

ABSENCE FROM LEARNING DURING THE MB CHB

***Requesting pre-approval for planned absence and notifying
unplanned absence for illness/bereavement/emergency***

The five years of the MB ChB degree form a comprehensive curriculum, structured to ensure adequate learning opportunities for students to graduate ready for medical practice under supervision as a first-year doctor. Much of the learning is experiential and reliant on interactions with others. While the degree takes five years to complete, the academic year is considerably shorter than a full calendar year, with 35-38 teaching weeks in years 2-5, a total of 186 weeks. Course dates for medical students for specific years can be found [here](#) and the typical semester/holiday course structure is as follows:

Year	Duration	Year runs	In year holidays/semester breaks
ELM 2	34 weeks	Orientation – mid Feb Mid Feb – Late October Exams finish early Nov	Five weeks: S1 mid semester/easter – 1 week Mid-year vacation (June/July) – 3 weeks S2 mid semester break (Aug) – 1 week
ELM 3	34 weeks	Mid Feb – Late October Exams finish early Nov	Five weeks: S1 mid semester/easter – 1 week Mid-year vacation (June/July) – 3 weeks S2 mid semester break (Aug) – 1 week
ALM 4	38 weeks	Late Jan – Late Oct	Four weeks: S1 mid semester/easter – 1 week Mid-year vacation (June/July) – 2 weeks S2 mid semester break (Aug) – 1 week
ALM 5	36 weeks	Early Feb – Mid Oct Oct-Nov – study break Exams finish early Nov	Four weeks: S1 mid semester/easter – 1 week Mid-year vacation (June/July) – 2 weeks S2 mid semester break (Aug) – 1 week
ALM 6	42 weeks	Mid Nov-Mid Nov	Ten weeks: Summer vacation (Mid Dec-Jan) – 2 weeks Winter vacation (Aug-Sept) – 2 weeks Scheduled holiday in course (varies according to elective Quarter) – 6 weeks

To provide for adequate learning during the course, it is expected that all medical students will attend all scheduled learning experiences. Attendance at all laboratories and tutorials in ELM and all block and vertical module teaching and all clinical placements in ALM is considered particularly important. It is acknowledged however that a student may need to attend to personal or extracurricular matters that clash with scheduled teaching or learning opportunities. In these instances, a student can apply for approval of absence from learning which, if approved, becomes a “planned and notified absence from learning” from their module in ELM and ALM respectively. The approval of absence from learning and its impact on academic progress should be fair and reasonable and involve discussion, where necessary, with the student. Nevertheless, due to the social nature of learning in medicine and to support students in developing the professional behaviour expected of medical practitioners, applying for “absence from learning” includes consideration of the needs of others and the nature of the learning activity/placement, and is not granted automatically.

Application for Absence from Learning

Students are required prospectively to seek approval for all Absences from Learning. Students are required to discuss their anticipated absence from learning with all relevant module convenors/administrators and then complete the appropriate Absence from Learning online form which is found in MedMoodle at the top of each year group home page. It is expected that planned Absence from Learning should be requested at least six weeks in advance. Students will be notified of the outcome of their Absence from Learning application by email.

In ELM if the Absence from Learning being applied for is longer than three days AND / OR a Terms requirement would be missed as a result of the absence, an online Absence from Learning form needs to be filled in, annotated by an ELM Administrator and the Assessment Convenor, and then approved by the Associate Dean Student Affairs. For Absence from Learning shorter than three days, students must notify the appropriate supervisor(s)/ tutors and email ELM Administration to record the absences as notified absences (otherwise absences will be recorded as "unnotified" and considered by the ELM Student Progress Committee when evaluating students' professional behaviour).

In ALM when any absence from learning is taken an online absence from Learning form must be completed and approved by the appropriate block and vertical module convenor(s), which is then automatically forwarded to the Associate Dean Student Affairs.

If students wish to discuss the process of applying for Absence from Learning, the Student Affairs Office can provide information.

Unplanned Absence due to Sickness, Bereavement or other personal Emergency

If a student is unable to attend learning sessions, block or vertical module learning, or clinical attachment due to illness or other reasons the appropriate tutor(s), module convenor(s), the ELM Administration (for ELM students) and the Student Affairs Office (for ALM students) must be notified on the first day of the absence and on any subsequent days (noting that if the absence extends to beyond 3 days, an Absence from Learning form will be required). **This is the student's responsibility. It is important not only because of the missed learning opportunities, but also because staff frequently arrange clinics and patients to be available for students so they need to know if the student will not be present.**

A medical certificate may be required for any student Absence from Learning because of illness for more than three days. It is important that students are absent from learning if acutely unwell with a potentially infectious illness, in order to avoid infecting vulnerable patients and colleagues.

The length of absence from learning for bereavement is also considered on an individual basis. Please note that students should anticipate being asked to provide evidence of bereavement i.e.: copy of death certificate, death notice etc.

It is likely the nature and type of learning provided for students to address their absence from learning will be negotiated directly with the student.

Consideration during the approval of Absence from Learning applications

When staff are considering approval of absence from learning applications, the following will be taken into consideration:

Student factors:

- The family or community importance of the student attending the activity.
- Whether the student has extenuating personal circumstances.
- Whether the student is participating in a national or international sporting or cultural event.
- Learning or professional development opportunities afforded by the activity.
- Whether the student is presenting, organising or representing a group at a conference or meeting.
- Whether the absence will benefit the wellbeing of the student.

Course/learning factors:

- The proportion of the module being requested for the absence.
- The reason the activity cannot be undertaken during scheduled holidays.
- The length of absence relative to the activity.

Learning factors:

- The importance of missed teaching or assessment, and the student's ability to catch up on missed activities.
- The student's total absence in that module and absence in that year.

If a student's application for Absence from Learning is declined, or the expected make-up academic work or clinical experience time is seen as being unreasonable by the student, the student may appeal through the Student Affairs Office and the Associate Dean Student Affairs. The decision on the appeal of an Absence from Learning request is made by the Dean of the campus in ALM and ADME or the Director of the ELM programme in ELM.

Missed Sessions

In ELM it is the students' responsibility to catch up on any material that they have missed. In general, ELM module convenors are not able to provide catch up work or sessions.

In ALM it is the student's responsibility to work with the Module convenor and/or the Associate Dean Student Affairs to determine the learning experiences required to mitigate the impact of absence from learning, which might include engaging with learning materials and/or clinical experience time. Normally, in ALM, an approved absence from learning of one or two days on a module would not need to be made up, provided no essential teaching sessions, clinical experiences or assessments were missed. Above one or two days, if missed content/experience cannot be completed within the module, this may lead to a module outcome on eSOA of 'Incomplete' and the student would need to negotiate a plan to enable completion and change of outcome on eSOA to "pass".

Unexplained/un-notified absences or absences when an application for Absence from Learning has already been turned down, may be considered unprofessional behaviour and reported as such in eSOA. This may result in a "conditional pass" for a module and could influence progression decisions about a student.

Student Progress Committees will take into consideration the amount of Absence from Learning accrued by a student when making progress decisions.

Public Holidays

If a Trainee Intern (TI - ALM6 student) is required to be with their clinical team on a public holiday (for example, the team is "on call" on a public holiday), they should be allowed one day's Absence from learning in lieu of this, to be taken at an appropriate time within the same clinical attachment/module. This should be discussed with the senior members of the clinical team to identify a day that is acceptable for all parties and where there is unlikely to be a significant loss of learning opportunities. It is expected that the TI notify the module administrator by email when this arrangement has been made.