Policy on Student Attendance

This Policy is intended to govern and guide decisions regarding Student Attendance in the Faculty of Dentistry, University of Manitoba.

1.0 Background
The University of Manitoba Faculty of Dentistry has a social mandate to ensure that graduating dentists are caring, skilled healthcare providers who are worthy of the public trust endowed upon them. In fulfilling this mandate, the Faculty of Dentistry has developed comprehensive programs of education and experience to ensure that graduates meet these high expectations. Collectively, we refer to these programs as Dental School. Unlike non-professional education programs, where students can pick and choose their education and experiences based on personal preferences, Dental School requires students to attend and participate actively in all components of the program.

While students are required to complete assignments and pass examinations, these are not considered to be equivalent to attending Dental School. When the University confers the DMD degree, it attests to society not only that the student has shown successful examination performance, but that the student has participated in the entire educational experience defined by the Faculty of Dentistry and has thereby demonstrated an appropriate level of professional learning and responsibility.

Students who do not comply with the Student Attendance Policy will face academic consequences, including:

- Reduced course grades
- Required make-up work
- Debarment from class or from final examination(s)
- Requirement to repeat a course or year in the program
- Notice of unprofessional behavior attached to all academic transcripts.

2.0 Statement of Policy
Students at the University of Manitoba, Faculty of Dentistry, are required to attend all scheduled classes, examinations, small group sessions, laboratories, pre-clinical labs, and clinics unless expressly indicated otherwise by the course coordinator in the course outline/syllabus.

Students are required to be on time for all scheduled classes, examinations, small group sessions, laboratories, and pre-clinical labs. Students arriving more than 10-minutes late will be recorded as absent.

3.0 Statement of Procedures

3.1 Absences
In the event of absence due to illness or compassionate reasons, students can be granted an “excused absence” by providing timely notification and subsequent documentation regarding the reason for the absence. All other absences will be considered “unexcused absences.” Timely notification is not only required for excusing an absence; it is considered a professional courtesy to instructors and classmates at the Faculty.
Because the University of Manitoba welcomes all faiths and beliefs, the decision regarding absence from class/labs/clinics on religious holidays is left to the individual. Excused absences for religious observance will not contribute to any academic consequence for the student.

All student absences will be tracked, and, with the exception of excused absence for religious observance, reflected in the subsequent course grade, unless expressly indicated otherwise by the course coordinator in his/her course outline/syllabus. In the event that unexcused absences for any student exceed 20% of the available academic time in a course, the Associate Dean (Academic) will call a Disciplinary Hearing to investigate the issue under the University of Manitoba Student Discipline Bylaw. Factors considered will include whether it is determined that the student is in breach of this Student Attendance Policy, then the more serious academic record consequences listed above will be incurred, as deemed appropriate for the situation.

In the event that total absences (excused and unexcused), excluding excused absences for religious observance, exceed 30% of the academic time in a course, the Associate Dean (Academic) will call a Disciplinary Hearing to investigate the issue under the University of Manitoba Student Discipline Bylaw. If it is determined that the student is in breach of this Student Attendance Policy, then the more serious academic record consequences listed above will be incurred, as deemed appropriate for the situation.

Regardless of whether the absence is “excused” or “unexcused,” students are responsible for all missed course content and activities, and for those courses that award points and/or credit for attendance, excluding excused absences for religious observance, the student will not be given such points and/or credit.

3.2 Notification of Absence
Students are required to give notice for all planned or unplanned absences. For student convenience, all contact regarding absence should be directed to the Dean’s Office Receptionist at (204) 789-3631 or by e-mail to absent@ad.umanitoba.ca. To be eligible for an excused absence, student notice must normally be received prior to the missed class, laboratory or clinic session. Only the Associate Dean (Academic) or Student Advisor or Student Affairs Coordinator are authorized to grant excused absences. Small group leaders, course coordinators, or lecturers are not authorized (responsible) to approve absences.

