

STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND LEAVE GUIDELINE

Overview

The purpose of this document is to outline the requirements to students and staff in the MBBS program in relation to participation to learning activities and leave approval. It also describes the repercussions for not attending compulsory activities.

The MBBS program at James Cook University is a full time program which requires student participation and attendance in designated learning sessions. It is assumed that students have taken into account commitments (such as work, family, social, sporting, religious and other commitments, and non-urgent medical and dental appointments) and are able to attend all coursework sessions.

The College of Medicine and Dentistry (CMD) recognises that most students attend as required and that many will have genuine reasons for taking small amounts of leave. At the same time, students have the responsibility to advise the staff affected by their absence, clinician on the ward, teaching staff, etc and apply for leave as they would in a professional environment.

Scope

These guidelines apply to all students enrolled in the MBBS program and staff involved in the teaching, counselling and administration in the MBBS program at James Cook University.

Attendance Requirements

Attendance at specified classes may be a mandatory requirement for satisfactory completion of some subjects, as detailed in the *Learning, Teaching and Assessment Policy*. Compulsory sessions include timetabled hours and other sessions as specified in the Subject and Rotation Outlines, subject and lecture week timetable and clinical rosters.

Attendance at compulsory sessions is one of the markers used to formally assess Professional behaviour. The College has processes in place to collect attendance data to populate the Professional Indicator Report (PIR). Signing for others is forgery and will trigger an Academic Misconduct case.

Students need to advise the subject coordinator or relevant administrator of their absence as soon as practical and apply for leave. Absences will be considered as unapproved absences until a Leave Application form is received and approved. Remediation may be required for approved leave (see appendix 1).

In Years 4, 5 and 6, where the number of unapproved absences exceeds 10% of placement days, students will fail the year as they will not have had sufficient clinical placement/session days to satisfactorily complete the clinical component of the subject.

1. MBBS 1, 2 and 3

The minimum attendance requirements, without remediation requirements, are:

- Timetabled learning activities listed as sign-in – 80%
- Clinical skills sessions, excluding practice sessions – 100%
- Home group meeting – 80%
- Clinical placements including rural placements and electives – 100%
- Prescribed learning activities such as Cultural Immersion – 100%

Any session requiring 100% attendance which is missed will be rescheduled. A remediation plan is not needed for these activities. A self remediation plan will be needed for sign-in sessions once 2 days have been missed.

Missed placement activities will require the student to complete make-up activities as determined by the relevant Academic Coordinator.

2. MBBS 4, 5 and 6

The minimum attendance requirements, without remediation requirements, are:

- Learning activities timetabled during lecture week – 80%
- Clinical skills sessions – 100%
- CPC sessions – 100%
- Clinical attachments during placement or rotation – 90%
- Bedside teaching sessions – 90%
- Designated Honours sessions – 100%

Students who are absent for more than 10% of placement/rotation days on unapproved leave will fail the placement or rotation.

Students who miss more than 10% of placement/rotation days on approved planned or unplanned leave will need to contact the placement or rotation coordinator to discuss an appropriate remediation plan.

Where the placement or rotation coordinator judges it is not possible to remediate the loss of learning opportunities before the end of the placement or rotation, the student may be required to remediate at a later date, take a leave of absence or repeat the year.

Applying for leave

Absences can be planned or unplanned. Applying for leave does not automatically mean the leave will be granted. Students should not make travel or other plans until the leave has been approved.

Pressures of work commitments, social commitments, sporting or other community commitments and routine, non-urgent medical, dental or other appointments do not justify an exemption from full compliance of this guideline. Students are expected to have made appropriate arrangements for study.

3. Planned leave

Planned leave may be granted for matters relating to:

- Health matters
- Significant family events
- Compassionate leave for events significantly affecting close relatives
- Cultural leave for the sole purpose of observing holy days or to attend essential religious or cultural duties.
- Academic conference or meetings relevant to the student's current studies
- Special sporting or arts leave for representation at state, national, or international level
- Defence force reservist leave
- Assisting with MBBS 1-3 MSATs as an examiner (MBBS 6 students only)

The application must be accompanied by supporting documentation such as a letter from the medical practitioner; conference registration; etc

Planned leave must be applied for at least 4 weeks before the first day of leave, or as soon as the student is aware of the situation.

4. Unplanned leave

Unplanned leave may be granted for matters relating to:

- Sudden health matters
- Urgent family matters such as bereavement
- Major political upheaval or natural disaster requiring emergency travel

Unplanned leave should be applied for within 3 calendar days of the first day of when the leave is taken, except in exceptional circumstances. In all circumstances the College should be notified immediately of the event occurrence.

Supporting documentation will be required after two days missed. Where a pattern of recurring absences is identified, students may be required to provide supporting documentation e.g. a Medical Certificate for each occurrence of sick leave.

Alternatively, an Extenuating Circumstances (medical and/or counselling) form may be used to advise the University of exceptional circumstances when applying for leave. Submission of this form can mitigate the requirement for medical or counselling certificates. You can access the form here: <https://apps.jcu.edu.au/extenuating-circumstances/#/>

5. Weekends and public holidays

Students may be rostered on-call or be engaged in other activities on some weekends and/or public holidays. Students must apply for leave if planning to be absent during activities rostered on weekends or public holidays.

6. Rural placements

Whilst on placement repeated applications for weekend leave may not be approved as students are expected to spend some time in the community learning about the social context of the health issues they are seeing and some time doing clinical activity, including being on-call.

Students are required to inform the College when leaving the rural placement site outside rostered activities. An example is when the student travels to another town, or goes camping for the weekend. In order to meet the University's legal responsibilities, especially to enable contact with the student in case of emergency, accurate records as to the whereabouts of students on rural placement are necessary.

