



Policy Title:
Attendance Policy

Policy Identifier:
PA102

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Reviewed by: PA Program Executive Committee	Review Date: 01/01/2026
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Category: Academic Policies	

Scope

University of South Carolina (USC) School of Medicine Columbia PA students.

Policy Statement

Consistent attendance, punctuality, and active participation in all didactic, laboratory, and clinical activities are required components of professionalism and academic performance within the USC Physician Assistant Program. Because the curriculum is rigorous and includes scheduled breaks and holidays, additional absences may negatively impact student mastery of course material. Attendance is **mandatory** unless an emergency or excused circumstance applies. Students must arrive on time and remain for the full duration of each required session.

Reason for Policy

This policy defines expectations, procedures, and consequences related to student attendance to ensure academic integrity, professionalism, and compliance with program and accreditation standards.

Definitions

- **Excused Absence:** An absence approved by program faculty based on acceptable justification and, when required, appropriate documentation.
- **Immediate Family:** A parent, spouse, child, spouse of a child, sibling, spouse of a sibling, grandparent, grandchild, or legal guardian.
- **Supervised Clinical Practice Experience (SCPE):** A required clinical rotation within the PA curriculum.

Procedures

1. Excused Absences

Absences or anticipated absences are evaluated individually by program faculty. Students remain responsible for all missed content and must contact the Course Director to arrange make-up work.



Excused absences may be approved for:

- Military service or jury duty
- Observance of a religious practice, holiday, or holy day
- Illness or injury too severe or contagious to attend (documentation required)
- Death or severe illness of an immediate family member (documentation required)

Students may receive up to three days of excused bereavement leave. Acceptable documentation may include an obituary or death certificate. Requirements for documentation follow [USC Student Affairs and Academic Support guidelines](#).

Reasons not considered valid for excused absences include:

Business appointments, routine medical/dental visits, weddings, graduations, personal vacations, airline reservations, death or illness of a pet, and other personal/social events.

2. Reporting an Absence

Students must notify all appropriate faculty members via email as soon as possible for each day of absence. Notification through peers, text messages, or informal communication channels is not acceptable.

3. Consequences of Absences

- **Tests and Practical Exams:**

An absence on a scheduled assessment day will be considered unexcused and result in a grade of zero unless appropriate documentation is provided.

- **Unexcused Absences:**

Students may choose to take an unexcused absence; however, each unexcused day results in a one-point deduction from the final grade in all PA program courses (excluding Anatomy and Physiology).

- **Multiple Unexcused Absences:**

More than two unexcused absences in a semester or SCPE triggers referral to the Student Progress and Promotions Committee (SPPC) and may result in disciplinary action.

- **Excused Absences – Didactic Phase:**

More than three excused absences in a didactic semester requires a mandatory meeting with the SPPC.

- **Clinical Rotations:**

Missing more than two days of a clinical rotation—excused or unexcused—requires make-up time as determined by the Clinical Education Team.

Contacts

Program Director

USC School of Medicine Columbia



Physician Assistant Program

History

Date of Change	Change
01/01/2026	Policy drafted into new template