

Title:	Leave of Absence and Return to Studies Following a Leave of Absence	Number:	002
Approved By:	Undergraduate Medical Education Committee (UGMEC)		
Approval Date:	4 March 2024	Next Review:	01 February 2027
Effective Date:	4 March 2024		
Audience:	Years 1-4 Students, Faculty and Staff – all sites		
Purpose:	Provides students, faculty and staff with information regarding the types, duration, impacts and procedures for Leaves of Absence, and the Return to Studies requirements before students return to the Undergraduate Medical Education Program.		
Related Policies and Procedures:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendance Policy and Absence Procedure #006 2. Academic Advising: Requested, Recommended and Required #015 3. Blood-Borne Communicable Diseases Policy & Guidelines #032 		
Exclusions:	None		
Calendar Statement:	calendar.ubc.ca		
Contact:	Associate Dean, Student Affairs and Associate Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education		

Preamble

Students may request a Leave of Absence (LOA) in circumstances that adversely affect their attendance or performance in the Undergraduate Medical Education Program (Program). There are four types of LOA: Medical, Parental, Personal, and Educational/Career Development. If a student misses greater than four consecutive weeks without requesting an LOA, the student will be placed on an Unspecified LOA until the type of LOA is determined.

An LOA is required if the time away from the Program is anticipated to be more than four consecutive weeks. An absence of four or less weeks is addressed in the Attendance Policy and Absence Procedure (#006).

Students on Medical LOA or Parental LOA will have their education license placed on “Temporarily Inactive” status by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of B.C. (CPSBC). All other LOAs do not incur Temporarily Inactive status.

As per the Health Professions Act, students have a professional responsibility to withdraw from patient care when they are impaired by illness, whether due to physical or mental reasons, emotional disturbance, cognitive concerns, or substance use. The Health Professions Act requires that any health practitioner notify the CPSBC regarding a health concern or impairment that may constitute a risk to patients or the public.

Students returning to medical education after an LOA may benefit from, and may be required to participate in, an interval of supplemental clinical training to ensure that they have the requisite skills prior to transitioning back to clinical work. This re-introduction is known as a Return to Studies (RTS) Requirement.

To be recommended for graduation, students must successfully complete all academic requirements and achieve all expected competencies for the Doctor of Medicine degree (#014).

Definitions

Academic Plan	An individualized plan that is implemented as part of Required Academic Advising. It is developed by the Student Development and Support Subcommittee (SDSS) in collaboration with a student, to support the student to address performance deficits, missed program requirements or competencies.
Leave of Absence (LOA)	A temporary suspension of all academic, clinical and professional activities for a period of more than four (4) consecutive weeks.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical LOA 	An LOA for a physical or mental health condition, including cognitive impairment or substance use disorder that significantly interferes with a student's ability to pursue the study of medicine, and/or provide safe patient care.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parental LOA 	An LOA for the birth or adoption of a child.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal LOA 	An LOA to attend to personal or family circumstances that significantly interfere with a student's ability to pursue their studies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational/Career Development LOA 	An LOA for approved academic, research or training activities that require time away from the Program.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unspecified LOA 	An LOA when a student has been absent without having formally requested an LOA
Return to Studies (RTS) Requirement	An additional experience to re-introduce students returning from an LOA, to ensure readiness to re-enter the program.
Regional Student Promotions Subcommittee (RSPS)	A Program site-specific subcommittee of the Student Promotion & Review Board (SPRB) that oversees and reviews the academic performance of students at the Program site and confirms assignment of course grades to SPRB according to assessment policies.
Student Development and Support Subcommittee (SDSS)	Ad hoc subcommittees of the RSPSs that support students experiencing academic difficulties, returning from an LOA, or experiencing other special circumstances.
Student Promotion & Review Board (SPRB)	A subcommittee of the Undergraduate Medical Education Committee (UGMEC) responsible for students' academic review and promotion.

Policy

Leave of Absence

1. A student must request an LOA if the student has missed or will miss more than four consecutive weeks of the Program.
2. Each request for an LOA will be considered individually.
3. The duration of a Personal, Parental or Educational/Career Development LOA is ordinarily one year or less. The LOA may be extended for as much as one further year under exceptional circumstances, as recommended by the Regional Student Promotions Subcommittee (RSPS) and approved by the Student Promotion Review Board (SPRB). The duration of a Medical LOA is determined on a case-by-case basis.

4. A student on an LOA is not permitted to attend academic sessions, perform any clinical duties, or undertake curricular assessments. Access to online materials is suspended unless otherwise requested and approved by the Regional Associate Dean (RAD) or designate.
5. During an approved Medical LOA, the CPSBC health monitoring department will meet with the student and the student's educational license will be changed to Temporarily Inactive status.
6. During a Parental LOA, the CPSBC will be notified and the student's educational license will be changed to Temporarily Inactive status. If students on a Parental LOA wish to undertake extracurricular clinical opportunities (e.g. shadowing) during their LOA, they can contact the CPSBC directly to request reactivation of their educational license.
7. A student on an LOA will be contacted regarding grades or decisions of the SPRB only with the approval of the RAD or designate.
8. A student on an LOA remains registered in the Faculty of Medicine, but is not enrolled in courses.
9. A student who is absent more than four consecutive weeks and who does not request an LOA will be placed on an Unspecified LOA. The type of LOA must then be determined prior to a student becoming eligible to return to studies.

