



GRADUATE PROGRAM PROCEDURE FOR INSTITUTIONAL POLICY E-09: ATTENDANCE

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to implement and clarify Institutional Policy E-09: Attendance for the Graduate Program.

2. APPLICABILITY

- 2.1 This procedure applies to all West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine (WVSOM) students enrolled in the Graduate Program.
- 2.2 WVSOM reserves the right to amend this procedure at any time.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 "Associate Dean" means the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs.

4. EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

4.1 Excused Absences

- 4.1.1 Graduate students must provide an excused absence request via e-mail to the Associate Dean (mdiiioia@osteo.wvsom.edu). The Associate Dean will determine if the student may be excused and will provide a written excused absence to the Course Director(s) and will copy the student. The student is to follow up with the Course Director(s) to make up the required activity. In the event that the mandatory activity is an exam, the Associate Dean will determine the make-up date for the exam.
- 4.1.2 A limited number of excuses may be granted for certain occurrences, such as the following:
 - a. Illness: A student illness and illness in the immediate family that prevent the student from attending any mandatory activity. A student who misses a graded activity for medical reasons may subsequently be required to present to the Associate Dean a written confirmation of his/her illness from a physician, physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner, none of whom may be in a familial relationship with the student, stating that the student was "too ill to attend on the day of the activity" and specifying the date that the student is to return to class.
 - b. Transportation Problems: A student may be excused if they physically cannot be present due to a documented transportation problem; ex. car broke down, interstate closed down, flight delayed.
 - c. Weather Problems: A student who is unable to make it to campus because of a documented weather condition, ex. ice or snow storm, may be excused at the discretion of the Associate Dean.
 - d. Weddings: A student participating in a wedding is expected to make every reasonable effort to attend classes as scheduled. However, a student who has an immediate family member being married may be excused at the discretion of the Associate Dean. Documentation of the wedding is required for excused absences.
 - e. Funerals: A student may be excused for funerals of a family member or close friend.

- f. Religious Observance: A student may be excused for up to five (5) days for observance of religious holy days. Absences from graded activities should be avoided.
- g. Off Campus Professional Meetings: A student may be excused for attending an off campus professional meeting if they meet academic criteria. Students must submit the "Off campus meeting form" to the Associate Dean.

4.2 Unexcused Absences

- 4.2.1 Students with an unexcused absence for a mandatory activity will have points or a percentage of their grade deducted.
- 4.2.2 Students who miss a mandatory activity will be required to make up the activity whether the absence is excused or unexcused. The Course Director or designee will determine the makeup activity. All courses are required to develop a mechanism for documenting attendance at mandatory activities.

4.3 Chronic Lateness

- 4.3.1 Documented chronic lateness is considered unprofessional behavior. Progressive discipline will be used to address students who are late to mandatory activities. Verbal feedback will initially occur followed by a written warning. Chronic lateness will be reported to the Associate Dean as unprofessional behavior and may result in further action in accordance with Institutional Policy GP-01: Academic and Professional Standards and applicable procedures.
- 4.3.2 Students who do not complete all course assignments, including makeup activities, according to the due date on the syllabus will receive a grade penalty unless there are extenuating circumstances in the judgment of the Course Director that prevented the student from completing all course work. Students with documented and approved extenuating circumstances will receive an Incomplete (I) until the course assignment(s) has been completed within the time frame determined by the Course Director.

5. OFF-CAMPUS MEETING ATTENDANCE

- 5.1 The following procedure pertains to all graduate student leave from classes to attend off-campus meetings even if no classes will be missed. It recognizes that the graduate student's major responsibility should be to attend class, labs, and other designated activities in order to gain the mastery of skills and knowledge that is necessary to complete their graduate program. While attending national meetings can be instructive and add to a student's overall knowledge base, students must first gain basic skills and information from the classroom. Thus, while it is recognized that students have discretion to attend certain classes, it is also recognized that it is a privilege, not a right, for a graduate student to be allowed to attend national meetings. Therefore, students will be required to adhere to the following procedure whether or not they would be missing a required class or exam.

