

Leave of Absence

Students must meet all curricular and attendance requirements to be officially advanced to the subsequent year, as reviewed by the Promotions Committee. Please see the Advancement and Promotions Policy for details. A student who takes a leave of absence may not be able to make up the missed requirements without delaying graduation.

Personal Leave of Absence

A personal leave of absence (PLOA) is a period of non-enrollment during which a student is not considered to be working toward the MD degree. PLOA must be invoked if the period of absence exceeds 29 calendar days¹. The initial leave of absence may be granted for personal or academic reasons for a period not to exceed one calendar year. A student requesting an extension of the leave of absence beyond one calendar year must update the [Status Change Form](#) and obtain permission of the Advisory Dean for the extension before the current leave has expired. Failure to do so will automatically result in administrative withdrawal from the School of Medicine.

The Office of Curricular Affairs, the Office of the Registrar/Financial Aid, the Office of Admissions, MedEd IT and the Vice Dean for Medical Education should be notified in the event a PLOA is approved and/or extended. Students on a PLOA are generally eligible to retain Duke Student Health Insurance. Students should contact [Duke Student Affairs- Student Health](#), and/or the Office of Learning Environment and Well-being (LE WELL) Case Manager, for questions regarding their coverage and confirm their eligibility for coverage. Please see Addendum A for additional information regarding the Student Health Insurance Policy for an approved PLOA.

Medical Leave of Absence

A student may be eligible for a medical leave of absence (MLOA) if they have a medical condition as assessed by a licensed healthcare provider, for which treatment may impact their ability to continue in their education program. A medical leave is required if the absence exceeds 29 calendar days (see footnote 1). The student should meet with their Advisory Dean to facilitate referral to the Office of Learning Environment and Well-being (LE WELL) to initiate the evaluation for fitness for duty (or eligibility for leave). A MLOA should be considered when the student may miss more days than allowed as per the attendance policy for the course.

If additional medical leave time is required, an attestation from the treating physician/health care provider must be submitted to the Office of Learning Environment and Well-being (LE WELL) for consideration and determination of appropriate next steps.

¹ On the 30th day of absence, the Office of Financial Aid is required to complete the R2T4.

Medical Leave of Absence – Parental

Students who have become parents while enrolled in the Doctor of Medicine program may take a medical leave of absence (MLOA) before and/or after the child arrives. The maximum leave is twelve weeks. A leave of this length is likely to result in extension of the student's graduation date. A MLOA – Parental is granted for the birth and/or care of the newborn child of a student, or the placement with the student of a child for adoption or foster care.

Students on medical leaves are generally eligible to retain Duke Student Health Insurance. Students should contact [Duke Student Affairs- Student Health](#), and/or the Office of Learning Environment and Well-being (LE WELL) Case Manager, for questions regarding their coverage and confirm their eligibility for coverage based on their cited reason for the MLOA. Please see below for re-entry processes and requirements.

Application for a Leave

Students applying for a personal or medical leave of absence must follow the steps outlined below. Please note that steps 1 and 2 may occur simultaneously or in either order.

1. Meet with your Advisory Dean to discuss concerns and ideas regarding possibility of leave plans. The student will be referred to the Office of Learning Environment and Well-being (LE WELL).
2. Connect with the Office of Learning Environment and Well-being (LE WELL) to discuss concerns regarding leave.
3. The Office of Learning Environment and Well-Being (LE WELL) Case Manager, with formal consultation with the Office of Student Affairs, the Office of Curricular Affairs, and Medical Education Administration, will facilitate determination of applicability of various logistical pieces, including, Duke medical insurance, student health and psychological services considerations. The student will be directed to meet with the Office of Financial Aid as part of this process.
4. In concert with the Office of Learning Environment and Well-Being (LE WELL) Case Manager and student's Advisory Dean, complete the [Status Change Form](#), which will route to the Registrar's Office.
5. The Registrar will review the Status Change Form for determination of appropriateness and feasibility.
6. Upon approval, the Registrar will notify course faculty, the Office of Financial Aid, the Bursar Office, the Office of Student Affairs and the Office for Curricular Affairs.
7. Once the student's status has been changed, the student will be required to meet with Medical Education Information Technology (MedEd IT) staff to remove Duke-installed software from laptop. Please refer to the [technology policy](#) for official requirements and guidelines. In addition, the student will be asked to turn their Duke-issued identification badge to the Office of Student Affairs for the duration of their leave.

*The SoM is required by the Higher Education Act to recalculate the eligibility for federal Title IV student financial assistance for students who withdraw, drop out, are dismissed, or take a leave of absence, prior to completing 60% of a semester. Title IV funds include: Federal Work-Study, Federal Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loans, and Federal Direct PLUS Loans. The application of the Return of Title IV Funds Policy may result in funds being due to the and students are responsible for any outstanding balance (see footnote 1).

