



Max Rady College of Medicine Undergraduate Medical Education Policy

Policy Name:	Leaves of Absence (LOA)
Application/ Scope:	All students registered in the UGME Program
Approved (Date):	April 30, 2014
Review Date:	5 years from the last Revised Date
Revised (Date):	October 24, 2018
Approved By:	Reviewed at UGME Progress Committee: September 14, 2018 College Council, Max Rady College of Medicine: October 24, 2018

1. PURPOSE

To provide guidance and expectations for a medical student’s (“Student”) leave(s) of absence (“LOA”) from the Pre-Clerkship and Clerkship phases of the Undergraduate Medical Education (“UGME”) program.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. **Leave of Absence (LOA)** – A period of leave which extends beyond the maximum allowable absence/leave from an individual module/rotation that will require the Student to defer the full affected module/rotation to a later period in their medical education and may involve a delay in graduation.
- 2.2. **Course/Module** - A course/module is a course of study or educational unit, which covers a series of interrelated topics and is studied for a given period of time which taken together with other such completed modules or courses counts towards the completion of the M.D. degree. The UGME curriculum consists of seven (7) modules and six (6) longitudinal course occurring over a four (4) year period.
- 2.3. **Clinical Clerkship Rotations** - A hospital and/or medical based practicing clinic that involves patient care for which Students participate for a specified time period during their third and fourth year of the Program.
- 2.4. **Medical Student Performance Report (MSPR)** – An institutional assessment considered a component of a Student’s academic record and thus, will be made available for Student review. Students will be permitted to correct factual errors on the MSPR. Students are encouraged, when required to engage Student Affairs in supporting advocacy efforts in addressing perceived MSPR discrepancies.
- 2.5. **Pre-Clerkship** – Year I and Year II of the Program.
- 2.6. **Program** – the four-year Doctor of Medicine program at the Max Rady College of Medicine, University of Manitoba.

- 2.7. **Clerkship** – Year III and Year IV of the Program.
- 2.8. **Authorized Withdrawal** – an authorized withdrawal in accordance with the UGME Authorized Withdrawal or Program Withdrawal Policy.
- 2.9. **Program Withdrawal** – a program withdrawal in accordance with the UGME Authorized Withdrawal or Program Withdrawal Policy.

3. **POLICY STATEMENTS**

- 3.1. A request for a LOA is not automatically granted and may be declined or modified by the Max Rady College of Medicine based on the circumstances and conditions of the request.
- 3.2. A Student may, at any time, consult with the Associate Dean, Student Affairs, UGME for guidance as it relates to absence from a Pre-Clerkship or Clerkship component of the Program.
- 3.3. The Max Rady College of Medicine reserves the right to impose a limitation on the number of leaves, as well as their total duration, relating to the Student's ability to meet the academic criteria, essential skills and abilities, and the technical standards requirements of the Program. LOA(s) may be granted for up to a maximum of one (1) year total duration.
- 3.4. If a Student is not returning after one (1) year total duration, the Student shall be contacted by the Associate Dean, UGME, to convert his/her status to a Program Withdrawal or Authorized Withdrawal, as applicable, in accordance with the processes in the Authorized Withdrawal or Program Withdrawal Policy.
- 3.5. Should an extension of a LOA be requested by a Student or his or her health care provider, the College reserves the right to request a second opinion from a College-designated physician.
- 3.6. A Student's course of study, which is interrupted due to a LOA, will be reflected on his or her MSPR.
- 3.7. During a LOA, the Student is not permitted to receive academic credit pertaining to the progress of their MD degree.
- 3.8. In the event that the educational content in a course/clerkship cannot be made up prior to the course end-date due to an approved LOA, the Student will receive a grade of incomplete until the coursework is completed. Year I and Year II Students returning from an approved LOA will be scheduled to join the beginning of the next respective class.

- 3.9. A LOA will be considered for approval on a case-by-case basis by the Associate Dean, Student Affairs, UGME in consultation with the Associate Dean, UGME, in circumstances involving:
- Academic or education leave (other than for advanced or graduate studies at the University of Manitoba);
 - Maternity or parental leave;
 - Medical illness or injury;
 - Provision of care for an immediate family member;
 - Bereavement leave for a family member;
 - Other crisis or personal circumstance affecting the Student's educational commitments.
- taking into consideration the impact of an LOA on the Student's ability to meet the academic criteria, essential skills and abilities, and the technical standards requirements of the Program.
- 3.10. The period of time spent on LOA will not be included in the time period allowed for the completion of the MD degree.
- 3.11. An approved LOA shall set out the procedures and conditions required to facilitate the Student's return to the Program after the leave. This will include a plan for remediation, reintegration, deferred exams, meetings with key academic leaders, and any documentation necessary to support the Student's wellness and ability to return to studies (including any restrictions or accommodations). Formative clerkship rotations and/or written/OSCE examinations may be required as a condition of re-entry.
- 3.12. A Student disagreeing with a decision relating to the approval of the LOA or its conditions has the right to appeal, in writing, to the UGME Student Appeals Committee.

4. **PROCEDURES**

RESPONSIBILITIES - GENERAL

- 4.1. All requests for LOA must be submitted in writing to the Associate Dean, Student Affairs, UGME who will forward the materials received and consult with the Associate Dean, UGME. The following details must be included in the LOA request:
- The reason for the leave (if the leave is for medical reasons, a Certificate of Illness from the Student's physician must accompany the notification or be submitted as soon as possible thereafter containing the elements outlined in 4.3);
 - Any relevant supporting documentation;
 - The proposed commencement date of the LOA;
 - The expected date of return to training (if this is not known at the time the leave is being arranged, a subsequent letter must be provided with these details).
- Failure to provide clear and cogent reasoning will result in requests for LOA being delayed.