5.2 Criteria for Meeting Leave Approval

- 5.2.1 Students must meet the Eligibility Requirements noted below.
- 5.2.2 Students must be in good academic standing.
- 5.2.3 Students must have a cumulative overall grade point average of 80 or greater.
- 5.2.4 The meeting must have a student educational component (e.g., there must be an educational program at the meeting specifically for students or the student must hold an office which must be represented at a board meeting).
- 5.2.5 The meeting leave must first be approved by the Associate Dean of Graduate Programs.

5.2.6 The meeting leave must also be approved by the Course Director.

5.2.7 Depending on the nature of the meeting attended, students may be required to provide an oral report on the meeting to an appropriate constituent group.

5.3 Process for Applying for Meeting Leave

5.3.1 Students must initiate the process by filling out the Off-Campus Meeting Attendance Request Form, which is available at the Associate Dean's office. Approval must be obtained at least **three weeks** prior to the commencement of the trip. Forms must be filled out by each individual student. This form will only be given to students who are eligible to ask for meeting leave. Students **must** fill out this form whether or not they are missing any required course work. Failure to fill out this form will result in revoking permission to go to other meetings and may result in other academic sanctions, including documenting the infraction as unprofessional behavior. **Students must also verify that their health insurance provides coverage in the state they wish to travel.**

5.3.2 Once the trip has been pre-approved by the Associate Dean, if the student is going to miss any mandatory activities (e.g., classes, exams, quizzes, labs, TBLs, presentation wrap-ups or other activities), the student must also receive written approval from the involved Course Director(s). The Course Director(s) will **not** sign off on any trip until the Associate Dean has signed the form. NOTE: Although the Associate Dean may approve student meeting leave, the Course Director(s) may be aware of specific performance issues, or have other concerns which would preclude them from approving a student's trip. Therefore, under the circumstances above, both must sign off in order for the trip to be approved.

5.3.3 Written approval by the Course Director(s) required by Section 5.2.6 above must state how and when the required activities are going to be made up. Course Directors have the authority to specifically identify a non-negotiable time and date for all make-up exams as well as other work due.

5.3.4 After receiving the required signatures, students must return the form to the Associate Dean's office for final approval. If the form is not returned at least **two weeks** prior to the commencement of the trip, permission to attend the meeting will be revoked.

5.4 Eligibility Requirements

Students are not permitted to attend state and/or national meetings from August through December. Students will be allowed to attend one national meeting from January through May, provided they meet the criteria set forth above. All required academic activities missed must be made up. Arrangements for make-up must be made and approved in writing by the Course Director(s) a minimum of **three weeks** prior to attending the meeting. Course Director(s) have the authority to specifically identify a non-negotiable time and date for all make-up work due. Students will not be allowed to miss exams to attend a meeting, unless their attendance is required by a national organization.

5.5 Exceptions for Student Officers

5.5.1 Students who hold an office in a WVSOM-supported club or organization and are required to attend national meetings because of that office may be allowed to attend more than one meeting per year in order to fulfill this obligation. For example, students may still attend one meeting of their choice as well as the meetings they are required to attend by virtue of their office. Student officers must still meet all of the criteria listed above. Officers must document the necessity for their attendance.

5.5.2 Proxies attending required organization meetings will be permitted under unusual circumstances if permission is sought and obtained from the Associate Dean. The proxy must also meet all of the criteria listed above.

5.6 Other Exceptions

- 5.6.1 A single meeting each year can be attended for the purpose of presentation of scholarly activity such as papers or posters. This exception will be considered for primary authors or presenters only.
- 5.6.2 On occasion, meetings will be held back-to-back in the same place (e.g., SOMA and AOA). When this occurs, students may petition to attend both or parts of both meetings where appropriate, but must show a valid purpose for their attendance.
- 5.6.3 The Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean and the Associate Dean have the authority to deny any student request for meeting leave based on the circumstances, or grant other exceptions when appropriate.

Procedure Title:	Graduate Program Procedure for Institutional Policy E-09: Attendance		
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APPROVED BY:			
Approving Administrator – Interim Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean:			
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General Counsel/Chief Legal Officer:			
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