

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

General Policies and Procedures

All leave of absence (LOA) requests must be submitted in writing to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and normally approved in advance of the proposed starting date. Usually, a student must be in good academic standing, have no outstanding U or F or Inc grades on his/her transcript, and have satisfied all graduation requirements normally expected for the student's level of training before the request is granted.

Requests for a leave of absence not covered by the various leave categories described below are considered on an individual basis by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and may be reviewed by the Student Promotion Committee.

A LOA typically may not exceed one calendar year in length except as described below. Students are expected to graduate after four consecutive academic years of enrollment except when a student is:

- granted an approved LOA due to documented health problems or personal tragedy; or
- approved to pursue an educational or research experience outside of the standard four consecutive year medical school curriculum.

The Academic Policy Manual and graduation requirements in effect for the reinstated student's **new** graduating class will apply to the student for the balance of their enrollment at Stritch.

Students may be required to vacate their assigned locker, mailbox, and learning cluster cabinet, as well as make disability insurance premium payments directly to the vendor. Depending on the timing of the LOA, students may not be eligible for the university's hospitalization insurance plan during the leave. Students on leave may be eligible to retain other student services upon payment of the usual fees. Details are available in the Bursar Office.

Health Related Leave

LOA requests for illness must be submitted in writing to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs together with a letter from a physician caregiver that:

stipulates the existence of a medical condition of such nature that a leave of absence is recommended,

- specifies that an appropriate course of therapy will be instituted,
- identifies the supervising physician, and
- indicates that a progress report authorized by the student will be submitted prior to reinstatement.

Additional supporting documentation may be required depending on the circumstances. A LOA for health-related reasons may be approved for periods up to one year. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs, in consultation with the Student Promotion

Committee, may extend a health LOA in unusual circumstances upon written request of the student.

The student should submit in writing a formal petition to resume medical training to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs preferably at least four months in advance of the anticipated date of return. In all cases of approved leaves of absence for health-related reasons, the student is not permitted to return to class unless the physician caregiver also has certified in writing to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs that the student is capable of resuming a full course load in medical school.

Special Academic Programs

A leave of absence also may be approved for the following activities:

- study for an advanced degree in scientific areas related to medicine, for example, MD/PhD program
- research activities related to medicine, but not necessarily directed toward an advanced degree
- study in specialized areas not available at the Stritch School of Medicine and not necessarily directed toward an advanced degree
- to engage in a Stritch approved remediation study plan for course, clerkship, elective, or USMLE remediation

Students must submit a proposal describing the purpose and goals of the leave. Approval is given only if the value of the proposed program is considered unique and sufficient to outweigh the disadvantages of interruption of the regular medical curriculum. Decisions for leaves in this category are reviewed by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs in consultation with the Student Promotion Committee if necessary. The decision in these cases also is influenced by logistical constraints associated with translocation of students from one graduating class to the succeeding one.

Students accepted into Loyola's MD/MS or MD/MA degree programs normally may be granted up to a one-year leave. Students accepted into the MD/PhD dual-degree program and making satisfactory academic progress may be granted successive one-year leaves of absence upon the recommendation of the MD/PhD Steering Committee to enable the student to complete the PhD requirements.

Student transitions in enrollment between the Stritch School of Medicine MD degree program and the Loyola Graduate School PhD program are detailed in the *Timeline for MD/PhD Students*, available in the MD/PhD office at the health sciences campus.

If the Graduate School or the MD/PhD Steering Committee notifies the student and Stritch that the student is not making satisfactory progress toward completion of the MA, MS, or PhD graduate degree, then the Associate Dean for Student Affairs in consultation with the Student Promotion Committee determines whether the LOA granted by the Stritch School of Medicine should be continued or revoked. If the leave is revoked, the student is expected to resume full time medical training toward the MD degree on or before the beginning of the next academic semester at Stritch according to

the course start dates for the student's level of enrollment, or voluntarily withdraw from the Stritch School of Medicine within one month of the leave's revocation. In either case, there is an annotation on the medical school transcript regarding the revocation of the leave.

Other Absences

Prolonged absences in excess of normal discretionary time and regularly scheduled holidays and vacations for reasons other than those stated above are not normally approved. Specifically, requests for the following reasons are not approved:

- pursuit of a non-medically related program or unstructured activity,
- employment,
- preparation for the first time taking of USMLE exams (pending performance on a required NBME self-assessment exam provided by SSOM near the end of the academic year, this date may be changed)
- self-study
- time off solely to consider alternative career options
- residency interview travel
- other activities not related to the completion of the MD degree requirements

Written requests for leaves of absence for reasons not covered in this Academic Policy Manual are considered on an individual basis by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and may be reviewed by the Student Promotion Committee.