Return to Studies

1. Return to any component of the Program, including an RTS Requirement, from a Medical or Parental LOA is dependent on reactivation of the student's license by the CPSBC. All students returning from a Medical or Parental LOA must meet all requirements of the CPSBC for reactivation of an educational license.
2. A student returning from a Medical LOA must also be assessed by the UBC Centre for Accessibility (CFA) to ensure that the circumstances that led to the LOA have been satisfactorily addressed and that the student is ready to resume studies. The CFA may make recommendations to the Program for accommodations on a return from a Medical LOA, based on medical information.
3. A student may require an academic plan developed by the Student Development and Support Subcommittee (SDSS) with the student, for approval by the relevant RSPS.
4. Students returning from any LOA may be offered or required to complete a Return to Studies (RTS) requirement. This may include a customized RTS clinical experience or assigned course work based on the timing of the LOA, individual student needs, and available resources.
5. The RSPS determines and approves the re-entry point and the RTS Requirement for a student on an LOA of less than or equal to one year.
6. The SPRB determines and approves the re-entry point and the RTS Requirement for a student on an LOA longer than one year and/or when major curricular adjustments are required.
7. When determining and approving the nature and length of the RTS Requirement, the SDSS/RSPS/SPRB will take into consideration:
 - year of study
 - duration of and reason for the LOA
 - the student's prior academic performance including issues of professionalism
 - changes to the curriculum that may have occurred during the LOA
8. The RSPS may recommend to the SPRB that a student re-enter the Program at an earlier point than when the student left. The SPRB will make the final decision. When approving the point of re-entry into the Program, the RSPS/SPRB will take into consideration:
 - year of study
 - duration of and reason for the LOA

- the student's prior academic performance, including issues of professionalism
 - changes to the curriculum that may have occurred during the LOA
 - impact on resources, including capacity at the site
 - performance during the RTS Requirement
 - outstanding academic activities yet to be completed
 - potential impact on patient safety
9. A student returning from an LOA who has an RTS Requirement outlined in an academic plan must meet all the RTS Requirements. Students who do not meet the RTS Requirement will be referred by the RSPS to the SPRB.
10. An LOA will require the student to complete outstanding year requirements during a subsequent academic year, except under the most exceptional circumstances.
- 10.1. **Year 1 or 2:**
- 10.1.1. A student returning from an LOA can re-enter the Program only when the incomplete course(s) or assessment(s) are next offered.
 - 10.1.2. A student on an LOA between Year 2 and Year 3 is required to attend the Transitions into Clinical Education (TICE) component of MEDD 422 immediately before they begin Year 3, even if they have previously completed this course component.
- 10.2. **Year 3:**
- 10.2.1. A student returning from an LOA cannot sit a MEDD 431 end of block exam until the clinical work for that block is complete.
 - 10.2.2. A student returning from an LOA will be offered the Year 3 Summative OSCE at the end of Year 3 with the rest of the class or after completion of a clinical experience with students sitting the supplemental/deferred OSCE.
- 10.3. **Year 4:**
- 10.3.1. A student returning from an LOA must successfully complete all curricular and assessment components of the year to be eligible for graduation.
11. Students undertaking an RTS Requirement will register their RTS plan in the extra-curricular activity database to ensure they qualify for UBC liability insurance coverage.
12. A student returning from an LOA is subject to the fee schedule in place upon re-entry to the Program.

Procedures

1. Prior to Leave

- 1.1. For a Medical LOA, the student should contact their Site Assistant Dean, Student Affairs or the CFA. For any other LOA, the student should contact their Site Assistant Dean, Student Affairs.
- 1.2. All students considering or requesting an LOA are advised to contact the Student Financial Assistance Officer to discuss the financial implications of an LOA.

1.3. Medical Leave of Absence

- 1.3.1. The student (or the CFA advisor) will inform their Site Assistant Dean, Student Affairs, in writing, about the request for a Medical LOA.
- 1.3.2. The student will be placed on an LOA at the time of the request for a Medical LOA, pending assessment by the CFA:
 - 1.3.2.1. Student Affairs will advise the RAD or designate of the request. Student Affairs does not share confidential details.
 - 1.3.2.2. The RAD or designate will notify the student of approval in writing and will

advise RSPS/SPRB of the Medical LOA.

