



- Policy Number: 4120
- Approval Date: 12/19/2024
- Reviewed by FEC 11/18/2024
- Department: Office of Medical Education

CNUCOM Leave of Absence Policy

I. Purpose

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

II. Scope/Coverage

This policy applies to all CNUCOM students.

III. 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 an LOA are correctly followed. It is ultimately the responsibility of the student to fully comprehend the potential financial and professional implications of an LOA.

IV. Leave of Absence Categories

a. School Initiated

i. Academic LOA (LOA-Ac)

1. If the student is experiencing academic difficulties, an LOA may be proposed by the Student Promotion Committee (SPC). The initial duration of the LOA is six (6) months. Extensions beyond one (1) year are not permitted except under extenuating circumstances.
2. Students will work with the Office of Medical Education, course/clerkship director and the SPC to create an academic plan. This plan will include details such as actions the student will take for academic success. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Instructional approaches (i.e. self-paced study, didactics, online resources)
 - b. Integrated Learning Assistance/Support (i.e. face-to-face and online tutoring, course-based learning assistance)
 - c. Structured Advising (i.e. academic advising plan) including mechanisms to demonstrate readiness to return from LOA
 - d. Course/clerkships already completed and intended courses/clerkships to be completed upon return

- e. Intended dates for mandatory exams such as but not limited to CBSE, CCSE, USMLE Step examinations and any other mandatory exams contained in the curriculum and as required by the Progression Policy.

The academic plan is reviewed and approved by the Office of Medical Education. Upon approval of the LOA, the Registrar is notified.

3. To promote student wellness and success, monitoring will occur during the LOA. OSA will communicate with the students to monitor wellness and provide general counseling. Advisors are responsible for academic supervision of the student and provide interval reports to SPC when necessary.
4. If a student is granted an LOA that interrupts a course or clerkship, a grade of 'I' (incomplete) will be entered on the transcript, designating incomplete coursework. If/when the student returns from LOA, SPC consultation with the course director will determine how much of the interrupted course or clerkship graded with an 'I' will need to be completed or repeated. If the student is re-enrolled in the interrupted course or clerkship, the final grade will appear in the term in which the coursework is completed.

ii. Administrative LOA (LOA-Adm)

An Administrative LOA may be initiated by the SPC, Assistant Dean for Medical Education or the Dean's Office for reasons that can include, but are not limited to:

1. Noncompliance with health clearance or other compliance requirements
2. Nonpayment of registration fees leading to repeated business holds.

b. Student Initiated

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

i. Research and Education Enrichment LOA (LOA-R)

An approved LOA can be generated by the student to pursue research endeavors or an additional degree, either at CNU or another institution.

ii. 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.



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iii. Medical LOA (LOA-Med)

An approved Medical LOA 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 medical conditions.

iv. Personal LOA (LOA-P)

An approved Personal LOA 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 LOA include but are not limited to:

1. Death in the family
2. Caregiver for family members
3. Other personal situations preventing participation in the curriculum

V. Procedure

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that an 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 any unforeseen circumstances) until the LOA is approved.

To request a planned absence, the student should contact their individual advisor, the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and the appropriate course/clerkship director. An official LOA request form must be completed and should include the last date of attendance, anticipated return date and the reason for the LOA. 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 an 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.

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 deficiencies during Phase A will initially be for six (6) or one (1) semester and may be extended at the discretion of the SPC. LOAs requested during Phase B will coincide with preset blocks at the discretion of the M3 or M4 Director and may be extended at the discretion of the SPC. Extensions beyond one (1) year are not permitted except under extenuating circumstances during any Phases.



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VI. Financial Implications

- a. An LOA can result in significant financial impact. Therefore, the timing of the leave is critical. A student may not receive a full refund of the 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 an LOA.
- d. A student may not serve in an elected office or represent the school to another organization while on an LOA unless the Assistant Dean of Medical Education has granted an LOA that includes that specific provision.

VII. Intent to Return

- a. If a student is approved for 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 form. This form 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 an 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 form. The SPC will review the academic progress of the student to determine the status of the student upon from LOA.
- b. Failure of the 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 Directors and based on the availability of needed clerkships.

Approval Record:

APPROVED BY: SPC 12/19/2024

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INDEXES: LOA, leave of absence, intent to return, academic plan