- 4.2. Upon receipt of a LOA request, arrange to meet with the Student requesting the LOA in a timely manner. A Student in Year III Medicine or Year IV Medicine seeking a LOA from a clerkship rotation, must meet with the Associate Dean, Student Affairs, UGME, Associate Dean, UGME and Director Clerkship, Clinical in order to develop a comprehensive plan for reintegration.
- 4.3. All Students requesting a LOA as a result of a medical illness or injury must produce a medical certificate to:
 - Verify that medical care is being received; and
 - Establish the anticipated duration of the LOA.
 - If the duration of the LOA is uncertain, documentation by the treating physician is required.
- 4.4. In consultation with the Associate Dean, Student Affairs, UGME an approved LOA due to medical illness/injury may contain conditions such as:
 - The affected Student receives appropriate care and support;
 - A written medical certificate or declaration of readiness to return to the Program, from the physician involved in the Student's care;
 - An additional, independent medical opinion to ensure the Student's capability to resume his/her studies.
- 4.5. Students proceeding on a LOA should contact the Office of the Associate Dean, Student Affairs, for further clarification on how the LOA may affect current loans and interest free programs prior to contacting their lenders.
- 4.6. Prior to commencing the process in 4.7, a Student intending to return from a LOA for medical reasons must provide documentation to the Office of the Associate Dean, Student Affairs, UGME as further outlined above, including any documentation from their treating physician/professional counsellor of their readiness to resume studies, if applicable.
- 4.7. A minimum of six (6) weeks prior to returning to the Program, the Student shall contact the Associate Dean, Student Affairs, UGME in order to arrange a meeting to ensure that all conditions for re-enrollment have been met. This meeting, attended by the Associate Dean, Student Affairs, UGME and Associate Dean, UGME, is intended to ensure that the Student is adequately prepared to resume his or her studies, based on the procedures and conditions set out at the time of LOA approval. In addition to the foregoing, additional requirements established by Student Counseling Services, Faculty Counseling Services, the Student's health care provider, or the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba may need to be met prior to the Student's reentry to the Program.
- 4.8. Where an LOA involves conditions which may impact patient safety or addiction, or for any LOA longer than four (4) weeks duration, the Max Rady College of Medicine shall notify the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba of the LOA, such that the College may take whatever action it deems necessary, including when necessary, suspension of the Student's registration with the College.
- 4.9. The Progress Committee must be notified of all LOAs such that they may provide guidance on the academic suitability of a request for LOA. The Progress Committee will, from time to time, provide clarification on the criteria and conditions to be enacted in support of LOA requests.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ASSOCIATE DEAN, STUDENT AFFAIRS, UGME

- 4.10. Approves or denies an LOA request in writing to the Student.
- 4.11. Notifies the Associate Dean, UGME once an LOA has been granted to a Student, providing relevant enrolment details relating to Student LOAs such as anticipated start and return date if such information is available.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ASSOCIATE DEAN, UGME

- 4.12. Upon receipt of an LOA notice from the Associate Dean, Student Affairs, UGME, draft a letter to the Administrator, Enrolment to provide information about the LOA which has been granted noting the effective start date of the LOA and, if known, anticipated return date. Copy the Administrator, Clerkship, Administrator, Pre-Clerkship, Administrator, Clerkship Evaluations, Administrator, Pre-Clerkship Evaluations on the letter as required.
- 4.13. Request the Administrator, Clerkship/Pre-Clerkship to develop an academic schedule for the Student's return.
- 4.14. Provide updates to UGME Staff as available in regard to the status of Students who are on LOA or proposing to return from LOA.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ADMINISTRATOR, ENROLMENT

- 4.15. Record all LOAs upon receipt in respective tracking database within the curriculum management system, including updating the graduation date for the Student in the curriculum management system.
- 4.16. Inform the Registrar's Office of the LOA, dates and notation to be placed on the Student's academic transcript
- 4.17. Liaise with the Student by email with regards to fee/registration actions that the Student must take. Inform the Student of the Registrar's Office processes (i.e. fee appeal processes) if applicable.
- 4.18. Draft a letter on behalf of the Associate Dean, UGME to notify CPSM of the LOA.
- 4.19. Correspond with Students on LOA prior to their return to ensure that all aspects of registration are completed (both University and CPSM requirements).
- 4.20. Communicate with CPSM, Registrar's Office and UGME staff once the return date for a Student on a LOA is known in order to configure the Student's registration.
- 4.21. File LOA documentation in the Student's active file.
- 4.22. Submit appeal documentation as required to the Associate Dean, UGME for review.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ADMINISTRATOR, CLERKSHIP/PRE-CLERKSHIP

- 4.23. Remove the Student who is on a LOA from any academic schedules, groups and/or clinical rotations. Notify the affected clinical department staff as necessary.
- 4.24. Upon notification that the Student is returning from a LOA, reinstate Student in appropriate academic schedules, groups and/or clinical rotations. Notify the affected clinical department staff as necessary.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENT AFFAIRS STAFF

- 4.25. Record decisions on LOA upon receipt and record in respective tracking database.
- 4.26. Schedule meetings for Students seeking an LOA or Students seeking to return from an LOA with the Associate Dean, Student Affairs, UGME.

5. POLICY CONTACT

Please contact the Associate Dean, UGME or the Associate Dean, Student Affairs, UGME with questions respecting this policy.