Eligibility to Return from a Leave of Absence

Students applying to return from a personal or medical leave of absence must follow the steps outlined below:

1. The student will coordinate with the Office of Learning Environment and Well-Being (LE WELL) Case Manager to help with coordination of requirements and to obtain support during the return process.
 1. Satisfied all financial obligations (debt) to the University. Students should work directly with the Office of the Bursar to resolve prior financial obligations or billing questions.
 2. For personal medical leaves, the Office of Learning Environment and Wellness (LE WELL) will confirm medical clearance (and help establish a plan to maintain wellness) to return at-least 45 days prior to re-enrollment
 3. The student will be required to complete the [Status Change Form](#) at least 30 days prior to re-enrollment so that necessary paperwork and registration may be accomplished, and relevant course directors informed
2. The Office of Learning Environment and Well-being (LE WELL) Case Manager will facilitate communication with the student's Advisory Dean, the Office of Curricular Affairs and the Office of the Registrar to begin the process of coordinating schedules to permit return with adherence to essential functions of the curriculum and without impacting other learners in the environment.
 1. At this step, it is possible additional delays will become apparent, as some course offerings take place at set times during the year and/or are not able to be completed at other times of the year.
 2. Students returning from LOA must complete all compliance requirements before final clearance to return to the classroom or clinical learning environment.
3. Once approved to return from LOA, the student will be required to meet with Med IT to have laptop reconfigured and Duke software re-installed, if needed and in accordance with the [technology policy](#).
4. Students returning from a leave who wish to apply for financial aid must notify the Financial Aid Office and file the necessary application forms by May 1 for the following fall term, and by October 1 for the following spring term. Late applicants cannot be assured that their aid will be available in time for registration payment deadlines
5. Student borrowers returning from their leave are required to follow up with their servicers to ensure loans are placed back into in-school deferment status. For information about loan deferment and to acquire a deferment form, please visit [Office](#)

[of Financial Aid](#). All forms must be completed and certified by the Registrar immediately following Registration. Failure to file a deferment form upon return will cause payments to be due on loans and could affect future borrowing eligibility

In all cases of leave of absence, other than for approved second degree programs, a student must complete requirements for the MD degree within six years of matriculation. Students who are readmitted after a leave of absence may be required by the Vice Dean for Education to repeat some or all the previously completed coursework.

While on Leave of Absence

- Access to buildings other facilities, that normally may be used only by students who are currently registered and enrolled in classes, will be suspended. Students on leave may not participate in extracurricular activities. Exceptions to this rule must be specifically approved in advance by the School. If so instructed by the Vice Dean for Education, a student on leave must remain away from the University/Medical School campus.
- Students with parking passes will have their pass suspended.
- Students on leaves of absence are not registered at Duke, and therefore do not have the rights and privileges of registered students. They cannot fulfill any official department or University requirements during the leave period.
- Students are not permitted to attend classes, use school services, or maintain employment as students at Duke while their leave is in effect.
- An approved LOA is not counted toward a student's time to degree and does not require the student to make degree progress during the period of the leave.
- The student would need to follow current policy for making up incomplete grades. Leave periods are excluded from the maximum timeframe for completing incomplete grades.
- Students will be asked to turn their Duke-issued identification badge to the Office of Student Affairs for the duration of their LOA.

All international students who are in F-1 and J-1 visa status must follow a set of immigration regulations as outlined by the U.S. Government in order to maintain their international student status. Students who are in F-1 and J-1 visit status must meet with the Duke Visa Service Office to discuss the decision to take a LOA or withdraw before submitting a completed [Status Change Form](#).

Curricular Expectations

Students who are on a leave of absence are still required to meet all curricular expectations and requirements, upon their return. This includes adherence to attendance policies, exams and assignments, and all other instructional and assessment requirements. They will be assessed for grades and for promotion/graduation on the same curricular requirements as their fellow students.

ADDENDUM A

Personal Leave Student Health Insurance Policy is as follows. Students should contact [Duke Student Affairs- Student Health](#), and/or the Office of Learning Environment and Well-being (LE WELL) Case Manager, for questions regarding their coverage and confirm their eligibility for coverage.

1. Student goes on Personal Leave between Mid-June through Mid-September; the policy will term back to July 31st, the last day of the previous school year.
2. Student goes on Personal Leave after Fall Enrollment, in October, November, or December, the policy will terminate on December 31st.
3. Student goes on Personal Leave during Spring Enrollment (November 15th through January 31), the policy will be termed back to December 31st.
4. Student goes on Personal Leave after the Spring Enrollment, the student's policy will terminate on July 31st, the last day of the school benefit year.