

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE**

SUBJECT: Leave of Absence Policy

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- A. To inform faculty, staff, and students of the student leave of absence requirements, processes, and procedures at UH College of Medicine

- B. To ensure the UH College of Medicine complies with the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) standards for the medical education program, including LCME Standards 11.1 and 12.2.

II. BACKGROUND

Students are expected to proceed through the University of Houston College of Medicine's curriculum to graduation in a continuous, uninterrupted fashion. However, a student may temporarily separate from the curriculum via an approved Leave of Absence for academic, personal, medical, military, or other reasons. The University of Houston College of Medicine Student Promotion and Advancement policy requires that a student complete the medical education program curriculum within a six-year time frame, which includes any leaves of absence.

III. POLICY

A. Leaves of Absence

1. Personal Leave of Absence

- a. Leaves of absence for periods not to exceed one academic year may be granted for personal reasons.

2. Medical Leave of Absence

- a. Medical leaves of absence may be granted for up to one academic year.
- b. A request for a medical leave must include a written statement from a qualified licensed healthcare professional that such a leave is indicated in the best interest of the student.

3. Unexcused absences, for any reason, of 30 or more consecutive calendar days during any phase of the medical curriculum will result in an automatic withdrawal from the College of Medicine. Following such a withdrawal, the student must reapply for admission into the medical program through the Office of Admissions and Student Affairs. Students are encouraged to apply for a leave of absence if extended absences are anticipated.

4. The exact length of the Leave of Absence may vary from case to case; however, it shall not normally exceed one (1) year. Requests to be gone for longer will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

B. Procedures for Students in Good Academic Standing

- 1. A medical student in good academic standing is one who is not on internal academic watch/warning or had good standing removed (see Academic Standing Policy). Students in good academic standing who are seeking a leave of absence will submit a written request (and a statement from a qualified licensed healthcare professional in the case of a medical leave of absence) for the leave of absence to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, Admission, and Outreach (ADSAAO).

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2. The ADSAAO will consider the request and specify the conditions for return upon termination of any approved leave of absence in a written letter that will be signed by the student and a copy placed in the student's file.
 3. Student Affairs will inform the appropriate departments of such leave.
 4. At least 90 days prior to the scheduled return date, the student will submit a letter of intent to the ADSAAO addressing the conditions for return. In the case of a medical leave, the student must include a written report or communication from the student's qualified licensed healthcare professional attesting to the student's readiness to resume their studies.
- C. Procedures for Students Not in Good Academic Standing
1. A medical student who is not in good academic standing (on internal academic watch/warning or had good standing removed - see Academic Standing policy), will submit a written request (and physician statement in the case of a medical leave of absence) for a leave of absence to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, Admission, and Outreach (ADSAAO) who will forward it to the Student Performance and Advancement Committee (SPAC) for consideration and disposition.
 2. If the student has requested expedited review, the ADSAAO and Chair and Vice Chair of the SPAC may reach a decision regarding granting or denying of the leave, duration of the leave, and conditions for re-entry that will be furnished in writing to the student. The written letter will be signed by the student and a copy kept in the student's file. The SPAC will be informed of the action at the next scheduled meeting.
 3. Student Affairs will inform the appropriate departments of such leave if granted.
 4. At least 90 days prior to the scheduled return date, the student will submit a letter of intent to the ADSAAO addressing the conditions for return. In the case of a medical leave, the student must include a written report or communication from the student's qualified licensed healthcare professional attesting to the student's readiness to resume their studies. SPAC will determine whether the criteria for re-entry have been met. Students may continue to be on academic watch or warning upon return.
 5. If a student who is not in good academic standing requests a second leave of absence within two years of the first leave, all above procedures will be followed. If a second leave is granted, the SPAC will determine the conditions for return based on a review of the entire academic record, history of leaves, and documentation supporting the student's return to their studies, if applicable. If a student is allowed to re-enter, the conditions for re-entry will be specified at that time.
- D. Appeal for Denial of Leave, Extension or Re-entry
1. In the event a student's request for leave, extension or re-entry is denied, the student may submit a written appeal to the Dean of the UH College of Medicine or designee within five (5) business days of notification of denial.

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2. The Dean or designee will respond to the appeal within 10 business days.
3. The Dean's (or designee's) decision will be final.

IV. MONITORING OF THIS POLICY

- A. The Office of Student Affairs will oversee and monitor student leaves of absence.

Approval History		
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