

University of Tennessee Health Science Center College of Dentistry  
Excused Absences Policy

Excused absence requests must be submitted on-line at the following link:

[https://uthsc.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_8CItMyVmB5Wz8yh](https://uthsc.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8CItMyVmB5Wz8yh)

OR

[http://bit.ly/UTNDent\\_EXABS](http://bit.ly/UTNDent_EXABS)

Students may attach documentation (pdf, photo, document) when submitting the on-line form. An absence is NOT officially excused until the student is notified by the College of Dentistry (CoD) administration (Dean or designee: Associate or Assistant Deans). No other CoD personnel (Course Directors, Chairs, Group Leaders, etc. may grant an excused absence.)

Students in the D-3 and D-4 years are allowed 6 half-days per semester for personal business. The following days away from CoD clinics are NOT included: rotations at any official CoD extramural rotation. (Excused absence NOT required). D-3 and D-4 students are allowed a maximum total of two weeks (10 business days) for CoD extramural/off-site rotations. Sick days without a doctor's excuse count towards the 6 half-day total.

Personal days may be carried over from the Fall to the Spring semester, subject to adequate academic and clinical progress, as defined by students' group leaders and the Office of Academic Affairs. Personal days may NOT be carried over to the next academic year. The use of a personal day must NOT compromise patient care or continuity of care.

For clinical excused absences, the student must call and let their PCC and any scheduled patients know of their unavailability to keep the appointment. Excused absences allow students to miss class and/or clinic without penalty.

**Events / situations that are usually excused:**

**\* indicates documentation MUST be attached to the excused absence request**

- Formal residency interviews\*
- Graduation ceremonies of first degree relatives
- Private practice interviews (*limited to 4 interviews in D4 year ONLY; documentation required; students MAY NOT miss a scheduled class for a private practice interview*)\*
- Formal, academic invited externships AND in good academic standing (*No probation and sufficient progress in clinic*)\* (see p.3)
- Illness with note from treating clinic or doctor's appointment.\*
- Childbirth (*student and spouse/partner only*)\*
- National Boards (day of exam only and one travel day, if > 100 miles from Memphis), ADAT or GRE.\* If at all possible, students should AVOID taking exams when class/clinic is in session
- Death or sudden, serious illness of immediate family member (*spouse/partner, child, parent, grandparent*)\*
- Representing the college/university in an official capacity (as defined by the College) AND in good academic standing (*No probation and sufficient progress in clinic*)\*
- Regional/national meetings of dental-related organizations with student involvement. (*Primary CoD student officers only; No academic probation and sufficient progress in clinic*)\*
- Scientific meetings (ONLY if presenting) AND in good academic standing; No probation and sufficient progress in clinic)\*

Notes:

1. In the case of unanticipated illnesses or family emergencies, students who miss a scheduled course or clinic session, must provide documentation, within five working days of the resumption of matriculation to obtain an excused absence. Medical documentation must be obtained from the

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University Health Service, or the student's health care provider. An excused absence does not excuse a student from assigned clinic or clinic blocks (patient treatment), nor does it excuse students from any course requirements. It is the student's professional responsibility to obtain a replacement for any assigned block rotation, and notify the departmental block coordinator of the change.

2. In the case of professional and/or scientific meetings, students MUST obtain an excused absence BEFORE making travel arrangements.

**Examples of events that are NOT excused:**

- Weddings including student's own and any associated events
- "Free dental days," CE courses, dental meetings, or mission trips not sponsored by the College
- Shadow/observe a residency program without an official invitation
- Acting as a dental assistant for board exams (without prior approval from clinical affairs)
- Routine family events: birthdays, anniversaries, babies, vacations, or similar events
- Funerals and/or sudden medical events (other than immediate family as listed above)
- Unfortunate events (examples: flat tires, alarm malfunctions, traffic, etc.)

Students that cannot provide proper documentation will NOT receive an excused absence and thus may not be offered an opportunity to make-up missed examinations, quizzes, or other assignments. For these students, course directors have the discretion of requiring alternative assignments or examinations to ensure competency. All decisions regarding feasibility of providing required educational experiences, in an alternative manor, will be made by the course director with input from the departmental chair.

Since every possibility cannot be anticipated, exceptions may be granted at the discretion of the Dean or designee (Associate or Assistant Deans) Students are bound by the course requirements of the course(s) from which they are absent, as well as the UTHSC Honor Code.

### College of Dentistry Externship Policy

The US Department of Education, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the Commission on Dental Accreditation expect students of dental education programs to be in regular attendance in their academic programs. While the College recognizes the value of externships, particularly for those students who are planning to pursue post-doctoral education, students' full participation in the DDS program is of paramount importance. For this reason, the following externship policies are in place.

1. Participation in externships is limited to D4 students <sup>1</sup>
2. Externships longer than one week are strongly discouraged
3. DDS students are limited to 2 externships in their D4 year <sup>2</sup>
4. Externships must be of demonstrated educational value
5. Prior to applying for, or accepting an externship, students MUST:
  - a. Send a request to the Dean or their designee (Associate or Assistant Dean) that they wish to pursue an externship. Documentation of the externship, including the educational value, is required.
  - b. Be in good academic standing, as certified by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (Minimum GPA: 3.0; no academic probation; no Incompletes).
  - c. Be making better than average progress in their clinical experiences, as certified by the Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs. (Clinic points greater than class average).
  - d. Associate Deans may seek faculty input in making a determination of "good standing."
  - e. Following certifications, the student will be notified by the Associate Dean for Institutional Affairs that they may pursue an externship.
6. Participation in an Externship does NOT exclude students from any course requirements, or course work, including examinations. Examinations MUST be taken at their regularly scheduled time, unless the student makes alternative arrangements with the course director.

#### Notes:

1. D3 students who demonstrate EXCEPTIONAL academic progress and clinical ability MAY be allowed to attend an externship in the spring of their D3 year, subject to approval as described above. All other conditions above apply, and a D3 externship counts as one of the 2 allowed externships.
2. The number of externships allowed may be adjusted for students applying to highly competitive residency programs

Approved by UTHSC College of Dentistry Executive Administrative Council

April 19, 2022. Amended and approved, April 21, 2022