USA COM ATTENDANCE POLICY

I. PRECLINICAL COURSES

Although lecture attendance is not required unless otherwise specified by the module director, regular attendance at lectures is strongly encouraged and expected.

Attendance is required for all in-class sessions which are team-based, including team-based learning (TBL) sessions, Flip Class sessions, instructional sessions or assessments conducted in the gross anatomy laboratory, team-based laboratory instructional sessions, and other team-based type instructional sessions. Psychomotor (clinical skills) sessions are also mandatory.

A. ABSENCES

Absences will be excused in the following circumstances: serious illness, family illness, birth of a child, jury duty, presentations at professional meetings, and personal emergencies. The student must notify the Associate Dean for Medical Education and Student Affairs and the module director with as much advance notice as possible for the absence. In the case of illness, the student will be required to present a doctor’s excuse if absence due to the illness lasts more than 24 hours.

In order to allow for other important events in a student’s life (i.e. family events such as weddings, graduations, funerals of friends or non-first degree relatives, major religious holidays, participation in professional meetings, etc.) students may be granted up to 3 full days per academic year during the M1 and M2 years. Students are responsible for notifying the Associate Dean for Medical Education and Student Affairs and the module director for approval. Students are encouraged to plan these days outside of major exam and quiz dates if at all possible. Every effort will be made to reschedule an exam, if the ability of the student to plan an absence around an exam proves impossible. However, since this is not guaranteed, students are strongly encouraged to consult with the module director prior to finalizing travel plans, such as purchasing plane tickets, etc. The student will be required to provide documentation of the event attended in the form of a graduation, wedding, or funeral program/obituary, etc. to the module director upon his/her return.

Makeup quizzes for active learning exercises, including simulations, are not given. Likewise, Review and Assessment quizzes cannot be made up, but a student may arrange with the module director to review the questions after the regularly scheduled quiz time. Independent learning assessments (ILAs) have a deadline of the next biweekly exam start time. If the assessment is not submitted by the deadline, the student will be non-compliant and given a U (unsatisfactory) on mid-and/or final module reports. A module director may specify a shorter deadline for a specific ILA so the schedule should be read carefully. Missed quizzes for excused absences will not be counted toward the student’s grade.
Absences will be tracked over the course of the M1 and M2 years. Should a student have an excess of absences or fail to notify both the module director and the Associate Dean for Medical Education and Student Affairs or Assistant Dean for Assessment and Evaluation as outlined above, a PEC note will be issued as documentation of a lapse in professionalism and the student will be counseled. Should a student continue to accrue unexcused absences, a second PEC note will be issued and the student will be referred to the Student Promotion and Evaluation Committee.

B. VACATION

Students receive the holidays posted in the College of Medicine Academic Calendar.

II. M3 CLINICAL ROTATIONS

Attendance is required for all clinical experiences (inpatient and outpatient) during the M3 clinical rotations.

A. ABSENCES

Excused absences will be granted in the following circumstances: serious illness, family illness, birth of a child, jury duty, presentations at professional meetings, and personal emergencies. In the case of illness, the student will be required to present a doctor’s excuse if absence due to the illness lasts more than 24 hours.

In order to allow for other important events in a student’s life (i.e. family events such as weddings, graduations, major religious holidays, participation in professional meetings, etc.) students are granted up to 3 full days per academic year during the M3 year. Students are responsible for obtaining approval from the Associate Dean for Medical Education and Student Affairs and the clerkship director. The student will be required to provide documentation of the attended event in the form of a graduation, wedding, or funeral program, a professional meeting agenda etc. to the clerkship director upon his/her return.

Make-up assignments are at the discretion of the clerkship director and may necessitate making up time during evening shifts and/or on weekends for in-house clerkships. The student must notify the Associate Dean for Medical Education and Student Affairs and the clerkship director with as much advance notice as possible for approval of an excused absence. Making up credit for individual student assessments (including shelf exams) missed due to an excused absence will be done in collaboration with the clerkship director.

Absences (with approval) will be tracked over the course of the M3 year. Should a student have greater than the allowed number of absences (with approval) or fail to notify both the clerkship director and the Associate Dean for Medical Education and Student Affairs as outlined above, a PEC note will be issued as a sign of the student’s lapse in professionalism and the student will be counseled. Should a student continue to accrue absences, a second PEC note will be issued and the student will be referred to the Student Promotion and Evaluation Committee.

B. VACATION
Students receive the holidays posted in the College of Medicine Academic Calendar.

III. M4 CLINICAL ROTATIONS

Holidays and vacation

All blocks begin on Monday and end on Friday. Time off for M4s during holidays is at the discretion of the supervisor/course director of the elective, or may be delegated to the responsible Resident on the service. For fourth year senior students, "official university holidays" such as July 4, Thanksgiving, New Year’s Day, Mardi Gras Day are given at the discretion of each course director. The student must communicate with the director before the holiday and adhere to his/her requests. The student is expected to assume in many respects the role of a physician, and in so doing to recognize the needs of patients and the need of the service for coverage, regardless of weekends and holidays. Senior students can assign vacation time to any block date of their choice, keeping in mind that vacation should be used during interview season. Students cannot participate in any clinical experience during the three (3) week Holiday break in December as they will not be covered by medical liability and or malpractice insurance during that time.

