



## LEAVE OF ABSENCE

### I. **Policy Statement**

CNUCOM grants approved leaves of absence (LOA) to medical students for academic, employment, maternity, military, medical, research, educational enrichment and other approved professional or personal reasons. It is the responsibility of the student to review the LOA policy prior to requesting an LOA. Students should consult with their Advisor and the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs prior to any planned LOA to ensure that the procedural requirements for a LOA are correctly followed. It is ultimately the responsibility of the student to fully comprehend the potential financial and professional implications of an LOA.

### II. **Purpose**

The purpose of the policy is to provide guidelines for approval of extended leaves of absence for medical students at CNUCOM.

### III. **Scope/Coverage**

This policy applies to all CNUCOM students.

### IV. **Policy Procedure**

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that a LOA request form is submitted in a timely manner. Non-attendance does not constitute notification of intent to apply for LOA status. It is the responsibility of the student to continue coursework (barring an unforeseen circumstance) until the LOA is approved.

To request a planned absence, students should first contact their individual Advisor then discuss with the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, and immediately contact the appropriate course director(s) or clerkship director(s). An official LOA request form must be completed and includes the last date of attendance, anticipated return date, and reason for the leave of absence. The LOA request must be signed by the Director of Student Financial Aid and The Business Office prior to being submitted to the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs.

The Assistant Dean of Student Affairs will review the academic standing of the student and forward the documents to SPC to determine whether a LOA will be granted. Final approval of the LOA is provided by the Office of Medical Education. LOA forms can be accessed via links found on the CNUCOM website and in the CNUCOM Student Handbook. All requests for planned absences must be submitted to the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs at least two months prior to the planned absence.

#### **a. Leave of Absence Categories**

In general, a student is eligible for one LOA during their tenure at CNUCOM. Requests for a second LOA are highly discouraged and unlikely to be approved due to the disruption it would cause to the students' progression through the curriculum. LOAs requested for academic deficiency during Phase A will initially be for six months or one semester and may be extended at the discretion of the SPC. LOAs requested during Phase B will initially be for one semester coinciding with preset blocks at the discretion of the Phase B Director and may be extended at the discretion of SPC. Extensions beyond 1 year are not permitted except under extenuating circumstances during any Phases.

#### **i. School Initiated**

##### **1. Academic LOA (LOA-Ac):**

- a. If the student is experiencing academic difficulties, an LOA may be proposed by the Student Promotion Committee (SPC). The initial duration of the LOA would be one semester. Extensions beyond 1 year are not permitted except under extenuating circumstances.
- b. Students will work with their advisor, course/clerkship director and the Student Promotions Committee (SPC) to create an academic plan. This plan will include details such as actions the student will take for academic success:
  - i. Instructional Approaches (i.e. self-paced study, didactics, online resources)
  - ii. Integrated Learning Assistance/Support (i.e. face-to-face and online tutoring, coursebased learning assistance).
  - iii. Structured Advising (i.e. academic advising plan) including mechanisms to demonstrate readiness to return from LOA.
  - iv. Courses/clerkships already completed and intended courses/clerkships to be completed upon return.
  - v. Intended dates for mandatory exams such as but not limited to CBSEs, CCSE, USMLE Step examinations,

- and any other mandatory exams contained in the curriculum and as required by the Progression Policy
- c. The academic plan is initially reviewed and approved by the SPC and then submitted to the Office of Medical Education. Students will need a mandatory meeting with the Associate Dean of Medical Education prior to final approval. Upon approval of the LOA, the Registrar is notified.
  - d. To promote student wellness and success, monitoring will occur during LOA. OSA will communicate bi-monthly with the students to monitor wellness and provide general counseling. Advisors are responsible for academic supervision of the students and provide interval reports to SPC when necessary.
  - e. Students should be and are expected to:
    - i. Develop an Academic Plan with advisor and course/clerkship director meet with SPC and OME Dean to seek approval of Academic-LOA.
    - ii. Meet with their advisor at least once per month during LOA.
    - iii. Submit a formal Academic Plan in writing to SPC four (4) weeks prior to the end date of LOA
  - f. If a student is granted a LOA that interrupts a course or clerkship, a grade of W (withdrawal) will be entered on the transcript, designating uncompleted coursework. If/when the student is re-enrolled, SPC consultation with the course director will determine how much of the interrupted course or clerkship graded with a W will need to be repeated. If the student is reenrolled in the interrupted course or clerkship, the final grade will appear in the term in which the coursework is completed. The grade of W remains on the transcript along with any grade subsequently achieved.

