

The University of New South Wales
Faculty of Medicine

Policy on extra-curricular activities affecting attendance in MBBS Program

1. Background to Policy

The MBBS program is a full-time program requiring students' attendance in scheduled classes and other teaching activities (e.g. clinical placements). Students are also expected to complete self-directed learning and assessment tasks outside of scheduled teaching activities.

The University sets an expectation of 25 hours per UoC over a 16-week semester. Based on typical MFAC courses (12UoC) lasting 8 weeks which equates to 37.5 hours per week.

Attendance at scheduled teaching activities is also governed by the University's requirement that students attend at least 80% of all classes. Details on attendance requirements are provided in individual course guides.

Students are involved in many extra-curricular activities throughout their studies. The Faculty is generally supportive of such activities but they must not significantly impact on attendance at scheduled teaching activities or completion of assessment requirements.

This policy relates to the following extra-curricular activities:

1. Employment.
2. Voluntary work.
3. Sport, music or other recreational activities.
4. Student-related activities e.g. conferences, courses
5. Academic activities e.g. conferences, courses.

The Faculty and/or University have policies covering non-attendance relating to Special Consideration, religious holidays and being a member of the Australian Defence Reserves.

2. Aims of the policy on extra-curricular activities affecting attendance

- Set out the possible consequences of failing to meet attendance and assessment requirements because of extra-curricular activities.
- Establish processes which allow the Faculty to support students in extra-curricular activities without adversely affecting academic progress.
- Set out the process of obtaining permission from the Faculty to attend extra-curricular activities during session.

- Set out the principle that, although the Faculty will assist students in determining whether or not any extra-curricular activity will adversely affect their performance, the final responsibility for achieving satisfactory results in the MBBS program remains with students.

3. Policy

1. Failure to meet attendance requirements because of extra-curricular activities will not be excused unless prior approval is obtained.
2. Failure to meet assessment requirements (e.g. failing to submit assignment by deadline, failing to attend an examination) because of extra-curricular activities will not be excused unless prior approval is obtained.
3. Under no circumstances will external work requirements be accepted to excuse non-attendance. The Faculty understands the need for many students to work part-time but this must be arranged so as it does not affect attendance.
4. Approval for non-attendance will be considered for the following activities:
 - A single, significant activity related to voluntary work. Note that regular voluntary work will not be accepted for recurrent absences.
 - A single, significant activity related to sport, music or other recreational activity being undertaken at an elite or semi-professional level. Note that regular sporting or other recreational activities will not be accepted for recurrent absences.
 - Attendance at student-related conferences/courses organised by student organisations or health professional groups and national or international medical education meetings.
 - Attendance at conference for academic purposes including presenting papers from ILP or Honours projects.
5. Approval to attend an extra-curricular activity must be obtained before the event and will not be taken into consideration retrospectively if a student has failed to meet attendance or assessment requirements.
6. Approval to attend an extra-curricular activity does not exempt a student from meeting attendance or assessment requirements. Approval will depend on:
 - The overall impact on attendance and whether class or other teaching activities can be made up at an alternate time to ensure that the course requirements have been met. Students requesting long periods of absence will be required to take leave and sit the course later.

- The nature of the assessment and whether an alternate mechanism is available to meet the assessment requirement. This may include extension of a deadline for submission of an assignment or sitting an examination at a later time. As a rule, additional examinations cannot be held and a student would be required to sit a missed examination when supplementary or later rounds are being conducted. This may delay a student's progress.

Approval will not be granted if alternate arrangements for meeting attendance or assessment requirements cannot be made.

7. Approval will also depend on the student's academic performance and will not be granted if disruption to the student's progress would be considered disadvantageous.

4. Obtaining permission to attend extra-curricular activities

1. Approval to be absent from a course for less than one week (when the 80% attendance rule will not be contravened) or to defer a course assessment must be obtained in writing (via email) from the course convenor. Students must contact the course convenor as early as possible to ensure that alternate arrangements can be made. Late requests are unlikely to be approved as alternate arrangements cannot be made without sufficient notice.
2. Approval to be absent from a course for one week or more, or when the 80% attendance rule may be contravened, must be obtained in writing (via email) from the phase convenor or the Associate Dean (Education). Students must contact the phase convenor as early as possible to ensure that alternative arrangements can be made. Late requests are unlikely to be approved, as alternate arrangements cannot be made without sufficient notice.
3. If temporary absence from a course is approved, the student must inform the relevant School administrator (for courses coordinated by a single school), scenario group facilitator (Phase 1), course tutor (Phase 2) or supervisor (Phase 3). Students must also ensure that their clinical school is also notified of their absence.
4. Approval to defer a phase assessment must be obtained in writing (via email) from the relevant phase convenor or the Associate Dean (Education).

Faculty will not consider financial consequences to students (e.g. loss of registration fees for conference, loss of grant) if students have already made arrangements to attend extra-curricular activities without approval.