

From AAMC Handbook:

Leaves of Absence

In the event of extenuating circumstances that preclude a student from continuous uninterrupted progression in the medical school curriculum, policies govern the procedures for requesting an approved Leave of Absence (LOA) and a return from a LOA. A student may request a leave of absence for one of several reasons. Some of the more common reasons are defined below. Your institution may have additional approved reasons.

- *Medical:* A leave recommended in writing by a physician, which is considered necessary for the student's emotional, mental, or physical health, and beneficial to their personal and professional well-being and progress. The recommendation must generally include a diagnosis and a suggested duration for the leave. The institution may exercise an option to ask that a student requesting a medical leave or extension or requesting to return from a medical leave have a medical assessment by a physician designated by the university.

- *Academic:* To include an interruption of the medical curriculum to pursue an advanced degree, research training, a medically related fellowship, extended USMLE preparation, or other education program approved by the dean.

- *Financial:* When a student is unable to meet tuition and/or other educational financial obligations for all or part of an academic period.

- *Personal:* When a student requires time to give primary attention and effort to circumstances or a situation that will inhibit or interfere with their academic performance and/or progress. A personal leave of absence usually may not exceed 12 months, and a student may not request this type of leave more than once in an academic year. It may be advisable to have a policy in place that requires a student to be in good academic standing to request a personal LOA.

- *Administrative:* The dean has the option to place a student on an administrative leave of absence. If an administrative leave is granted because it is believed that the student is incapable of continuing in the medical curriculum at that time, return from administrative leave may carry stipulations such as proof of successful resolution of the circumstances necessitating the leave. Any student receiving financial aid must participate in an exit interview with the financial aid office prior to being approved for a LOA. Consideration for adjustment or refund of fees to © 2008 AAMC. May not be reproduced without permission. 16 AAMC Handbook for Student Records Administrators students on leave of absence shall be based on established refund

policies, in accordance with Title IV regulations. The length of a LOA may vary. Often, the maximum is 12 months, but with an option to request an extension of the leave of absence for an additional 12 months under unusual circumstances and with appropriate documentation. It is advisable to have a policy that restricts the maximum total length of time that a student can be on leave, e.g., two or three years. Students approved for a LOA, regardless of the type of LOA, must also request and be approved when they wish to return from the LOA. Advance written notice of the student's intent to return may be required. Final approval for leaves of absence, extensions, and returns from LOA are generally made by the dean or student affairs dean of the college of medicine.