



OTAGO MEDICAL SCHOOL  
*Te Kura Hauora o Ōtākou*

## MEDICAL STUDENT LEAVE POLICY

Reviewed 2019

It is expected that all students will attend all scheduled learning experiences. This particularly applies to all laboratories and tutorials in ELM and all block and vertical module teaching in ALM. It is however acknowledged that a student may wish to have leave from time to time to attend to personal or extracurricular matters.

Staff and students have agreed that the process of applying for and having leave approved, should be easy, and without unnecessary barriers. The approval of leave and the decisions about any catch-up work needed should be fair and reasonable and involve discussion where necessary with the student.

### **Application for Leave**

Students are required to seek approval for all leave and once approved, should notify in advance, appropriate convenors/administrators, supervisors or tutors. Where possible, planned leave should be requested six weeks in advance.

In ELM if the leave being applied for is longer than 3 days a Leave Request form needs to be filled in, annotated by the ELM Administrator and/or the ELM Assessment Administrator, and then approved by the Associate Dean (Student Affairs). For leave less than 3 days, students must seek approval from the appropriate supervisor(s)/ tutors and email the ELM Administrator to record the leave as an explained absence.

In ALM when any leave is taken a Leave Request form needs to be completed and approved by the appropriate block and vertical module convenor(s) and then forwarded to the Student Affairs Office. If the leave requested is for longer than 3 days it also needs approval from the Associate Dean (Student Affairs). Normally, this would involve a brief meeting with the Associate Dean.

If students wish to discuss the process of applying for student leave, the Student Affairs Office can provide information.

### **Consideration of Leave Application**

When staff are considering approval of leave applications, the following points will be taken into consideration:

- Learning or professional development opportunities afforded by the activity
- 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
- Whether the student is presenting, organising or representing a group at a conference or meeting
- The proportion of the module being requested as leave
- The reason the activity cannot be undertaken during scheduled holidays
- The length of leave relative to the activity
- The importance of missed teaching or assessment, and the student's ability to catch up on missed activities

- The student's total leave in that year and any other leave in that module
- Whether the leave will benefit the wellbeing of the student

If a student's application for leave is denied by the module convenor(s), or any catch up required is seen as being unreasonable by the student, the student may appeal to the Associate Dean (Student Affairs). An ultimate appeal of a leave decision by the ADSA, can be made to the Dean of the campus in ALM or the Director of the ELM programme in ELM.

### **Sick Leave, Bereavement Leave or other Emergency**

If a student is unable to attend learning sessions or their attachment due to illness or other reasons the appropriate tutor(s), module convenor(s), the ELM Administrator (for ELM students) and the Student Affairs Office must be notified on the first day of the absence and on any subsequent days. **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 need to know if the student will not be present.**

A medical certificate is required for any student absence because of illness for more than 3 days. It is important that students absent themselves from work if ill, in order to avoid infecting vulnerable patients.

The length of time taken for bereavement leave is also considered on an individual basis. Please note that evidence of bereavement should be provided i.e.: copy of death certificate, death notice etc.

### **Dealing with Missed Sessions**

Please note in ALM it is the student's responsibility to arrange any necessary catch up with the relevant module convenor(s). In ELM it is the students' responsibility to catch up on any material that they have missed. ELM module convenors are not able to provide catch up work or sessions.

Normally, in ALM, an approved absence of one or two days on a module would not need to be made up, provided no essential teaching sessions or experience was missed. Above one or two days, if missed content/experience cannot be completed within the module, this may lead to a module result of 'Incomplete' and a plan made to allow completion.

Unexplained absences or absences when leave has already been turned down, may be considered as unprofessional behaviour when it comes to assessment decisions.

### **Public Holidays:**

If a Trainee Intern is required to work public holidays with their team, they should be allowed one day's leave in lieu of this, to be taken at an appropriate time within the same module. This should be discussed with the senior members of the team to arrange a day that is beneficial for all parties and where there is unlikely to be significant loss of learning opportunities.