



Leave of Absence Policy

Category:	2-Attendance and Absence
Curriculum Phase:	All Phases
Author/Authoring Body:	Curricular and Student Affairs
Responsible Unit:	Curricular and Student Affairs
Policy Contact:	Student Affairs Dean Office
Next Review Year:	2026

Summary

The University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson (COM-T) promulgates this policy to ensure that all student requests for a leave of absence are considered in a uniform and consistent manner.

Students may request a Medical Leave of Absence to address their own mental or physical health needs. Students may request a Non-Medical Leave of Absence to attend to all other personal circumstances, including educational/research opportunities, bereavement, military obligations, or family leave. Students requesting any leave of absence should meet with their House Dean, Financial Aid, and Registrar to obtain education about any leaves of absence. Failure to comply with this policy may result in Academic Dismissal from the COM-T.

Applicability & Scope

This policy applies to medical students across all phases of the curriculum.

Definitions

LOA – Leave of Absence

MLOA – Medical Leave of Absence

Policy Statement

Students may request a Medical Leave of Absence to address their own mental or physical health needs. Students may request a Non-Medical Leave of Absence to attend to all other personal circumstances, including educational/research opportunities, bereavement, military obligations, or family leave.

Students are not required to participate in the curriculum during a Leave of Absence. Students on a Leave of Absence must seek advance permission, in writing, from the Associate Dean of Curricular Affairs, to participate in any curricular activity—including exam retakes, remediation, or USMLE Step 1

or 2. Students acknowledge that participating in a curricular activity while on a Leave of Absence is wholly voluntary; unfavorable results will not be invalidated on the basis of a student's leave status.

Students who want to enroll in another academic program at the University of Arizona or any other institution must seek permission from the Student Progress Committee before enrolling and cannot use the Medical Leave of Absence process for that purpose. Students requesting any leave of absence should meet with their House Dean, Financial Aid, and Registrar to obtain education about any leaves of absence. Failure to comply with this policy may result in Academic Dismissal from the COM-T.

I. Medical Leaves of Absence

A. Requesting a Medical Leave of Absence

- 1) Students requesting a leave of absence because of their own physical or mental health needs must complete The University of Arizona College of Medicine [Medical Leave of Absence Request Form](#). In addition, the student must obtain supporting documentation from a licensed health care provider that contains the following information:
 - a) The approximate date of onset of the health condition giving rise to the circumstances surrounding the request for leave of absence, and the dates through which such condition is anticipated to continue;
 - b) The general nature of the health condition that prevents the student from continuing in the curriculum at the present time;
 - c) The date on which the provider anticipates the student will be able to return to the curriculum.
- 2) The student must provide the supporting documentation to the **University of Arizona Campus Health Service** to the attention of:

Executive Director, Campus Health Service 1224 E. Lowell Street, Building 95
Tucson, AZ 85721

FAX: 520-621-4301 or

Email: Terri West [Theresaw@arizona.edu]

- 3) Campus Health Service will review the documentation. If the documentation supports a medical leave based upon the student's own mental or physical health needs for the time period requested, it will issue a "Verification of Health-related Reasons for Request for Leave of Absence" form to the student (hereafter "Verification Form"). The Verification Form will include the date the MLOA form was submitted to Campus Health and the dates through which such condition is expected to continue but will **not** include information related to the nature of the condition. This Verification Form will be sent from Campus Health Service to COM-T Registrar's office.
- 4) NOTE: COM-T will not honor a retroactive LOA, a LOA cannot be effective prior to the date the request is submitted. MLOAs are limited to a maximum of 6 months prior to renewal. Prior to any renewal or extensions of MLOAs, the student will meet with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or an Assistant Dean for Student Affairs to discuss MLOA renewal plans with the student affairs team (Registrar, Financial aid, and Learning Specialist).

B. Returning from a Medical Leave of Absence

- 1) **No later than 5 business days prior to** the approved medical leave of absence ends, the student must:
 - a) Provide the COM-T's current [Technical Standards](#) to the student's health care provider;
 - b) Obtain documentation from the health care provider certifying that the student is able to return to the curriculum and perform the [Technical Standards](#);
 - c) Provide the documentation from the health care provider to Campus Health Service.
 - d) Meet with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or an Assistant Dean for Student Affairs to discuss reintegration plans. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs or an Assistant Dean for Student Affairs will discuss reintegration plans with the student affairs team (Registrar, Financial aid, and Learning Specialist).
- 2) If a student requires an accommodation for a disability upon a return from a medical leave of absence, the student must contact the University's Disability Resource Center as soon as practicable.
- 3) If a student is unable to return to the COM-T at the expiration of a medical leave of absence, the student may seek a withdrawal under existing University policies. If a student fails to return and does not formally withdraw from COM-T within 3 months of the end date of the MLOA term, the student will be subject to Academic Dismissal as per the [Policy on Dismissal from the College of Medicine](#).
- 4) **NOTE: Students requesting an MLOA prior to passing USMLE Step 1.**
All students must satisfactorily complete the Pre-clerkship phase of the M.D. degree and take the USMLE Step 1 Exam within 3 years of the date of matriculation. A student will be deemed to have completed the Pre-clerkship phase upon an initial attempt at the USMLE Step 1 Exam. Progress in the Clerkships may halt if a student fails the USMLE Step 1. All M.D. degree students must satisfactorily complete all graduation requirements 6 years from the original date of matriculation. All time limits are inclusive of leave(s) of absence, a repeat of an academic year, and retakes or remediation of any course, exam, or other requirements, as per the [Grading and Progression Policy](#).

