



# Leaves of Absence and Withdrawal

**Senior Leader:** Medical School Dean

**Responsible University Officer:** Senior Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education

**Policy Owner:** Office of Student Affairs, Twin Cities and Duluth

**Policy Contact:** Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, Twin Cities

Associate Dean for Student Life & Academic Affairs, Duluth

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## POLICY STATEMENT

University of Minnesota Medical School (UMMS) students are expected to proceed through the curriculum in a continuous, uninterrupted fashion until graduation. In the event of circumstances which necessitate a temporary period of non-enrollment, a leave of absence (LOA) may be available.

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## REASON FOR POLICY

Circumstances may arise in which students may need/choose to interrupt their enrollment. Allowing an LOA provides students the ability to return to medical school without affecting their time to degree (see '*Related Information*').

For students on an imposed LOA, it provides an opportunity for them to address academic, technical, or professional deficiencies that permit continuation in, and successful completion of, the medical education program without affecting their time to degree.

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## PROCEDURES

Students on, or about to take, an LOA are encouraged to speak with the Office of Financial Aid regarding any impact a Leave may have on their financial aid status or tuition refund eligibility.

### I. Leave of Absence

Enrolled students may request an LOA from the relevant Dean on their respective campus: the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs on the Central Campus in the Twin Cities; Associate Dean for Student Life and Academic Affairs on the Regional Campus in Duluth (henceforth referred to as "Dean of Students"). Typical reasons for requesting such a leave include, but are not limited to:

- medical reasons
- financial reasons
- personal reasons
- educational enhancement reasons (including [Flex MD](#))
- caretaker reasons (see below)

Conversely, a Leave of Absence may be imposed as a result of a scholastic standing committee outcome for students not meeting the academic, technical, or professional standards set by the UMMS. Information about the scholastic standing committees can be found in the [Scholastic Standing Committees Policy](#).

#### General Procedures

1. Students requesting an LOA must submit a request in writing to the Dean of Students for review. Students may be required to meet with the Dean of Students to discuss their options. The relevant Dean of Students has authority to approve or deny the request. LOAs for Flex MD applicants will be handled through the Flex

MD Committee.

2. Approved leaves will stipulate:
  - a. a time period for the leave
  - b. the date by which the student must formally notify the school confirming their return to active enrollment or by which an extension must be requested (typically no fewer than thirty days in advance of the LOA termination date)
  - c. any conditions to be met prior to, or subsequent to a return to active enrollment
3. The approval of an LOA does not negate other medical school policies related to course remediation or academic status and it does not negate previous/concurrent scholastic standing committee decisions.
4. LOAs are applied for the entirety of an academic term. LOAs approved after a term has started, but where no coursework has been taken in that term, will be retroactively applied to the entire term.
5. Students who begin an LOA prior to the end date of current courses/clerkships should consult the [Medical School Registration Policy](#) (see 'Related Information') regarding the impact this may have on their grades and tuition charges.
6. An LOA is approved for up to one year. A student may request an extension of one additional year. Requests for an extension may require a documented reason for considering further extensions, and the additional consideration and approval of the Scholastic Standing Committee in addition to the Dean of Students. Flex MD participants may be approved for two years.
7. Unapproved LOA: A student will be considered to be on an Unapproved LOA in the following instances: 1) Ceasing active engagement in the medical education program without official approval of an LOA; 2) Failing to return to the UMMS after being on an LOA without an approved extension. Students on an unapproved LOA may be withdrawn or dismissed from the medical school in addition to being subject to other actions, including academic holds, delayed reinstatement, and additional financial obligations.
8. The UMMS reserves the right to require a student returning from an LOA to complete remedial work or demonstrate satisfactory academic competence where there are legitimate concerns about that student's current academic ability or for patient safety.

#### **Leaves of Absence for Caretaker Reasons:**

Caretaker reasons include caring for a child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, spouse, or domestic partner (Family member) who has a serious health condition. Students who have or adopt a child may take an LOA before and/or after the child arrives.

Depending on the length of the LOA, it may result in extension of the student's graduation date. Students requiring short-term, excused absences for caretaker needs (ie. caring for a sick child) should refer to the [Attendance Requirements and Excused Absences Policy](#) for guidance.

## **II. Withdrawal**

Although there may be a variety of legitimate reasons a student may consider withdrawing from medical school, such a decision can have significant consequences on a student's future and should be considered carefully.