Time Off

In order to travel to or take USMLE Step 2CS/CK, M4 medical students are allowed to miss a total of five (5) days off during a four (4) week rotation. The five (5) days off cannot be taken during an AI (Acting Internship) rotation. The five (5) days off cannot be taken all in a row causing the student to miss an entire week. Students must request the time off from the course director with as much advance notice as possible. During interview season, students may take up to five (5) days off during a four (4) week rotation to attend interviews. Students must request the time off by contacting the Course Director with as much advance notice as possible. Students are strongly discouraged from taking five (5) days off in a single week. The course director may require make-up work for the time missed or suggest, in consultation with the Associate Dean for Medical Education and Student Affairs, that the student drop the rotation and place vacation in the block instead.

The USA College of Medicine recognizes that time may be allotted for important events in a M4 student’s life (i.e. family events such as weddings, graduations, major religious holidays, participation in professional meetings, etc.). In the previous years (M1- M3), students were granted three (3) full days per academic year to allow for participation in these events. These three (3) days are also extended to the M4 students with the following caveat: no student will exceed five (5) days off in any given M4 rotation which last four (4) weeks inclusive of USMLE Step 2 CS/CK travel and testing time and interview time. In order for a student to receive credit for the M4 rotation, at least 75% of the clinical activities must be satisfactorily performed with the course director’s approval. As with all other M4 absences, these absences must be approved by the course director prior to the absence. Make-up assignments if necessary are at the discretion of the course director. Including the acting internship rotations, each M4 student should have at least an average of one day in seven free from all required clinical duties over the four (4) week rotation. In the event of urgency, if the M4 student needs to exceed the time off for any given M4 rotation, the student must contact the Associate Dean of Student Affairs prior to the beginning of that rotation, to
seek approval for potential schedule changes which might accommodate the time off. This accommodation may include scheduling vacation for the rotation or other alternatives.

IV. APPOINTMENTS FOR MAINTAINING STUDENT HEALTH AND WELL BEING

The USA College of Medicine recognizes and supports the critical need for students to maintain their individual health and wellbeing. To that end, during the M1 – M4 years, students will be granted excused absences to attend necessary physical and mental health appointments. Such appointments include those to address preventive health care, acute illnesses, chronic illnesses, physical therapy, and counseling/psychological services. Students who are parents are excused to attend their children’s appointments that fall under these categories as well.

The following steps apply in this circumstance:

1. Every effort should be made to schedule appointments during less active days and time periods for the module or clerkship.
2. As much advance notice as possible should be provided by the student to the appropriate supervisory individuals (module director or, director,) regarding the date/time of the appointment and what time the student anticipates leaving and returning.
3. Documentation of the appointment by the provider must be presented to the module director or clerkship/site director. (NOTE: Personal information regarding the nature of the appointment is not necessary. The only documentation required is the date/time of the appointment and that the student was in attendance)
4. Remediation will be required according to the guidelines outlined in this policy. Make-up activities will be assigned at the discretion of the module director or the clerkship director.

V. TRAVEL

Pending availability of funds and advance approval of the Associate Dean for Medical Education and Student Affairs, the College or other organizations will support travel for students in good standing as follows:

A. AAMC Organization of Student Representatives (OSR)
   1. Sophomore Member: The sophomore may attend the regional spring meeting after finishing his/her sophomore year. The previous fall meeting may be attended when financially feasible and approved by the Associate Dean for Medical Education and Student Affairs.
   2. Junior Member: The junior member may attend both the fall national and spring regional meetings.
   3. Senior Member: The senior member may attend the fall national meeting, the last time to serve as a voting member. If he/she holds a national or regional elected office, the senior should plan to attend both the fall and spring meetings. The spring regional meeting may be attended when financially feasible and approved by the Associate Dean for Medical Education and Student Affairs.

B. AMA
Medical Student Section Travel and expenses for one or two students to attend each of two meetings (annual meeting in June and interim meeting in December) will be paid by the College (1/2 of total) and the Medical Association of the State of Alabama (1/2 of total) provided the student(s) is presenting or is on the program in some capacity. The student will be excused for one day of travel to the meeting, attendance at the meeting on the day of presentation or scheduled participation, and one day for return travel.

C. Students with Presentations at Professional Meetings
   1. Attendance and any potential funding will be approved by the Associate Dean for Medical Education and Student Affairs
   2. The student will be excused for one day of travel to the meeting, attendance at the meeting on the day of presentation or scheduled participation, and one day for return travel.
   3. The student must approach the module director or the clerkship director for approval and provide as much advance notice as possible about the dates the student anticipates being absent.
   4. Make-up work may be required and is at the discretion of the module or clerkship director.

D. Students Participating in Professional Meetings for Other Reasons
   1. The student is responsible for seeking the approval of the Associate Dean for Medical Education and Student Affairs to attend the meeting.
   2. The student must approach the module director or clerkship director for approval and provide as much advance notice as possible about the dates the student anticipates being absent.
   3. Make-up work may be required and is at the discretion of the module or clerkship director.

The following steps apply to travel:

A. As much advance notice as possible should be provided by the student to the appropriate supervisory individuals (module director or clerkship director) regarding the dates the student anticipates being away at the meeting.
B. Documentation of meeting attendance (i.e. official meeting program sessions attended) must be presented to the module director or clerkship/site director.
C. Make-up time may be required and will be assigned at the discretion of the module director or the clerkship director.