II. Non-Medical Leaves of Absence

A. Requesting a Non-Medical Leave of Absence

- 1) Students requesting leaves of absence for reasons other than their own mental or physical health needs must submit a [Non-Medical Leave of Absence Request Form](#) to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, along with a separate Personal Statement, which addresses the following:
 - a) The reason(s) the student is requesting the leave of absence, the length of the proposed leave, and the anticipated return date.
 - b) How the student anticipates reintegrating into COM-T upon return from the leave of absence.

- 2) The student also must attach supporting documentation, such as:
 - a) an invitation to participate in an internship, externship, research-related endeavor or fellowship and the goals the student plans to achieve while on leave;
 - b) a statement from a health care provider related to the student's need to care for another person;
 - c) a statement from the military requiring the student's attendance;
 - d) police reports;
 - e) an obituary or death certificate; or
 - f) court documentation or a letter from an attorney or other professional detailing the reasons for the student's request for a leave of absence.
 - 3) If the student is unable to provide supporting documentation, the student must state the reason for the lack of documentation in their Personal Statement. Upon receipt of the student's Non-Medical Leave of Absence Request Form and supporting documentation, the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or an Assistant Dean for Student Affairs will present it, along with the supporting documentation, to the Student Progress Committee for review and approval. The Student Progress Committee may request the student to appear before it to provide information in support of the request. The Student Progress Committee's decisions regarding non-medical leaves of absence are not subject to review or appeal.
- B. Returning from a Non-medical Leave of Absence
- 1) Prior to the end date of the non-medical leave of absence, the student must meet with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or an Assistant Dean for Student Affairs to develop a plan for reintegration and return to the curriculum. The Associate Dean for Student Affairs or an Assistant Dean for Student Affairs will present the student's plan to the Student Progress Committee for review and approval. Non-medical leaves of absence are limited to a maximum of 6 months prior to renewal.
 - 2) NOTE: You must complete **all** these steps no later than the last date of your requested leave of absence. The SPC meets monthly – plan accordingly.
- C. Duration of Leaves of Absence
- 1) Leaves of absence, for either medical or non-medical reasons, are granted for no longer than 6 months prior to renewal. Prior to any renewal or extensions of MLOAs, the student will meet with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or an Assistant Dean for Student Affairs to discuss MLOA renewal plans with the student affairs team (Registrar, Financial aid, and Learning Specialist). Leaves of absence, for either medical or non-medical reasons, do not circumvent graduation requirements or graduation timelines as per the [Grading and Progression Policy](#). If a student is unable to complete the curriculum within the required timeframes due to their medical condition or disability, they must seek an accommodation through the DRC (and not an exception from the College).
- D. Failure to Return from Approved Leave of Absence
- 1) If a student fails to return and does not formally withdraw from COM-T within 3 months of the conclusion of an approved leave of absence, whether for medical or non-medical

reasons, the student will be subject to Academic Dismissal as per the [Policy on Dismissal from the College of Medicine](#).

Related Information

Policies

[COM-T Policy 1-101: Grading and Progression Policy](#)

[COM-T Policy 1-103: Policy on Dismissal from the College of Medicine](#)

[COM-T Policy 1-105: Technical Standards](#)

[COM-T Policy 2-101: Attendance and Absence Policy](#)

Forms

[Medical Leave of Absence Request Form](#)

[Non-Medical Leave of Absence Request Form](#)

Revision History

5/3/2024: Vice Dean for Medical Education approved a revision to the personal circumstances for requesting a Non-Medical Leave of Absence.

3/31/2023: Vice Dean for Medical Education approved revisions to clarify participation in the curriculum during a leave of absence, steps for returning from a MLOA, renewal or extensions of LOAs and MLOAs, and failure to return from an approved LOA.

2/9/2023: Policy revised.

9/8/2020: Policy revised.

3/19/2012: Policy revised.