3.3 Excused Absences
Given appropriate notice, some absences can be excused, based on the following criteria:

a) Unplanned Excused Absences:
   i) Illness
      (1) Students will be granted excused absences for 3 sick days per academic year, without need for a physician’s certificate, provided the notification is received prior to 8:00 a.m. on the day(s) of the illness.
      (2) Excused absences can be granted for illness beyond 3-days per academic year by submitting a physician's certificate to the Student Advisor and Student Affairs Coordinator (Rm D113 / 789-3484).
   ii) Compassionate Reasons
(1) Excused absences will be granted in documented cases of family emergency or bereavement to a maximum of 3-days per academic year.

b) Planned Excused Absences:
Note: All planned absences require >2-week’s notice and a completed Excused Absence Request Form.
  i) Attending professional meetings as a formal Faculty representative (maximum 5-days per academic year).
  ii) Attending post-graduate interviews and National Board examinations (maximum of 3-days per academic year).
  iii) Religious observance.
  iv) Jury duty, Subpoenas and required Military duty (maximum of 3-days per academic year).

c) Absences that will NOT typically be excused:
  i) Early departures or late arrivals intended to “bookend” travel arrangements
  ii) Personal events such as weddings or family functions
  iii) Attending professional meetings or conventions, when not a faculty representative
  iv) Humanitarian service missions beyond 1-week, and/or not approved in the course PDSD 4080 – Community Dentistry Externship.

d) Long term illness
  i) Cases of long-term student illness will be given independent consideration by the Associate Dean (Academic) in consultation with the respective Course Coordinator and Department Head.
  ii) In such cases, an exception to the effect of absences on course marks and/or debarment may be made.

3.4 Examinations
Students are required to attend all scheduled examinations. A student who is prevented from attending any regular examination, by reason of illness or other cause beyond his or her control, must at once notify the Dean/Director, and give satisfactory evidence of the cause of absence. Students failing to provide satisfactory evidence will receive a mark of zero (“0”) on the missed examination. If the absence was necessary by reason of illness, then the student MUST provide a physician’s certificate to receive an excused absence. The Faculty reserves the right to require the physician’s note to be from a University of Manitoba Health Service Clinic, and to confirm the validity of any submitted physician’s certificate.

3.5 Signed Student Acknowledgement
All Faculty of Dentistry students will be required to sign a form acknowledging their understanding of the Policy on Student Attendance. The Policy will be reviewed each year during the orientation period, with student signatures obtained immediately afterward. Students will not be allowed to participate in classes, preclinical laboratories, or clinics until they have signed the form acknowledging their understanding.
3.6 Clinic Attendance
All Faculty of Dentistry students are expected to be present in clinic for all scheduled clinics, including externship clinics. Students are required to provide prior notification for all clinic absences, as per 3.2 above.

In the event that a patient fails to attend a scheduled appointment, or a student is unable to find a suitable patient to attend a scheduled clinic, then that student is still required to attend the clinic session and inform their supervising dentist. Second- and third-year dental students will be automatically required to assist with patient care in their assigned discipline/clinic, while fourth year dental students will be required to participate in “Urgent Care Clinic” or, if required due to insufficient patient flow, will assist other students in the provision of dental care. A limited number of students will be allowed to ‘pink-card’ into the student lab in order to complete laboratory procedures. Course Coordinators may approve student lab attendance only for students with known current lab cases.

Course coordinators will clearly communicate in their respective Course Outlines/Synopses, the relationship between clinic attendance and subsequent marks/grades obtained.

4.0 University and Faculty Expectations
The above stated Policy and Procedures are designed to govern and guide decisions regarding student attendance in the DMD program at the Faculty of Dentistry, and are complementary and supportive to the following University of Manitoba Policy on Attendance and Withdrawal excerpted from the 2011-2012 Undergraduate Calendar, available at http://www.umanitoba.ca/student/records/media/2011_General_Calendar.pdf:

SECTION 7: Attendance and Withdrawal

7.1 Attendance at Class and Debarment
Regular attendance is expected of all students in all courses. An instructor may initiate procedures to debar a student from attending classes and from final examinations and/or from receiving credit where unexcused absences exceed those permitted by the faculty or school regulations. A student may be debarred from class, laboratories, and examinations by action of the Dean/Director for persistent non-attendance, failure to produce assignments to the satisfaction of the instructor, and/or unsafe clinical practice or practicum. Students so debarred will have failed that course.