Leave of Absence

Overview

Life circumstances (for example illness, childbirth, family emergency, etc.) may require students to take time away from courses or rotations. Anything up to two weeks of time off may be considered a period of excused absence. Anything longer than 2 weeks requires a leave of absence (LOA). A LOA is a period of temporary non-enrollment.

In Years 1 and 2, the Office of Student Affairs may grant up to two weeks of excused absence followed by a return to all course work thereafter. Any need for time off beyond two weeks would require a student to request a formal LOA to the Office of Student Affairs. The student would then return to courses the next calendar year where he or she left off. The rationale for this is that Year 1 and 2 courses are only offered once per year and have prerequisites, and that the first semester must be completed before the second. Based on this and the volume of material, students cannot make up more than 2 weeks of missed material. A LOA may last for a period of up to one year, but a student can chose to convert the leave to a scholarly year. (See section of scholarly years.)

In Year 3 or Year 4, excused absences of longer than two days will require the student to make up the missed parts of a rotation. A student who requires more than 2 weeks of time off must request a LOA. A LOA may be granted for up to one year (see below) but a student who takes a LOA may return to rotations at any point before then (see section on return from LOA below), or convert the leave to a scholarly year. Based on when the leave is taken, the student may be required to make up parts or all of the rotation missed. The length of the leave may affect when a student is able to graduate.

The following leaves of absence are available: Medical LOA; Personal LOA and Administrative LOA. All requests for a LOA are made directly to and granted at the discretion of the Office for Student Affairs. A LOA constitutes a mutual agreement between school and student with regard to utilization of time during the leave, as well as the requirements that must be met prior to reentering the curriculum. Clearance for the leave, as set forth above, is required prior to beginning the LOA.

Medical LOA

Medical LOA may be initiated by either student or the Office for Student Affairs. All medical LOA require a physician’s endorsement and/or an administrative evaluation as ordered by the Office for Student Affairs. The term of the leave is up to one year. The leave may be extended for a second and final year at the School’s discretion upon recommendation of a physician. All students on medical LOA are required to have health insurance and are eligible for the Mount Sinai insurance at the unsubsidized rate.
Personal LOA
A personal LOA enables a student to take time off, in extenuating circumstances, to address issues of a personal nature, including those related to the health and well-being of a family member or partner.

A Personal LOA will not be granted until after the completion of the first semester of Year One, except in extenuating circumstances. Personal leaves may not be taken at any time when the student is not in good academic standing, as defined in the Academic Standing Policy, or in serious academic status, as defined in the Academic Status Section, except in extenuating circumstances.

Ordinarily, personal leaves may not exceed one year; however, requests by the students to extend a personal leave into a second year will be considered under exceptional circumstances. Upon return from a personal leave of absence, the student will be required to pay the entire first semester’s tuition with no chance for refund. (Refer to tuition policy)

Administrative LOA
Under certain circumstances students experiencing difficulty or who fail to complete school requirements may be required to take an administrative LOA.

Parental LOA - NEW
A parental LOA enables students to take time off for issues related to childbirth, adoption, or other parental responsibilities. The term of the leave is up to one year.

Financial Implications of LOA
To be eligible to receive federal and institutional student aid, the student must meet and maintain MSSM’s standards of satisfactory academic progress. (Please refer to the section entitled “Satisfactory Academic Progress for Financial Aid” under the “Financial Aid” heading in this handbook.)

A Leave of Absence Status, greater than 180 days, will move students out of their loan deferment status. At this point, the last date of attendance, prior to the leave, becomes the “Out of School” date. The student would have spent his or her grace periods and immediately be in repayment status for all educational, federal loans. Students are expected to meet with Bursar and Financial Aid Director before a LOA is finalized in order to fully understand the consequences of each.

Additional Information
A student who resides in Aron Hall must vacate Aron Hall while on LOA.

While on LOA a student will have library privileges suspended. Students on LOA may not participate in any educational opportunities at MSSM for credit or noncredit.
Clearance to Begin Leave of Absences, Withdraw, Transfer, or Otherwise Leave the School

Students who leave the medical school prior to completion of the curriculum (e.g., transfers, withdrawals, leave of absences) must obtain clearance before departure. Students are required to meet with the Office for Student Affairs before filling out the appropriate forms. The student will receive a letter of leave and individualized conditions will apply. All students must meet the criteria and confirm agreement with the terms of the leave in writing. In addition, students must complete a sign-out form and requiring the signatures of a number of offices indicating that there are no outstanding debts or other encumbrances to the student's record and that all medical school property has been returned. When all the signatures are obtained, the student must return the form to the Registrar's Office. There is a minimal fee of $100. Leave of absence form can be found at http://www.mssm.edu/education/student-resources/registrar/academic-forms

Return From LOA

Clearance to return from leave is required. Students should refer to the individualized terms of their leave letter and must complete all required evaluations or testing prior to return. In general toxicology testing and student health evaluation will be required after all personal and medical leaves. At the end of a specified period of LOA, if the student does not notify the School of his or her intentions, it will be assumed that he or she no longer wishes to be considered in good standing and will be dismissed. If a student wishes to apply for reinstatement at a later date, a new application for admissions must be completed.