reflect the correct length of absence.

Clinical students can 'self-certify' for up to 7 continuous days (includes weekends) or will need to provide a support note from their GP if the absence is longer than 7 continuous days. This mirrors practice in the majority of working environments, encourages professional behaviour from the outset and further assists the School in identifying and supporting students with ongoing personal or medical issues at an earlier stage.

Students with short term absences (i.e. within the 7 day self-certification period) will be able to re-join their studies straight away and students will be made aware that it is their responsibility to catch up on any work missed.

Where students have missed mandatory sessions, they must discuss with the local administrative team to identify if it is possible to catch up. If not, then an email to the educational supervisor (for Clinical Phase students) or Personal Tutor (BMedSci and non-clinical courses) with the relevant Student Services administrator copied in.

Where the absence affects an assessment deadline, the student will need to consider whether the [Policy on Circumstances Affecting Students' Ability to Study and Complete Assessments](#) applies to them.

Where a student has a longer absence that may affect them being able to catch up on all of the teaching/placement that they have missed, **the student must inform:**

- a) the University via relevant Student Service administrator who will refer this to the Course Director and Director of Student Wellbeing.



b) their Placement Provider if they are on a clinical placement.

Notifying and Recording of absence

An acknowledgement email will be received (this will be automatic for students completing the online form). It is the student's responsibility to check that the form and any supporting documentation is complete and accurate when they submit. Students will be asked to provide correct information for incomplete applications or where the paperwork does not support the form submitted.

Planned absence

Foundation Year with Medicine, BMedSci and GEM courses (Early Years)

Any requests for planned absence advance (known in advance) should be submitted using the **Absence request form** and submitted to the relevant Student Services Centre 6 weeks in advance.

The flexible leave policy will not apply to these courses due to a more generous holiday allowance they receive as part of their course structure.

Clinical Years – Flexible leave Policy

There are instances where students would like to request leave from the course for a variety of reasons (examples provided in the Absence Reference Guide) therefore students will have a **flexible leave allowance** that can be used within the framework of the Flexible Leave Policy criteria as stipulated below.

Students will need to complete the **Flexible Leave Request form** and **submit within the required minimum notice periods specified, of the date of leave being requested:**

Stage of study	Notice required
CBM (CP2), GP Primary Care (CP3) and Critical Illness (CP3)	20 working days' notice required
Other CP2, CP3 attachments	10 working days' notice required

The flexible leave allowance amount is shown before for each stage of the clinical course is as follows:

Stage	Number of days	Length of stage
CP2	5 days	22 Weeks
CP3 –A14ACE only*	5 Days (4 days ACE, 1 day MAST)	20 Weeks



Exclusion periods

1. Induction days, mandatory teaching sessions (please check with your placement as these will differ between attachments)
2. The days immediately before and after Bank Holidays
3. Your individual Formative OSCE session
4. Summative assessments
5. Friday and Monday of consecutive weeks

The student must follow the correct process for applying for the leave by submitting the flexible leave request form notifying both:

1. The University at MS-UGstud-absent@nottingham.ac.uk
2. Your contact/administrator at your placement provider

General Principles

It will be each individual student's responsibility to consider what they will miss when taking their flexible leave.

The School/Clinical Placements will NOT be able to reschedule learning opportunities missed by students when taking flexible leave.

Each student will need to decide what activities they are prepared to miss as part of their decision-making process when deciding when to take their flexible leave and the impact that this may have on the successful completion and sign-off of their placement.

With the exception of the attachments named below, Flexible Leave will need to be applied for **at least 10 working days** in advance of the leave being taken. For any requests giving less than the specified minimum number of working days' notice, the student will need to discuss it in person with their placement provider.

CBM (CP2), GP Primary Care (CP3) and Critical Illness will need 20 working days' notice.

It is not possible for flexible leave to be taken during Specials attachments (ENT/Dermatology/Ophthalmology). Flexible leave cannot be applied for retrospectively.

Please note if a student does not advise the relevant people in advance, that they are taking flexible leave, this may well be seen as unprofessional behaviour by the School and could result in a PACC referral.



It is advised that students do not repeatedly miss the same educational activity. It is each student's responsibility to find out if they have missed out on any key information or announcements whilst they have been on leave.

A previously undeclared absence remains an unauthorised absence and will be recorded as such whether or not the student concerned has flexible leave days still available to them.

Process of taking leave

Each student will need to inform the relevant Student Services team AND their local attachment administrator or coordinator.

Students will also be advised that it is their responsibility to let other key individuals know that they are taking flexible leave. This might include any of the following:

- Clinical Teaching Fellows
 - GP Placement Provider
 - Clinical Supervisor
 - SSM Provider (CP2 only)
 - Clinical Group members
- (Please note this list is not exhaustive)*

Cancelling Flexible Leave

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.

In addition, if students are too ill to attend, this would be classed as sickness absence and they can request flexible leave being taken at the time to be reinstated so that they will have the option to take it at another time. However, they will be required to follow the School Sickness Absence Process and submit the relevant documentation, for example, a Self-Certification Form, GP Note or Hospital Admission confirmation as evidence before any flexible leave can be reinstated.



Submission of the Flexible leave form

When submitting a form, the student can expect to receive an email of acknowledgement of receipt within 1-2 working days from the University. It is the student's responsibility to check that the form is complete and observe that flexible leave requests are not used during exclusion periods.

Recording of Flexible leave taken

The form will be received by the University who shall record the amount of flexible leave taken on a spreadsheet and will monitor to ensure that the allocated amount for the year is not exceeded. Instances where flexible leave is not used responsibly, will be flagged to the relevant year lead/Course Director.

Flexible Leave and missed sessions/attachment fails

Please note that flexible leave is **NOT** intended to be used to remediate for a failed attachment.