

LEAVE OF ABSENCE - POLICY

A leave of absence (break in the MD curriculum) from the School of Medicine may be granted for a variety of reasons differentiated in the following policy. While a student is on leave, they will be neither assessed tuition nor eligible for financial aid from the School of Medicine, except as may be specified below.

1. Academic

With the concurrence of the Committee on Promotions, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs has an option to grant a Leave of Absence, to be specified in duration, for a student who has failed two sections in the first term of the freshman or sophomore year. This Leave of Absence shall be for the pursuit of remedial studies and the student shall return to repeat the entire first or second year as specified by the Promotions Committee. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs may also grant a leave of absence for board study.

2. Medical

A student with a health problems with limited or impaired function, and is in good academic standing, shall be granted a Leave of Absence (not to exceed one year) at the discretion of the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. The Associate Dean shall collect pertinent data from the treating physician and may request a second opinion from an administratively appointed physician to document the necessity for such a leave. If the opinions of the two physicians differ, the Associate Dean and the student shall accept the opinion of the administratively appointed physician. If a student is not in good academic standing and has a medical condition, the Committee on Student Promotions would have the option of granting up to one year leave of absence, with required physician documentation. In this case, requests for return to the curriculum or for extension of a second year of medical leave must be considered by the Committee and may be granted only under compelling and well-documented circumstances.

3. Returning from a Medical Leave of Absence

A letter from the treating physician certifying the student's fitness to resume study shall be required a minimum of one month prior to reentry. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs may require a second opinion from an administratively appointed physician, identified by the school, to document that the student is fit to return from leave. The student must give permission to the physician to release this information to the school and the physician report shall be a written opinion. In the event that the opinions of the two physicians differ, the Associate Dean and the student shall accept the opinion of the administratively appointed physician. In the event that the physician or health care professional's opinion is that the student is not fit to return to the full load of medical studies, the opinion shall be binding on the student and the student may not reenter. In the event that the student returns from a leave and is unable to function at a level to meet course standards, whether academically or clinically, he or she shall be dismissed on recommendation of the Committee on Student Promotions. All official medical records in the Office of Student Affairs shall be shared with the Committee to assist in making a final determination. Upon dismissal, a student may choose to reapply to the school and request advanced standing.

4. Special Study (Research Fellowship or Degree Program)

Students in the MD program may choose to participate in a dual or joint degree program, pursue an advanced degree outside of an official program, or desire to take time away from the curriculum to participate in a research project. With proper documentation, this leave will be granted. Students registered in an academic program will have student status through that program's registration. Students who have been awarded a competitive research fellowship will retain their full time student status through special registration for a period of one year. This registration will assess no tuition; assessment of applicable fees will be determined by the location of the research (on or off campus). Students who are doing a year of research, but have not been awarded a competitive fellowship, will not have registered-student status during their one year leave; they will be considered students in good standing of the MD program, on leave.

5. Extensions

Extensions of academic and medical Leaves of Absence shall be given only under extraordinary circumstances of family or financial hardships. Requests for such extensions shall be presented to the Committee on Student Promotions whose decision will be final.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE - PROCEDURE

A break in medical education may have implications for student loan deferment and repayment status. If a voluntary leave is being considered, you should meet with a financial aid counselor in the school of medicine before making your plans. When a student is placed on leave involuntarily, that student must meet with a financial aid counselor as soon as is practical.

6. Required meeting with a Financial Aid Counselor

This meeting with a financial aid counselor must take place whether the individual will have student status during the leave period or not. This includes the following: any student who is taking a personal leave, a medical leave, or any type of forced or academic leave. This also includes any student who is taking time away from the medical school curriculum to do research or enter other academic programs (such as working on a master's degree like an MPH or an MBA). Students in various programs, such as PSTP and CSTP, should also meet with a financial aid counselor. Note that this list is not intended to be inclusive and would include all students taking a break from the medical curriculum for any reason.

7. Requesting and Applying for a Leave

Students wishing to take a break in the MD program must meet with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs to petition for the leave at least 60 days prior to the target date. Documentation to be presented: request form that will include beginning and ending dates; a letter to the Associate Dean stating the reason for the leave and plan for returning; supporting documents for all but personal leave requests. The latter may include: an acceptance letter to a degree program; an offer to work on a project in a research lab; an acceptance/offer letter for a competitive fellowship. A final determination to grant the leave may not be finalized until all appropriate documentation has been received.

8. Plan for Return from Leave (for medical leave, see item #3)

The official letter granting the leave will specify a notification-of-return date, as well as any conditions to be met prior to returning. The student is obligated to notify the School Registrar, by the notification date, of the desire to return. This written notification is necessary to assure the student's course scheduling for that academic year. Should a student fail to notify the school or meet the return conditions, they will be withdrawn from the School of Medicine and would need to apply for re-admission.

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Approved: George A. Huber, Esq. - January 21, 1985

Approved: Thomas Detre, M.D. – January 28, 1985

Revision approved by Alan Garfinkel, Esq. – February 10, 2011

Approved: Steven Kanter, M.D., Vice Dean – February 27, 2011