Article 10 Leave of Absence Policy

1) Definition and General Terms
   a) An LOA from the SOM is defined as not having a registration of at least six credit hours in a semester at the UNC School of Medicine. Examples of LOA from the SOM include LOAs for graduate study, personal reasons, research, administrative reasons, and medical reasons.
   b) An LOA does not change the student’s enrollment status. UNC SOM students have continuous enrollment until they graduate, withdraw, die, or are dismissed from medical school.
   c) Students returning from LOA are governed by the policies in effect at the time of their return to the curriculum.
   d) Students on LOA are responsible for notifying the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) of changes of mailing address, phone number and email address and updating contact information in Connect Carolina.
   e) Students should meet with OSA personnel prior to the LOA start date to document the terms of the LOA (LOA meeting), including but not limited to: type of leave, length of leave, start and end dates, deadline for notifying OSA of intent to return, conditions and/or required documentation for return from leave, procedure for requesting an extension, and consequences of student’s failure to contact with OSA prior to expiration of leave.
   f) Students must confirm their intent to return from LOA with a letter or email to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs indicating when they would like to return. This notice must be received by the University registration deadlines (October 1 for spring semester and March 1 for summer and fall semester).
   g) Continuing students will have priority over students returning from leave for registration in courses. It is possible that students will not be allowed to re-enroll when planned, if space is not available.
   h) Students who are not registered at UNC for one semester or longer will need to be reinstated and reactivate their Onyen.
   i) North Carolina residency status may be affected by a student’s actions during an LOA. Students may be required to submit documentation on return from leave to re-determine residency status.
   j) A student who fails to comply with the provisions stated in the LOA letter will be withdrawn from medical school or reviewed by the Student Progress Committee for withdrawal or dismissal depending on the terms stated in the LOA letter.
   k) With the exception of master’s degree programs and research programs of two years duration or less, that students enroll in after completion of the Application Phase, (core clinical clerkships), students will be expected to comply with the graduation requirements in effect when they return to the curriculum.
   l) Students will be expected to comply with University and SOM policies in effect at the time of their return to the curriculum.

2) Graduate Studies LOA (see Article 13)
   a) Students applying for graduate LOA must provide documentation from their graduate program before initiation of the leave, and obtain permission from the Associate Dean of Student Affairs or designee.
b) Graduate LOA is variable depending on the graduate program. Students may request to extend this leave by submitting documentation of satisfactory progress from the graduate program to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

c) The final year medical school course requirements for graduation for students enrolling in master’s degree programs will be determined at the time the student goes on leave. Typically students enrolling in one or two year master’s programs will fulfill the final year course requirements for graduation for their entering class.

3) Personal LOA
a) Students applying for personal LOA must obtain permission from the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or designee.

b) Personal LOA is typically granted for one year and is renewable for one additional year with the approval of the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

c) Written request to extend personal leave must be approved by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

d) Personal LOA is restricted to a maximum of 2 years except in extraordinary circumstances.

4) Research LOA
a) Students applying for research LOA must notify the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or designee of their intent to go on a research LOA.

b) Research LOA is typically granted for one year and is renewable for one additional year with the approval of the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

c) Written request to extend research leave must include a letter of support from the student’s research mentor and be approved by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.

d) Research LOA is restricted to a maximum of 2 years except in extraordinary circumstances.

5) Administrative LOA
a) Students may be placed on administrative LOA according to University policies (e.g. by the Emergency Evaluation and Action Committee).

b) An appeal of an administrative LOA initiated by the University must be handled according to University policies.

c) The Student Progress Committee may place a student on administrative leave following the policies discussed in Article 8.

d) Administrative LOA can be initiated by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs for the following reasons:
   i) Failure to meet the School of Medicine’s published deadlines for paying tuition and fees.
   ii) Failure to file a request by the School of Medicine’s published deadlines for deferring payment of tuition and fees if financial aid is not yet available.
   iii) Failure to meet the University’s listed health requirements, or any other University requirement, by the stated deadline.
   iv) Failure to meet the School of Medicine’s listed health requirements by the stated deadlines.
   v) Failure to repay an outstanding debt owed to the School of Medicine (e.g. emergency loan), following a written warning from the Financial Aid Officer or the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.
   vi) Failure to comply with the School of Medicine USMLE exam requirements.
e) Students are typically placed on Administrative LOA for one year.
f) Written request to extend administrative leave must be approved by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.
g) Administrative LOA is restricted to a maximum of 2 years except in extraordinary circumstances.
h) A student may be placed on an administrative LOA for up to 14 days if the student fails to meet the Technical Standards or standards for professional conduct (Article 5). The Student Progress Committee may extend this period as deemed appropriate, and may establish requirements for returning to the curriculum.
i) Students may appeal an administrative LOA initiated by the SPC or the Associate Dean for Student Affairs using the procedures outlined in Article 9.

6) Medical LOA
   a) The Associate Dean for Student Affairs may request that a student be evaluated by Campus Health Services or the Emergency Evaluation and Action Committee, for medical LOA if the student is jeopardizing the health and safety of self, patients, or others. Failure to comply with this request will result in the student being placed on administrative LOA until the student undergoes the requested assessment.
   b) Medical LOA is typically granted for one year and is renewable for one additional year with the approval of the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.
   c) Medical LOA is restricted to a maximum of 2 years except in extraordinary circumstances.
   d) Written request to extend medical leave must be approved by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.
   e) If it is not feasible to meet with OSA personnel to document terms of LOA, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs will provide written documentation of the LOA terms.
   f) Campus Health Services must evaluate and approve all requests for return from medical leave.

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