

UMKC SCHOOL OF MEDICINE: GUIDELINE REGARDING RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS AND PRACTICES

Purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to assist faculty in responding to requests by medical professions students for the consideration of religious holidays and practices that may conflict with educational and clinical responsibilities. The guideline is intended to facilitate the equitable treatment of medical professions students in such a way that patient care and educational activities are not compromised.

Guideline

Physicians, physicians-in-training, and medical professions students are professionals with a responsibility for patient care that may require them to work on religious holidays or may conflict with religious practices. All medical students including students on clinical rotations should understand that becoming a physician includes learning to accept responsibility for one's patients 24 hours per day, 365 days per year, except when alternatives for coverage have been obtained. For example, medical professions students on clinical rotations are required to participate in patient care activities on weekends as part of the medical team.

The UMKC School of Medicine recognizes the importance of religious observances and attempts to avoid scheduling exams or other graded activities on those religious holidays that are observed by large segments of the population. In the event that a graded exercise or exam is scheduled on a recognized religious holiday for a specific student or group of students, the student may request to take the examination at another time. The decision regarding alternate arrangements will be made by the faculty member for the course. It is the responsibility of the student to notify instructors, coordinators and the administration well in advance of a major religious holiday for a request for alternate completion of examinations or other required work. It is suggested that students notify clerkship coordinators of potential conflicts at least two months in advance and that students notify professors immediately upon obtaining the course syllabus. A partial list of key religious holidays that are observed by a large segment of the populations is provided for quick reference. Note: Since some holiday dates may change from year to year, it is a good idea to consult pertinent websites, (e.g. <http://info.umkc.edu/diversity/events-programs/religious-calendar/>) for actual dates for a given year. For additional information contact Sam Turner, turnersam@umkc.edu or Cynthia Ginn, ginnc@umkc.edu .

Religious Holidays and Holy Days

- Ramadan (Muslim)
- Rosh Hashanah (Jewish)
- Eid al Fitr (Muslim)
- Sukkot (Jewish)
- Yom Kippur (Jewish)
- Eid al Adha (Muslim)
- Ash Wednesday (Christian)
- Month of Fasting (Baha'i)
- Passover (Jewish)
- Good Friday (Christian & Orthodox)
- Easter (Christian & Orthodox)
- Christmas (Christian)

Religious Practices

In addition to holiday observances, questions might arise regarding religious practices that might conflict with scheduled clinical or educational activities. In instances where a student believes his/her religious practices conflict with patient care or academic requirements, the UMKC School of Medicine's Office of Diversity and Inclusion will serve as a resource for students and faculty in resolving the concerns. The Office will make efforts to identify a practicing physician of the same faith as the student for counseling and advice regarding balancing patient care, educational and religious obligations.

Guidance Regarding Schedule Modifications for Clinical Clerkships

In general, students are expected to attend and participate in every session of a clinical clerkship. Excused absences will be considered only to the extent that such absences do not interfere unreasonably with the goals and objectives established for the clerkship.

Students who wish to modify their schedule for any reason, including observation of religious holy days are obligated to seek an excused absence from the clerkship director or course coordinator **in advance**. Students are asked to take the following steps to complete this request:

1. All excused absences from a clinical clerkship must be approved by the Clerkship Director in writing. Student must obtain a "Request for Clerkship Excused Absence Form" from any Educational Team Coordinator (ETC).
2. The completed form is taken to the Clerkship Coordinator first and then to the Director for approval and signature. (Students are asked to speak directly to the Rotation Coordinator and Director to obtain their signature, and not simply leave the form to be signed)

Students with excused absences are expected to make arrangements with the Clerkship Director in advance for an alternative schedule or make-up work. Failure to do so two weeks prior to the clerkship start-date, will result in an unexcused absence. The course faculty/director or clerkship director is expected to review excused absence requests in a timely manner to determine whether an alternative schedule or other arrangement can be made.

Students enrolled in the Docent Rotation should seek approval for excused absences from the assigned Docent. Consequences of unexcused absences will be determined by the Clerkship Director and may result in a No Credit for the Clerkship.

Agreements between a student and his/her course faculty/director or clerkship director generally apply **only to the student's home program**. The agreement shall not apply to rotations affiliated with other programs, unless a formal written agreement to excuse an absence request has been executed between the programs. Programs may decline to offer an alternative schedule to visiting students for the same reasons that such requests would not be honored for their own students.