



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER™

School of Medicine

Operating Policy and Procedure

SOM OP: 40.09, **Student Leave of Absence**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this School of Medicine (SOM) Policy and Procedure is to describe procedure related to student leaves of absence from the School of Medicine curriculum.

REVIEW: This SOM Policy and Procedure shall be reviewed within each odd-numbered fiscal year by the Student Promotions and Professional Conduct Committee (SPPCC). Revisions will be forwarded to the Office of the Dean for approval and publication.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

1. **General.** This policy is intended to define the different categories of Leaves of Absence available to students in the School of Medicine and to describe the procedures necessary for approving requests for Leaves of Absence.
2. **Categories of Leaves of Absence.**
 - a. Administrative Leave of Absence
 - b. Medical Leave of Absence
 - c. Short Term Leave of Absence
3. **Procedures for Granting Leaves of Absence.**
 - a. Administrative Leave of Absence: All requests for an administrative leave of absence must be submitted, in writing, to the student's home campus Student Affairs office.
 - 1) *Student in Good Academic Standing* (as defined in [SOM OP 30.01, Grading Policy](#)): Administrative leaves of absence for periods not to exceed one academic year may be granted by the responsible Student Affairs dean (based on student's home campus). The student will be notified in writing of the specific conditions for consideration to return to the curriculum.
 - 2) *Student in Academic Difficulty* (as defined in [SOM OP 30.01, Grading Policy](#)): The request for leave of absence will be forwarded to the responsible SPPCC subcommittee (based on student class year) for consideration and disposition. If the need for a decision is urgent, the Student Promotions and Professional Conduct Executive Committee (Executive Committee), including determining the conditions for re-entry to the curriculum. The student will be notified in writing of the SPPCC's (or Executive Committee's) decision along with the specific conditions for consideration to return to the curriculum.
 - 3) *Extended Administrative Leave of Absence*: An extended administrative leave of absence in excess of one academic year necessitates withdrawal of the student

from the School of Medicine. Application for re-admission for a student who has withdrawn due to an extended administrative leave of absence shall be through the School of Medicine Admissions Committee regular process for consideration of applicants into the medical school. A student who does not withdraw from the School of Medicine following a leave of absence greater than one academic year will be administratively dismissed.

b. Medical Leaves of Absence:

- 1) *Student in Good Academic Standing* (as defined in [SOM OP 30.01, Grading Policy](#)): Medical leaves of absence (MLOA) for periods not to exceed one academic year may be granted by the responsible Student Affairs Dean. Requests for a MLOA must include a written statement from the student's health care provider(s) who must be licensed to practice independently in the United States. The health care provider(s) must currently (within the six months prior to the date of the requested MLOA) be providing care to the student and state that a medical leave is indicated in the best interest of the student. The written request for a MLOA from the student and substantiating information from the licensed health care provider(s) will be considered by the responsible Student Affairs Dean. The student will be notified in writing of the specific conditions for consideration to return to the curriculum.
- 2) *Student in Academic Difficulty* (as defined in [SOM OP 30.01, Grading Policy](#)): The request for MLOA will be forwarded to the responsible SPPCC subcommittee (based on student class year) for consideration and disposition. If the need for a decision is urgent, the Student Promotions and Professional Conduct Executive Committee (Executive Committee) may render a decision on behalf of the responsible SPPCC subcommittee, including determining the conditions for re-entry to the curriculum. The student will be notified in writing of the SPPCC's (or Executive Committee's) decision along with the specific conditions for consideration to return to the curriculum.
- 3) *Return from Medical Leave of Absence*: Upon completion of a MLOA, the responsible SPPCC subcommittee or the Executive Committee will determine if the conditions for return to the SOM curriculum have been met. The responsible SPPCC subcommittee or the Executive Committee may require written report(s) from all current health care providers and/or independent assessment(s) by health care providers of the SPPCCs choosing regarding the student's physical, mental, and/or psychological fitness to return to the SOM curriculum as a full-time student.
- 4) *Extended Medical Leave of Absence*: An extended medical leave of absence in excess of one academic year necessitates withdrawal of the student from the School of Medicine. Application for re-admission for a student who has withdrawn due to an extended medical leave of absence shall be through the School of Medicine Admissions Committee regular process for consideration of applicants into the medical school. A student who does not withdraw from the School of Medicine following a leave of absence greater than one academic year will be administratively dismissed.

c. Short Term Leaves-of Absence:

- 1) Short term leaves of absence for acute illnesses or other emergencies may be granted by the responsible Student Affairs dean. The Office of Student Affairs will inform the appropriate faculty and departments of such leaves. The student will be responsible for completing any missed curricular content.
- 2) Requests for non-emergency short term leaves to delay the start of third year must be made in writing to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs no later than May 1 of Year 2.

4. Appeal of Withdrawal or Dismissal Due to Extended Leave of Absence.

- a. Appeal for Administrative Leave of Absence beyond One Academic Year: Written request to appeal for approval of administrative absence greater than one academic year must be submitted in writing to the responsible SPPCC subcommittee (based on student class year) for consideration and disposition. The written appeal for an extended administrative leave of absence must be submitted to the responsible SPPCC subcommittee in accordance with the notification deadline(s) established in the letter approving the initial administrative leave of absence. The process for reviewing and dispositioning an appeal for an extended administrative leave of absence will be the same as is followed in section [3.a.2](#)) above.
- b. Appeal for Medical Leave of Absence beyond One Academic Year: Written request to appeal for approval of a MLOA greater than one academic year must be submitted in writing to the responsible SPPCC subcommittee (based on student class year) for consideration and disposition. The written appeal for an extended medical leave of absence must be submitted to the responsible SPPCC subcommittee in accordance with the notification deadline(s) established in the letter approving the initial medical leave of absence. The process for reviewing and dispositioning an appeal for an extended administrative leave of absence will be the same as is followed in section [3.b.2](#)) above.

5. Appeal of Denial of Leave of Absence or Request to Return to Curriculum. In

the event a student's request for a leave of absence, appeal for an extended leave of absence, or return to the curriculum is denied the student may appeal the denial. The procedure for appeal is as follows:

- a. Appeal must be made to the Dean of the School of Medicine within five (5) business days of written notification of the denial, must be in writing, and must cite grounds for the appeal. The appeal may be submitted through the student's home campus Office of Student Affairs.
- b. The Dean may elect to issue a decision alone or appoint an Appeals Committee. If an Appeals Committee is to be convened, it will be comprised of three members of the senior faculty (one member chosen by the student, one by the Dean, and one by the Chair of the SPPCC). The Associate Dean for Student Affairs and the Chair of the SPPCC (or designee) will serve as ex-officio members of the Appeals Committee.
- c. The Dean's decision alone will be issued within ten (10) business days of receipt of the student's written appeal, otherwise an Appeals Committee will be appointed within ten (10) business days of receipt of the student's written appeal. The Appeals

Committee will convene within ten (10) business days of being fully appointed and conclude deliberations on the appeal within ten (10) business days following a convened meeting to consider the student's appeal.

- d. The student may appear in person and/or present a statement to the Appeals Committee relative to the appeal. The procedures for the committee hearing shall follow those of the Student Conduct Board described in the TTUHSC Student Handbook.
- e. The decision of the Dean is final. The student and the Chair of the SPPCC will be notified in writing of the outcome of the appeal.