



Common Questions and Answers

Leaves of Absence (LOA)

NOTE: These common questions and answers are meant to help you navigate the sometimes complicated policies, but they may not apply to every situation. They are NOT a substitute for the official policy and procedures, which hold precedence and can be found here: <https://umanitoba.ca/health-sciences/rady-faculty-health-sciences-policies>. If you have any questions about details in the policy, please contact Student Affairs and/or the Policy Contact (listed at the bottom of each policy)

1. What is a valid reason for a leave of absence?

There are many valid reasons for students to take a leave of absence from medical school. These include but are not limited to:

- Medical leave (physical or mental health related)
- Parental leave (both pregnant people and non-pregnant partners)
- Research leave
- Bereavement or care of an ill family member
- Career exploration

Requests for leaves of absence are made to the Associate Dean Student Affairs and discussed with the Associate Dean UGME. Documentation may be required to support a request.

The most important things to remember about LOAs is that many students need them, it is OK to take one if you need it, and taking an LOA can help you come back to school happier and healthier. If you think that being in school right now is not the right thing for you, please come to Student affairs so we can discuss and review your options.

2. Will leaves of absence appear on my permanent record/will residency programs know that I took a leave?

Leaves of absence 4 weeks or greater are noted on your medical school performance record (MSPR). The dates of the leave appear on the MSPR but not the reason. Residency programs should not ask details about the leave.

3. Will the College of Physicians and Surgeons be notified if I take a leave of absence?

We are required to report LOAs of 4 weeks or greater to the College, or if the leave is due to mental health, substance use or any other reason that could affect your ability to safely care for patients. The CPSM usually meets with students returning from leave to make sure they are ready to return and have the supports in place to succeed. While the report to CPSM can be intimidating for many students, the meeting is supportive and meant to help you get back to school and practice safely.

4. What happens if I take an LOA in pre-clerkship?

It depends on where in the curriculum you need a leave, and how long a need you require. Short leaves (a few weeks or so) are generally easy to accommodate as you can write missed exams in the summer and submit some needed assignments late. Longer leaves may be harder to accommodate as the curriculum keeps going while you are away, and it can be hard to make up long stretch. If a longer leave is required, you may need to withdraw from the current year and join up with the next Class. Student Affairs will help you work through the options depending on your individual situations.



5. What happens if I take an LOA during clerkship?

During core rotations, taking an LOA usually means that you will be incomplete on one or more core rotations. Leaves of less than 6 weeks can usually be made up during the second half of 4th year and will not affect your graduation date, provided you don't have other time to make up

(e.g., a failed rotation.) Slightly longer leaves may result in time being made up between the end of 4th year and the beginning of residency. Much longer leaves may affect your graduation date and residency start. Student Affairs will help you work through the options depending on your individual situations.

6. What happens when I am ready to return from LOA?

This depends on the length and reason for your LOA. If your leave was reported to the CPSM they will need to confirm that you are cleared to return to studies. If you need accommodations when you return to help you resume your studies, you will need to be registered with Student Accessibility Services in advance so we can plan those accordingly. We like to meet with students, if possible, well in advance of their return to work through these important details.

CONTACT US

We welcome feedback. Please let us know if you find this document helpful and if you have tips you would like us to add! Contact us at StudentAffairsmed@umanitoba.ca.