

**Effective Date: January 1, 2019**

**Retired:**

**Revised:**

**Approved by:**

**Maria F. Lima, Ph.D. Dean, School of Graduate Studies and Research**

**Subject:** PA Program Attendance and Absence Policy

**PURPOSE:**

**The purpose of this this policy is:**

To outline the expectations for required attendance in Physician Assistant Program courses, Structured Clinical Practice Experiences (SCPE), and other activities.

**POLICY STATEMENT:**

*General Attendance Policy*

MMC PA Program students pursuing the Master's in Physician Assistant Sciences degree participate in an intensive, highly structured and progressive educational program in which full participation is essential. MMC PA Program students are expected to assign the highest priority to their professional development and participation in the educational program. Attendance and participation are expected in all education curriculum and activities.

Students are allowed to attend class for only those courses which he or she is officially registered by the Registrar. Credit is given only for coursework taken after official registration.

MMC PA Program students are required to arrive on time and participate fully in all required activities.

*General Absence Policy*

Any deviation from the above General Attendance Policy is considered an absence. Students should not assume they are allowed an absence and are responsible for providing as much advance notice of an anticipated absence and/or providing the earliest notification with required supporting information following an absence to the Course Director(s) of those courses or educational phases that will be interrupted. The application of the excused absence criteria and designation of an absence as an excused absence is at the discretion of the MMC PA Program.

**DEFINITIONS:**

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**Common Time** – A block of time designated on the official MMC PA Program calendar for student non-program activities.

**Excused Absence** – An absence that meets the criteria outlined in the Criteria for Designation of Excused Absence section below AND has been approved by the Course Director and MMC PA Program administration.

**On Time Arrival** – Being in a state of readiness to participate in the corresponding activity prior to the start of the activity.

**Unexcused Absence** – An absence from any activity that does not meet the criteria to be designated an excused absence as detailed in this policy. Any unexcused absence is viewed as noncompliance with the MMC PA Program’s Attendance Policy.

**PROCEDURE:**

All requests for an excused absence must be made in writing using the MMC PA Program approved form (see Exhibits). This includes providing all supporting Attendance Accountability and Adherence information and documentation as early as possible if petitioning for an anticipated excused absence and as soon as possible following an unanticipated absence.

Written requests for the designation of an absence as excused should be made in a format which allows for verifiable documentation of the time and date of the correspondence. Requests should be directed to the Course Director(s) of those courses or educational phase(s) that will be interrupted. Electronic correspondence such as email is the preferred method. Email correspondence should be directed to and from official institutional email accounts. If email correspondence is not possible or will cause an unacceptable time delay in notification, correspondence via phone or written communication should be made promptly followed by an email correspondence as detailed above.

*Absence from Examinations*

MMC PA Program students are expected to follow all applicable attendance and absence policies, including the Administration of Examinations for PA Students. All effort must be made by the PA student to notify the Course Director and the PA Program of an anticipated absence before an exam. Notification must be made and verified as received via phone, or email, PRIOR TO the commencement of the exam. Failure to provide notification prior to the commencement of the exam will result in the

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student receiving a score of 0 (zero) on the exam that is missed. Emergency situations that will not allow the PA student to meet the above notification requirements will be considered only on a case-by-case basis by the MMC PA Program.

Designation of an absence from an exam as excused shall be made as detailed in the procedure below. Absence from an exam due to an excused absence will require the PA student to take a make-up exam as detailed in Administration of Examinations for PA Students Policy and the respective course syllabus.

Adherence to the Attendance and Absence Policy is expected of all students and is part of the professionalism standards students are held to.

Accountability to attendance and policy may take the form of but is not limited to:

- Roll call
- Faculty, staff, and/or college personnel observations
- Random and/or scheduled audits
- Technology assisted accountability methods
- Sign-in forms

*Criteria for Designation of Excused Absence*

1. Reasons for excused absences include, but are not limited to:

- a. Student medical/dental emergency, family tragedy, or personal issues requiring immediate attention.
- b. Access to health services and/or counseling appointments that cannot be made during Common Time or unscheduled student time. All reasonable effort must be made by the student to schedule any such appointments during scheduled Common Time. Appointments requiring scheduling that will conflict with education curriculum and/or DMAs shall only be made with prior official PA Program approval as detailed above.
- c. MMC PA Program approved presentations and/or representation in a

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leadership capacity to regional or national professional organization events.

- d. Official MMC PA Program and institutional events such as interviews and public relations events that have been designated by the Program and/or institution as excused absence events for the student(s) participating.
2. The guidelines and requirements regarding reasonable notification of absence as detailed above have been satisfied.
3. When applicable, the MMC PA student demonstrates academic performance and academic standing at a level the MMC PA Program determines is sufficient to allow for the absence without negatively affecting the ability of the student to maintain required educational performance.
4. When applicable, the MMC PA student is not the subject of previous or ongoing disciplinary action, professionalism concern counseling, or formal procedures for breach of ethical and/or professional behavior standards.

Regarding MMC PA Program approved presentations, representations, and designated excused program events, criteria #2, #3 and #4 above must be satisfied for the student to receive approval for the respective excused absence(s).

#### *Consequences of Excused Absences*

As a general guideline, MMC PA Program students are allowed a maximum of three excused absences per program academic term/semester. Designation of more than three absences as excused absences requires exceptional circumstances that will be evaluated on a case by case basis by the MMC PA Program. The MMC PA student should not assume or expect any absences exceeding three will be designated as excused.

Excused absence(s) resulting from MMC PA Program approved presentations, representations, and designated excused program events will not count toward the allowed maximum.

Excessive absences and/or student conduct that are in violation with this policy will result in:

- Meetings with the Program Director, Associate Program Director, Course Director, Phase Director, and/or Faculty Advisor in an escalating manner to discuss the

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reasons for excessive absences.

- Academic counseling form documenting unexcused absence.
- Professionalism Concern Report (PCR) given for non-compliance with absence policy for each unexcused absence starting with the second unexcused absence.
- Student's receiving a PCR due to an unexcused absence are referred to the Student Progress Committee (SPC) at their next scheduled meeting. Further actions are at the discretion of the SPC.

Any absence that does not meet the criteria to be designated an excused absence as detailed in this policy, will result in the following action(s):

1. First Unexcused Absence

- a. Meeting with Course Director and Faculty Advisor (both must be present).
- b. Academic counseling form documenting the unexcused absence.

2. Second and Third Unexcused Absence

- a. Meeting with Associate Program Director and Phase Director (both must be present).
- b. Academic counseling form documenting second unexcused absence.
- c. PCR given for continued non-compliance with absence policy.
- d. Student referred to SPC at their next scheduled meeting. Further actions at the discretion of the SPC.

A student accumulating 3 unexcused absences and/or 2 absence related PCRs will result in an immediate referral to the Program Director to discuss these PCRs for violation of the attendance and absence policy. The SPC will consider the recommendations from the discussion with the Program Director in taking further action.

**EXHIBITS:**

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*Physician Assistant Sciences Program*

**PA Student Absence Request Form**

**Date:** Click or tap to enter a date.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**M#:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date(s) of Absence:** Click or tap to enter a date. to Click or tap to enter a date.

**My absence is due to:**

- Illness
- Funeral
- Conference
- Military
- Other

**Provide a detailed reason for your absence:**

**Obtain the signature(s) of your Course Director, confirming they have been made aware of the proposed absence. Their signature confirms that arrangements have been made to reconcile any missed coursework.**

**Printed Name of Course Director(s):**

**Course Director's Signature of Acknowledgement**

***Submission of this form DOES NOT mean automatic approval.***