



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER™
EL PASO

Woody L. Hunt School of Dental Medicine

Academic and Clinical Policies

Attendance during non-clinical coursework

During your years at the TTUHSC El Paso Woody L. Hunt School of Dental Medicine, attendance and participation in all scheduled activities is expected. This is part of the professional commitment that you assume as a dental student. Our integrated curriculum has simulation, clinical and group experience throughout each semester and course therefore missing class will not only hinder your own learning but the learning of others. As a member of the learning community brings forth unique ideas thus your absence could impact your fellow students through your lack of participation and may adversely affect your own success in dental school.

Each course may have specific attendance requirements that will be outlined in each course syllabus.

No credit will be given for any graded exercise missed without a valid excuse. *See the policy below for excused activities.*

How to Report an Absence:

All absences must be reported to the Office of Student Affairs via the official reporting email system. Student must email wlhabsence@ttuhsc.edu. The following information will need to be reported: name, date and time of missed activity, course director, and reason for absence. Only illness, healthcare appointments, personal emergency, or previously approved school-sponsored activities will be excused. If the absence is excused, the Office of Student Affairs will notify all appropriate faculty and staff within 72 hours of the event of the excused absence.

Attendance in Clinic:

Attendance at clinical duties and didactics is mandatory. Unexcused absences will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action, potentially including a requirement to repeat a clinical block or rotation. Students have allotted institutional holidays as stated in the institutional student handbook and on each academic calendar. The only excused absences will be for interviews, illnesses (with doctor's note), or documented family emergency.

Absences are only excused at the discretion of the Rotation/Course Director. Commonly excused absences include:

- Illness/Healthcare appointments
- Family Emergency
- Death in the Family
- Religious Holidays (please see the Religious Holy Days Policy below)
- Presenting at a National Conference
- Interviews for Residency (D4 only)

Absences within clinical hours:

If a student will be absent for any activity within the clinic, they must obtain approval from their Clinical Mentor, who will notify the Office of Student Affairs. If the Clinic Mentor determines that a student's absence(s) compromises the student's ability to attain the necessary competencies, they may require the student to make up days or complete alternate assignments.

If a student is absent more than five (5) days during third or fourth year, it will be reviewed by the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Excessive absences could be a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and may be forwarded to the Committee on Grading and Promotions.

In the event of an emergency that results in an absence from clinical duties, the student must notify the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs AND the Office of Academic Affairs as noted above as soon as possible.

Documentation required from student for clinical absences:

- **More than two consecutive days due to illness:** a doctor's note on the healthcare provider's letterhead or prescription paper is required.
- **When presenting at a national conference:** a copy of the invitation to present and travel itinerary is required.
- **When interviewing for residency (D4 only):** a copy of the invitation to interview and travel itinerary is required.

Requests for Absences for Planned Activities

No student will be excused from an exam or graded activities for any reason unless due to illness or emergency situation or for an approved university event. This would require a letter from a Dean to acknowledge university approval.

If a student wishes to be excused from class or clinical responsibilities to present a poster or paper at a professional meeting as a school-related function, they must first obtain permission from the Assistant/Associate Dean of Academic Affairs as far in advance of that absence as possible. Students wishing to attend a meeting as a participant rather than as a presenter must discuss with the Clinic Mentor for approval.

Religious Holy Days (See TTUHSC El Paso OP 77.12)

- a. A student who intends to observe a Religious Holy Day should provide written notice, at the earliest possible date prior to the absence, to the following: (1) the course directors of classes (for clinic, Clinic Mentors) that will be missed and (2) the Assistant/Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. A student will be excused from attending class(es), examinations, or other required activities for the observance of a Religious Holy Day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this section will be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment within a reasonable time and as determined at the sole discretion of the instructor of record and/or the Assistant/Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs before or after the absence.
- b. A student who is excused under the above provision may not be penalized for the absence; however, the instructor may appropriately respond if the student fails to satisfactorily complete the missed assignment or examination within the time frame set by the instructor.
- c. Any disputes regarding this policy should be submitted in writing to the TTUHSC El Paso President or his/her designee. Any decision by the President or his/her designee regarding the dispute shall be final.
- d. This policy does not apply to any student absence for a Religious Holy Day which may interfere with patient responsibilities or patient care.

Summary of absence policy:

- a. Classroom and simulation – as directed by individual course directors in their syllabi.
- b. Clinical – not to exceed 5 days per year

Policy on Absence During Examinations or Other Evaluations

- If a student is unable to take an exam or other graded activity at the scheduled time due to illness or a personal emergency, they must notify the Office of Student Affairs via the official absence email (wlhabsence@ttuhsc.edu). For clinical activities, the student must notify their Clinic Mentor directly.
- Any missed activities must be made up within **one week** of the scheduled activity.
- If the absence from the scheduled exam is due to illness, the student must bring a doctor's note to the Office of Academic Affairs or Clinic Mentor, as appropriate. Students will also be directed to contact the appropriate faculty member in question so that the exam can be made up within one week as stated in the attendance policy.
- **No credit will be given for any graded or required exercise missed without a valid excuse.** If the student believes this consequence is not appropriate to their particular

situation, he/she may appeal this in writing to the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. The Associate Dean will in turn consult with the course director, Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs, or Clinic Mentor responsible for the exam, and one other course/clerkship director from that year to determine if this prescribed course of action is appropriate. In the event that a second exam is missed and again the designated procedures are not followed, the student will meet with the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs or Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs.

- Students may appeal any decision on absences to the Student Affairs Committee.