

Leave of Absence

Overview

Life circumstances may require students to take time away from courses or rotations. When the need for time off is limited (see below), students may remain enrolled and will be permitted excused absences (see excused absence policies). If the time away is extensive or indeterminate, a leave of absence (LOA) may be considered. A LOA is a period of temporary non-enrollment. A LOA constitutes a mutual agreement between the School and a student with regard to utilization of time during the leave, as well as the requirements that must be met prior to reentering the curriculum. All requests for a LOA are made directly to and granted at the discretion of the Office for Student Affairs

Year 1 and 2 courses are only offered once per year and have prerequisites, and all requirements in the first semester must be completed before moving on to the second semester. Because of the schedule and volume of material, having to spend significant time away from studying and mandatory sessions may place a student at risk of poor academic performance. In Years 1 and 2, the Office for Student Affairs typically grants up to two (2) weeks of excused absences for students who require time off to attend to personal circumstances, followed by a return to all coursework thereafter. Any need for time off beyond two (2) weeks may prompt the consideration of a LOA. A LOA may last for a period of up to one year, but a student can choose to convert the leave at any point to a scholarly period, during which the student is considered enrolled as a fulltime student (see section about the Scholarly Year). In that situation and in partnership with the student, Student Affairs will work closely with the Medical Student Research Office to help the student identify a mentor and project and, when possible, funding. In the event of a LOA, the student would return to courses the next academic year where the student had left off.

In Year 3 or Year 4, excused absences longer than two days will require students to make up the missed parts of a rotation. A student who requires more time off may have up to eight (8) weeks, schedule permitting. In that event, clerkships may need to be rescheduled but students may remain enrolled. Anything longer than eight weeks may affect the student's ability to graduate on time and may require a LOA, which may be granted for up to one year. A student who takes a LOA may return to rotations at any point before the 12 month period ends (see section on return from LOA below), or convert the leave to a scholarly period. 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.

LOAs may be Medical, Personal, or Administrative. See below for details.

Medical LOA

Either the student or Student Affairs may initiate a medical LOA. A medical LOA may require a physician's endorsement and/or an administrative psychiatric or medical evaluation. The term of the leave is up to one year. The leave may be extended for a second and final year at the discretion of the Office for Student Affairs upon recommendation of a physician. All students on medical LOA are required to have health insurance and are eligible to continue with the School's student health insurance plan.

Personal LOA

A personal LOA enables a student to take time off to address issues of a personal nature, including those related to the health and well-being of a family member or partner. A LOA may also be granted for issues related to childbirth, adoption, or other parental responsibilities.

A personal LOA will not be granted for non-health or non-family related circumstances (for example to pursue a time-limited opportunity in athletics or other interests) until after the completion of the first semester of Year 1. Personal leaves for such non-extenuating circumstances 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.

Ordinarily, personal leaves may not exceed one year; however, requests to extend a personal leave into a second and final year will be considered under exceptional circumstances.

All students on personal LOA are required to have health insurance and are eligible to continue on the School's student health insurance plan.

Administrative LOA

A LOA can also be administrative. An Administrative LOA is mandated by the Department of Medical Education and is usually as the result of a student not complying with school's administrative requirements.

Documentation of LOAs

The dates for all LOAs will be noted on the Transcript and the MSPE. The reason for the LOA will not be included in these documents, with the exception of an Administrative LOA, which will be designated as such on the transcript and MSPE.

Financial Implications of LOA

To be eligible to receive federal and institutional student aid, the student must meet and maintain the School'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 period. The last date of attendance before the LOA is the "Out of School" date. After 180 days, the grace period ends and all educational federal loans will go into repayment. Students are expected to meet with the Office of Enrollment Services before a LOA is finalized in order to fully understand the consequences of the LOA on loan repayment.

Additional Information

A student who resides in Aron Hall may be required to vacate Aron Hall while on LOA, based on the nature and anticipated length of the LOA. While on LOA a student will have library privileges suspended. Students on LOA may not participate in any educational opportunities at the Icahn School of Medicine for credit.

Clearance to Begin Leaves of Absence, Withdraw, Transfer, or Otherwise Leave the School

Students who go on a LOA must obtain clearance beforehand from the Office for Student Affairs. Students are required to meet with their Faculty Advisor and/or Senior Associate Dean 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 (see link below) requiring the signatures of the requisite 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 processing fee of \$100.00 for leaves.

Leave of absence sign out and return forms can be found on the Medical School Forms [webpage](#).

Return from LOA

The Office of Student Affairs approves students for return from a LOA. The point person for the return process is the Student Affairs Manager. Students should refer to the individualized terms of their leave letter and must complete all required evaluations or testing prior to return. In general return from a medical leave of absence requires a physician's note that the student is cleared to return to school. At the end of a specified period of LOA, if the student does not notify Student Affairs Manager of his or her intentions, it will be assumed the student no longer wishes to be considered enrolled and will be dismissed. If a student wishes to apply for reinstatement at a later date, a new application for admission must be completed.

Decelerated Year

Students who have a compelling reason may request to spread requirements of one academic year over two calendar years. Interested students must meet with Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs and the Senior Director of Enrollment Services and Student Information to discuss the request. If approved, students will be considered 50 percent enrolled for this time period. Tuition will be prorated accordingly, but students will be responsible for living expenses and fees for each decelerated year. Students are enrolled during the decelerated period, loans will not go into repayment and students will be allowed to remain in housing. The period of deceleration will be noted in the Academic History section of the MSPE.

Flexibility of Year 1 and 2

While the limit for excused absences in Year 1 and 2 is two (2) contiguous weeks, students may watch the recordings of lectures at their convenience and only need to report to school for required patient presentations, small groups and laboratory experiences. This allows for significant time when a student is not required to be present at school.