



TITLE OF POLICY

Leave of Absence Policy

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

To establish the conditions and student responsibilities associated with leaves of absence, including specifications for different types of leaves of absence.

RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND REVIEW CYCLE

Education Committee will review and approve it in odd-numbered years or as needed.

LCME REFERENCE(S)

HISTORY OF APPROVALS AND UPDATES

Approved by Education Committee March 2019
Approved by Education Committee October 2016.

DEFINITION(S)

NA

POLICY

General Information on Leave of Absence

A Leave of Absence (LOA) from the UNC School of Medicine (UNC SOM) is defined as not having a registration of at least six credit hours in a semester at the UNC SOM. Reasons for LOA include:

- graduate study,
- personal reasons,
- research,
- administrative reasons, and
- medical reasons.

Enrollment: 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.

North Carolina Residency Status: 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.



University ONYEN: Students who are not registered at UNC for one semester or longer will need to be reinstated and reactivate their ONYEN.

Policies: Students will be expected to comply with University and SOM policies in effect at the time of their return to the curriculum. To begin an academic (graduate study or research) Leave of Absence (LOA), students must pass Step 1 and all Application Phase courses and requirements, including NBME exams, barring extraordinary circumstances. Students in the MD PhD program are exempt from this requirement. It is strongly recommended students also complete Step 2 CK before beginning their LOA.

Course Registration: It is possible that students will not be allowed to re-enroll when planned, if space is not available.

Graduation Requirements: Students will be expected to comply with the graduation requirements in effect when they return to the curriculum.

Failure to Comply: A student who fails to comply with the provisions stated in the LOA letter will be withdrawn from medical school or reviewed by the Student Progress Committee for withdrawal or dismissal depending on the terms stated in the LOA letter.

Student Responsibilities

Before LOA: Students must meet with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and designated staff in Student Affairs prior to the LOA start date to document the terms of the LOA, including but not limited to:

- type of leave,
- length of leave,
- start and end dates,
- deadline for notifying Student Affairs 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 Student Affairs prior to expiration of leave.

During LOA: Updated Contact Information: Students on LOA are responsible for notifying the SOM Registrar of changes of mailing address, phone number and email address and updating contact information in Connect Carolina.

Return from LOA: Students must confirm their intent to return from LOA with a letter or email to the SOM Registrar, indicating when they would like to return. This notice must be received by the date indicated on their Leave of Absence letter.



Specifications for Types of Leaves of Absence

Graduate Studies (see also Policy on Combined and Joint Degree Programs):

- 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.
- 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 SOM Registrar.
- The Leave of Absence committee will outline the graduation requirements that will need to be fulfilled prior to graduation.

Personal LOA:

- Students applying for Personal LOA must obtain permission from the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or designee.
- 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.
- Written request to extend personal leave must be approved by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.
- Personal LOA is restricted to a maximum of 2 years except in extraordinary circumstances.

Research LOA:

- Students applying for Research LOA must notify the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or designee of their intent to go on a research LOA.
- 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.
- 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.
- Research LOA is restricted to a maximum of 2 years except in extraordinary circumstances.

Administrative LOA:

- Students may be placed on Administrative LOA according to University policies.



- An appeal of an Administrative LOA initiated by the University must be handled according to University policies.
- The Student Progress Committee (SPC) may place a student on administrative leave based on the Policy on Student Progress Committee.
- Administrative LOA can be initiated by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs for the following reasons:
 - Failure to meet the UNC SOM's published deadlines for paying tuition and fees.
 - Failure to file a request by the UNC SOM's published deadlines for deferring payment of tuition and fees if financial aid is not yet available.
 - Failure to meet the University's listed health requirements, or any other University requirement, by the stated deadline.
 - Failure to meet the UNC SOM's listed health requirements by the stated deadlines.
 - Failure to repay an outstanding debt owed to the UNC SOM (e.g. emergency loan), following a written warning from the Financial Aid Officer or the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.
 - Failure to comply with the School of Medicine USMLE exam requirements.
- Students are typically placed on Administrative LOA for one year.
- Written request to extend administrative leave must be approved by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.
- Administrative LOA is restricted to a maximum of 2 years except in extraordinary circumstances.
- 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 (see also Policy on Technical Standards for Medical Students). The SPC may extend this period as deemed appropriate, and may establish requirements for returning to the curriculum.
- Students may appeal an Administrative LOA initiated by the SPC or the Associate Dean for Student Affairs using the procedures outlined in Policy on Student Appeals.

Medical LOA:

- 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.



- 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.
- Medical LOA is restricted to a maximum of 2 years except in extraordinary circumstances.
- Written request to extend Medical LOA must be approved by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs.
- If it is not feasible to meet with Student Affairs personnel to document terms of LOA, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs will provide written documentation of the LOA terms.
- Campus Health Services/Counseling and Psychological Services must evaluate and approve all requests for return from Medical LOA.

PROCEDURE(S)

NA