## ii. **Student Initiated**

A student in good academic standing may, at any time, request a leave of absence for a specified period.

### 1. **Research and Educational Enrichment (LOA (LOA-R):**

An approved Leave of Absence can be generated by the student to pursue research endeavors, an additional degree, such as MHA, MPS, Ph.D., either at CNSU or another institution.

### 2. **Military Obligation LOA (LOA-Mil):**

An LOA will be granted for all uniformed service members called to duty (whether voluntary or involuntary) for the duration of their time served. The student must complete a Leave of Absence Form and provide a copy of their military orders. Service members will be re-admitted to the university upon their return under the same re-admittance policies as all students who have been on an LOA from the university. Service members will not experience any penalties from the University for fulfilling their military obligations.

### 3. **Medical LOA (LOA-Med):**

An approved Medical Leave of Absence may be initiated by the student and must be accompanied by documentation from the student's personal health care provider and/or an independent examiner must attest to the student's inability to participate in the curriculum due to a medical condition.

### 4. **Personal LOA (LOA-P):**

An approved Personal Leave of Absence is initiated by the student to attend to family, financial, or other personal factors that affect the student's ability to participate in the curriculum. Examples of reasons for a Personal Leave of Absence include but are not limited to:

- a. *Death in the family*
- b. *Caregiving family members.*
- c. *Other personal situations preventing participation in curriculum.*

### 5. **Administrative LOA (LOA-Adm):**

An Administrative Leave of Absence may be initiated by SPC, Assistant Dean for Medical Education and the Dean's Office for reasons such as:

- a. *Noncompliance with health clearance or other compliance requirements.*
- b. *Nonpayment of registration fees leads to repeated business holds.*

## V. **Financial Implications**

- a. LOA can result in a significant financial impact, and therefore, the timing of the leave is critical. A student may not receive a full refund of tuition if an LOA is submitted after the first day of instruction. Leave may affect financial aid, health insurance and malpractice liability coverage.

- b. University health insurance is active only through the last semester for which a student has been registered.
- c. Malpractice coverage is in effect only while a student is registered and participating in clinical activities that are approved as part of the curriculum. Therefore, a student is not approved by the university to participate in outside clinical activities while on a LOA.
- d. A student may not serve in an elected office or represent the school to another organization while on LOA unless the Assistant Dean of Medical Education has granted an LOA that includes that specific provision.
- e. Students relinquish their badge access during LOA. Students will retain university email access and be migrated to the corresponding class based on their intended date of return. These factors should be carefully considered along with the timing and benefits of a planned LOA.

## VI. Intent to Return

- a. If a student is approved of an LOA, the student is eligible to return without reapplication if the absence is within the approved time frame. Prior to return, the student must submit an Intent to Return from Leave of Absence Form which must be approved by the Office of Medical Education at least two weeks before the intended date of return of the student. If a student was granted a LOA with requirements for return to the College of Medicine, then the student must submit written proof of completion of the requirements with the Intent to Return from Leave of Absence Form. The Student Promotions Committee will review the academic progress of the student to determine the status of the student upon return from LOA.
- b. Failure of a student to adhere to the indicated policies for returning from an LOA may result in dismissal and terminal separation of the student from California Northstate University.
- c. Return to Phase A will be dependent on when the courses needed to complete this phase are next offered. Return to Phase B will be at the discretion of the M3 and M4 Clerkship Directors and based on the availability of needed clerkships.

*REVIEWED by FEC: 11/18/2024*

*APPROVED by SPC: 12/29/2024*

*Review/Revision Cycle: Every Three Years*