When emergency leave is necessary students are required to make contact with the appropriate rural preceptor or 1300 RUR MED as soon as possible to ensure that the supervisor/preceptor knows the student's whereabouts. This should be followed as soon as is practicable with a written Leave Application and Remediation Plan sent to the designated person. The university understands that sudden illness or other unexpected or exceptional circumstances can prevent a student from attending rural clinical placement but expects a leave application to be submitted as soon as possible in such circumstances.

7. Remediation Plan

In the Remediation Plan the student should demonstrate:

- that they are able to reschedule or swap into another similar mandatory session or make up time, according to the rules associated with this activity, and/or;
- that they will undertake any additional assessable or other non-assessable tasks as required, including mandatory make-up activities.

In exceptional circumstances (compelling health reasons, bereavement, caring for unwell members of immediate family) and when a student has approved leave, remediation will be

arranged by the Year Coordinator and would usually occur in term breaks, or during the MBBS6 Clinical Elective rotation. All remediation or make-up activities must be completed before the assessment committee meeting for graduating subjects.

Remediation requirements are different for each year level of the course (see appendix 1).

Approval Details

Custodian:	Associate Dean Students, College of Medicine and Dentistry
Approval authority:	Dean, College of Medicine and Dentistry
Contributors:	Director Foundation Studies, Director Clinical Studies, Manager Academic Services
Version no:	16.1
Date for next review:	Oct 2020

Modification History

Version no.	Approval date	Approved By	Implementation date	Edited	Details
16.1		CSC	19 Feb 2020	Manager Academic Services	Added "...without remediation requirements..." to minimum attendance requirements in Points 1 and 2.
16	10 Dec 2019	Dean of College	1 Jan 2020	Associate Dean, Students & Manager Academic Services	Major review of the document to align remediation requirements, submission of medical certificate with workplace requirements. Deleted superfluous information that was already included in other documents. Deleted all existing tables and replaced with one single table outlining remediation requirements across the course.
15.2	12 Dec 2017			Manager Academic Services	Added MBBS 1-3 MSATs to the list of Point 8 - Possible acceptable reasons for taking leave
15.1	16 Jun 2017	Dean of College	17 Aug 2017	Manager Academic Services	Added a statement clarifying normal approved leave days for student attending a conference (see 8.e and item 13) after CSC Meeting in Aug 2017.
15.0	16 Jun 2017	Dean of College	5 Jul 2017	Associate Dean, Students & Manager Academic Services	Amended requirements for mandatory remediation for Years 4-6 missing 1-4 days of clinical (table 4) and item 23, p. 7.
14.0	06 Dec 2016	Dean of College	1 Jan 2017	Associate Dean, Students & Manager Academic Services	Re-organised content and numbered items; new heading 'Remediation' (p. 6). Included statement that remediation is not possible if a student misses more than 20 days in MBBS 4 (p. 7). Included Honours student requirement to apply for leave, but not to remediate time missed for attending honours seminars (pp. 2,7,11)
13.0	06 Oct 2015	Dean of College	1 Nov 2015	Associate Dean, Students & Manager Academic Services	Renamed Senior Student Advisor and Director of Students to Associate Dean, Students. Changed departure guidelines for year 4 rural placement (p.6) reflecting time allowed to travel and removing distance conditions. Consequences of not completing attendance requirements (p.6) reworded. Updated tables to reflect correct titles, email addresses. Reworded table 1b to Years 1 & 3 Placements and created table 1c to reflect Year 2 Rural Placement.
12.1	Dec 2014	Dean of College	Jan 2015	Manager, SEPU, Year 5 Academic Coordinator	Refined the requirements for Years 4 to 6 (p.2) and updated table (p.20)
12.0	29 Sep 2014	Dean of Medicine	2 Oct 2014	Manager, SEPU; Director RCTS; Manager Rural Coordination	Removed references to School of Medicine; removed examples of reasons for taking leave (p.3 item d). Changed departure guidelines for students upon completion of rural placement (p.5) to be in accordance with the Student Travel Guide (ref to allowable time to travel, not distance)
11.2	19 Dec 2013	-	19 Dec 2014	Manager, SEPU	Added departure guidelines for students upon completion of rural placement (p.5)
11.0	31 Jul 2012	Head of School	1 Aug 2012	Director of Students, Director RCTS, Director of Clinical Studies	Guide review and rewrite. Inclusion of rural placement attendance and leave. Name change to <i>MBBS Attendance, Non-Attendance and Leave Guide</i> .
10.1		Head of School	Jan 2010	Manager, SEPU	Minor changes made to Years 1 to 3.
08.1	2008	Head of School	2008	unknown	<i>MBBS Attendance and Leave Policy</i> Approved by School of Medicine and Dentistry Board of Studies, Policy in use. << >>

Related Forms

MBBS1-3_Form_Student application for leave 2019

MBBS4-6_Form_Student application for leave

Clinical skills non-attendance process – MBBS 1 to 3

Clinical skills non-attendance process – MBBS 4

[Appendix 1](#)

Remediation is required after the number of days of absence indicated below.

Year level or activity	Days missed per semester or rotation	Days missed per year	Who approves the remediation plan
MBBS 1-3	1 day	N/A	Subject coordinator
MBBS 1 GP Placement	1 session	N/A	Placement coordinator
MBBS 1 Health Elective	1 day	N/A	Placement coordinator
MBBS 2 Rural Placement	2 days	N/A	Placement coordinator
MBBS 3 Emergency Medicine Selective	2 days	N/A	Placement coordinator
MBBS 4 (including Rural)	3 days	10	Year 4 coordinator at each site
MBBS 5 (per 6 week rotation)	3 days	8 days	Rotation Coordinator at each site
MBBS 6 (per 10 week rotation, including Rural)	5 days	10	Rotation Coordinator at each site