

UT Health Science Center: COM116 Inclement Weather - COM Medical Education	
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Related Policy: COM106 – Excused Absence and Wellness Days	Program: Medicine (M.D.)	

POLICY

It is the policy of the University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC) College of Medicine (COM) that provision be made for the potential disruption of learning activities due to inclement weather.

RATIONALE AND PROCEDURE

1. The administration of each campus determines if it is to be closed during an inclement weather event. Students should monitor UTHSC email and campus emergency communication systems for information regarding potential closures.
 - a) Since conditions will vary across the state, students are only excused from educational activities taking place at the particular campus impacted by a closure.
 - b) Students will be responsible for making up any academic work missed during an absence due to severe weather conditions.
2. In the context of preclinical and didactic education, closure of the school implies that classes and scheduled meetings are cancelled, unless they can take place virtually.
 - a) Students should monitor communications regarding the availability of virtual educational activities.
 - b) Individual students who may be unable to participate in required virtual education (e.g., due to local power outage or loss of internet access) should complete a Limited Leave Request (LLR, available on OLSEN) to document the absence.
3. During the clinical years, closures will be determined by the local clinical campus administration.
 - a) If the local clinical campus is closed, then clinical rotations and classes will be cancelled, unless they can take place virtually.
 - b) Students should monitor communications (e.g. email) regarding the availability of virtual educational activities.
 - c) If the local campus is open, students and faculty with clinical responsibilities are professionally obligated to maintain inpatient care.
 - d) If the local campus is open, students on clinical services are expected to continue to provide care for their patients, provided students feel that traveling would not place them at risk of injury.
 - e) If students feel that travel to campus/clinical rotations is unsafe even though campus is not closed, they should immediately contact their supervising resident or attending regarding about potential risks associated with travel, to report any anticipated absence or delay in arrival, and to make appropriate alternative arrangements.
 - f) Students should also immediately report an inability to participate in patient care to the

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Clerkship Coordinator and/or Clerkship Director.

4. Clinical experience missed due to inclement weather when campus is CLOSED is considered an Excused Absence. No LLR form is needed.
 - a) In the event that campus is closed for inclement weather lasting more than 2 days, the clerkship/course director may assign alternative experiences (e.g. virtual didactics and/or clinical make-up time) for which the student will be responsible for completing/attending.
 - b) In the event that the campus is closed, students may elect to attend clinical duties if the hospital or clinic is open and if they feel safe traveling, but this is at their discretion and not required.
5. Wellness days can be used for clinical experience missed due to inclement weather when campus is OPEN.
 - a) This is to be documented by submission of the LLR form, indicating 'weather' as the reason for the absence.
 - b) In accordance with policy on [Excused Absence and Wellness Days](#), a student missing more than 2 days of a rotation may be required to make up the missed time, at the discretion of the Clerkship Director. This is to ensure that the student has had sufficient exposure to obtain a fair and accurate clinical evaluation and acquire sufficient clinical experience.
6. Students should make every effort to fulfill their patient responsibilities. However, they should not place themselves at undue risk and should not be subject to harassment for choosing to avoid travel under conditions perceived to be unsafe. Any such behavior should be reported directly to the Clerkship Director, Sr. Asst. Dean or Assistant Dean of the Clinical Curriculum, or anonymously in the course evaluation or mistreatment reporting form.

APPROVAL HISTORY

Effective: 4/19/21

Revised: 1/22/24