Students contemplating withdrawal for any reason should consult with the Dean of Students prior to making such a decision. Students are also strongly encouraged to seek assistance from their advisors, the Student Counseling Services, including the UMMS' Confidential Bridging Counseling, or other support systems prior to considering withdrawal.

Students wishing to permanently end enrollment in the UMMS must notify the Dean of Students, in writing, their intention to withdraw and their expected official withdrawal date. The withdrawal may also be reviewed by the scholastic standing committee.

Students whose withdrawal date begins prior to the end date of any courses/clerkships in which they are currently enrolled should consult the [Medical School Registration Policy](#) regarding the impact this may have on their grades, tuition charges, and other University benefits.

A student's current academic standing and any remediation requirements will remain in effect at the time of withdrawal and be noted in the student's academic file; these may inform decisions regarding requests for reinstatement (See [Reinstatement from Withdrawal Policy](#)).

### III. Appeals

Students who wish to appeal any determination regarding an LOA or withdrawal decision will be subject to the appeals process outlined in the [Scholastic Standing Committees Policy](#).

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### FORMS/INSTRUCTIONS

There are no forms associated with this policy.

**LOA Request:** Students seeking to take an LOA should submit a request, in writing, to the relevant Dean of Students as early as possible and may need to meet with the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students has the authority to approve or deny the request for an LOA and will provide the student with a written decision. Notifications will be provided to the Registrar and other relevant individuals/offices for processing as needed.

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### ADDITIONAL CONTACTS

Subject	Contact	Phone	Fax/Email
<b>Primary Contact</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Fax/Email</b>
Student Affairs - Twin Cities	Michael Kim, MD	612-625-5180	<a href="mailto:mikekim@umn.edu">mikekim@umn.edu</a>
Student Life & Academic Affairs - Duluth	Robin Michaels, PhD	218-726-8872	<a href="mailto:rmichael@d.umn.edu">rmichael@d.umn.edu</a>
Financial Aid - Twin Cities	Kristin Basballe	612-624-7675	<a href="mailto:parrx008@umn.edu">parrx008@umn.edu</a>
Financial Aid - Duluth	Dina Flaherty	218-726-6548	<a href="mailto:dflahert@d.umn.edu">dflahert@d.umn.edu</a>

### DEFINITIONS

#### Leave of Absence (LOA)

An LOA from the medical school converts the student's status to "Inactive." The student is no longer considered enrolled during the approved duration of the LOA, but is expected to return to medical school. The student may still be subject to financial obligations (i.e. loan repayments, outstanding charges to the medical school) depending on the length of the LOA. As per University of Minnesota Policy, any student absent from courses for one full semester is automatically considered to be on a Leave of Absence.

#### Withdrawal

A withdrawal from the UMMS converts the student's status to 'Discontinued.' The student is no longer considered enrolled with no intention to return to the medical school, is subject to all financial obligations (i.e. loan repayments, outstanding charges to the medical school), and may not have access to University facilities. Withdrawn students who subsequently wish to consider returning to the medical school will be subject to the [Reinstatement from Withdrawal Policy](#).

#### Dismissal

A dismissal is an involuntary withdrawal from the medical school, typically as an outcome of a scholastic standing committee decision or as a result of a violation of University or UMMS conduct policies.

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### RESPONSIBILITIES

#### Dean of Students (Twin Cities and Duluth)

The Dean of Students is responsible for review and approval of Leaves of Absence, approval to return to medical school from a LOA, and coordination between the relevant scholastic standing committee and students placed on imposed Leaves of Absence.

#### Flexible MD Oversight Committee

The Flexible MD Oversight Committee is responsible for reviewing and approving/denying a student's request to take an elective LOA as part of the FlexMD program.

### **Students**

Medical students are responsible for notifying the appropriate school official regarding requests for an LOA, requests for LOA extensions, the intention to return from an LOA, and for adhering to all conditions or requirements of an LOA. Medical students are also responsible for any impact an LOA may have on their financial aid status.

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## **RELATED INFORMATION**

Visit the [Medical Student Policies](#) Webpage to review the following policies:

- Scholastic Standing Committee Policy
- Reinstatement from Withdrawal Policy
- Grades & Grade Appeals Policy
- Medical School Registration Policy

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## **HISTORY**

**Date Effective:** December 2019

**Approved By:** Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education, November 2019

**Reviewed:** Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education, May 2021

**Reviewed and Approved:** Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education, October 2022

**Reviewed with minor updates:** August 2023