

Max Rady College of Medicine Undergraduate Medical Education Policy

Policy Name:	Leaves of Absence
Application/ Scope:	All medicine students registered in the UGME program
Review Date:	July 2023
Revised (Date):	July 2028
Approved (Date):	August 2023
Approved By:	College Executive Council

1. **PURPOSE**

To provide guidance and expectations for a medical student's (Student) leave(s) of absence 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 course/rotation that will require the Student to defer the full affected course/rotation to a later period in their medical education and may involve a delay in graduation.
- 2.2 **Course** - An educational unit, which covers a series of interrelated topics and is studied for a given period of time counts towards the completion of the M.D. degree.
- 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.
- 2.5 **Pre-Clerkship** – Year 1 and Year 2 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 3 and Year 4 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 an 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 LOA will be considered for approval on a case-by-case basis by the Associate Dean of UGME Student Affairs in consultation with the Associate Dean of 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 crises or personal circumstances affecting the Student's educational commitments.

LOA requests should take 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.

- 3.3 A Student may, at any time, consult with the Associate Dean of UGME Student Affairs or designate for guidance as it relates to absence from a Pre-Clerkship or Clerkship component of the Program.
- 3.4 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. Each LOA in excess of four weeks must detail the start and end date. There is a three (3) year total cumulative leave of absence after which students will withdraw from the program.
- 3.5 Should an extension of an LOA be requested by a Student or their healthcare 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 an LOA in excess of four weeks, will be reflected on their MSPR.
- 3.7 During a LOA, the Student is not permitted to receive academic credit pertaining to the progress of their MD degree. Students will not be permitted to write any examinations during the period of a LOA.
- 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 1 and Year 2 Students returning from an approved LOA will be scheduled to join the beginning of the next respective class.
- 3.9 The period of time spent on an LOA will not be included in the time period allowed for the completion of the MD degree. A student in clerkship may miss up to four weeks of Clerkship for an approved LOA without making up this time. Students in Pre-Clerkship who have an approved LOA will make up this time during the summer vacation.
- 3.10 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.
- 3.11 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 of UGME Student Affairs. 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 4.2).
 - 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 reasoning will result in requests for a LOA being delayed.

- 4.2 All Students requesting an LOA as a result of a medical illness or injury must produce a medical certificate to:
 - Verify that medical care is being received.
 - Establish the anticipated duration of the LOA.
 - If the duration of the LOA is uncertain, documentation by the treating physician is required.
- 4.3 In consultation with the Associate Dean of UGME Student Affairs 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.
- 4.4 Students proceeding on an LOA should contact the Office of the Associate Dean of UGME Student Affairs, for further clarification on how the LOA may affect current loans and interest-free programs prior to contacting their lenders. Students will be directed to seek further advice from the Financial Counsellor at the University.
- 4.5 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 of UGME Student Affairs as further outlined above, including any documentation from their treating physician/professional counsellor of their readiness to resume studies, if applicable.
- 4.6 A minimum of six (6) weeks prior to returning to the Program, the Student shall contact the Associate Dean of UGME Student Affairs or designate in order to arrange a meeting to ensure that all conditions for re-enrollment have been met. This meeting, attended by the Associate Dean of UGME Student Affairs and Associate Dean of UGME or designates, 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 (CPSM) may need to be met prior to the Student's re-entry to the Program.
- 4.7 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 CPSM may take whatever action it deems necessary, including, when necessary, suspension of the Student's registration with CPSM.
- 4.8 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 OF UGME STUDENT AFFAIRS

- 4.9 The Associate Dean of UGME Student Affairs or designate will arrange to meet with the Student requesting the LOA in a timely manner. A Student in Year 3 or Year 4 seeking an LOA from a Clerkship rotation must meet with the Associate Dean of UGME Student Affairs, Associate Dean of UGME and Director of Clerkship, Clinical or designates in order to develop a comprehensive plan for reintegration.
- 4.10 The Associate Dean of UGME Student Affairs will make a decision regarding the approval or denial of the request for LOA. If the request is approved, the Associate Dean of UGME Student

Affairs will inform the Student in writing. If the Associate Dean of UGME Student Affairs wishes to deny the LOA request, they will first consult with the Associate Dean of UGME and/or Progress Committee, before informing the student in writing.

- 4.11 The Associate Dean of UGME Student Affairs will inform the Associate Dean of UGME when an LOA has been granted, providing relevant enrolment details such as the anticipated start date and return date if this information is available.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ASSOCIATE DEAN OF UGME

- 4.12 Upon receipt of an LOA notice from the Associate Dean of UGME Student Affairs draft a letter to the Enrolment Administrator 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 Administrators for Pre-Clerkship, Clerkship, Pre-Clerkship Evaluations and/or Clerkship Evaluations on the letter as required.
- 4.13 Request the Pre-Clerkship or Clerkship Administrators 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.
- 4.15 Provide updates to Progress Committee as available in regard to the status of Students who are on a LOA or proposing to return from the LOA.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ENROLMENT ADMINISTRATOR

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

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PRE-CLERKSHIP/CLERKSHIP ADMINISTRATORS

- 4.24 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.
- 4.25 Upon notification that the Student is returning from an LOA, reinstate the Student in appropriate academic schedules, groups and/or clinical rotations. Notify the affected clinical department staff as necessary.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UGME STUDENT AFFAIRS STAFF

- 4.26 Record decisions on LOA upon receipt and record in the respective tracking database.
- 4.27 File LOA documentation in the Student's active file in the UGME Student Affairs office.
- 4.28 Schedule meetings for Students seeking an LOA or Students seeking to return from an LOA with the Associate Dean of UGME Student Affairs.

5. POLICY CONTACT

The Associate Dean of UGME Student Affairs or the Associate Dean of UGME.