- 1.3.2.3. Student Affairs will advise the CPSBC that the student is on a Medical LOA.
- 1.3.3. The student will be required to meet with a CFA advisor and provide documentation from the student's principal health practitioner supporting the request for a Medical LOA. The CFA may require additional documentation or may request permission to contact the student's principal health practitioner for additional information. This documentation is kept confidential and is not provided to the Program.
- 1.3.4. The CFA advisor will inform the Associate Dean, Student Affairs, in writing about the recommendation for a Medical LOA.
- 1.3.5. The CFA may discuss the LOA request and any conditions upon which they recommend the LOA be granted with Student Affairs.
- 1.3.6. Student Affairs will notify the RAD or designate regarding the CFA recommendation.
- 1.3.7. The RAD or designate will notify the student and Student Affairs in writing that the LOA request has been granted and if there are any conditions attached to this approval.
- 1.3.8. The CFA will monitor the Medical LOA in consultation with the Program and may request additional medical documentation from the student's treating health practitioner(s) during the course of the LOA to assess the need for continuation of the LOA or to assess the feasibility of a return to studies.
- 1.3.9. The CPSBC may also determine that a student on another type of LOA (eg. Personal or unspecified) requires a Medical LOA and thus will temporarily inactivate the student's license and inform Student Affairs of this.
- 1.3.10. Student Affairs will notify the RAD or designate regarding the CPSBC's decision to Temporarily Inactivate the student's license due to medical reasons.
- 1.3.11. The RAD or designate will notify the student and Student Affairs in writing that the LOA reason has been changed to a Medical LOA.
- 1.3.12. The student will be required to meet with the CFA to assess the need for continuation of the LOA or to assess the feasibility of returning to studies.

1.4. Parental Leave of Absence

- 1.4.1. The student must inform their Site Assistant Dean, Student Affairs in writing about the anticipated Parental LOA and expected duration of the LOA.
- 1.4.2. Student Affairs will notify the RAD or designate. Student Affairs does not share confidential details.
- 1.4.3. The RAD or designate will notify the student of approval in writing and will advise the RSPS/SPRB of the Parental LOA.
- 1.4.4. Student Affairs will advise the CPSBC that the student is on a Parental LOA.
- 1.4.5. The student may contact the CPSBC directly during a Parental LOA if they would like to have their license reactivated to facilitate undertaking extracurricular clinical opportunities.

1.5. Personal Leave of Absence

- 1.5.1. The student must submit a written request for a Personal LOA to their Site Assistant Dean, Student Affairs including:
 - the reason for the LOA
 - the proposed or expected duration of the LOA
- 1.5.2. Student Affairs will review the request and will consult with the RAD or designate who

will determine whether the LOA will be granted taking into account the recommendations of Student Affairs. The Associate/Assistant Dean, Student Affairs, may excuse a student from attendance, pending a determination of the leave request.

- 1.5.3. The RAD or designate will notify the student of approval in writing and will advise the RSPS/SPRB of the Personal LOA.

1.6. Educational/Career Development Leave of Absence

- 1.6.1. The student must submit a written request for an Educational/Career Development LOA to the RAD or designate, including:
 - the purpose of or reason for the LOA
 - the proposed duration of the LOA
- 1.6.2. The RAD or designate will also consider the following:
 - student's attendance record and history of previous LOAs
 - student's academic performance, including issues of professionalism
 - student's year of studies
 - changes to the curriculum that may occur during the requested LOA
- 1.6.3. The RAD or designate will notify the student of approval in writing and will advise the RSPS/SPRB of the Educational/Career Development LOA.

1.7. Unspecified Leave of Absence

- 1.7.1. If a student has missed greater than 4 consecutive weeks without requesting an LOA, the RAD will notify the student in writing that they have been placed on an Unspecified LOA.
- 1.7.2. Student Affairs will inform the CPSBC that the student has been placed on an Unspecified LOA.
- 1.7.3. Student Affairs will make a reasonable effort to contact the student through the contact information on file to discuss the LOA. The Student is required to maintain contact with Student Affairs with respect to the LOA.
- 1.7.4. The student should meet with their site Assistant Dean, Student Affairs to discuss their situation so that the type of LOA can be determined.

1.8. Upon Placement on LOA

- 1.8.1. Student Affairs will enter the student's information in the Leave-of-Absence Tracking Tool, which will initiate correspondence with the student and faculty as follows:
 - Student Affairs will notify the CPSBC that the student is taking an LOA and the anticipated date of re-entry, if known.
 - Student Affairs will notify UBC Enrolment Services of the student's change in enrolment status for the affected term(s).
 - For Year 3 students, the Year 3 stipend will be cancelled.
 - Access to UBC and Faculty systems, including the learning management and assessment systems, is suspended unless otherwise specified by the RAD or designate.

2. During the Leave

- 2.1. Students must renew their educational license with CPSBC while on an LOA even if, in the case of Medical or Parental LOA, it is Temporarily Inactive.
- 2.2. Students may request access to online educational resources and class email communication

through Student Affairs, who will then discuss with the RAD or designate to determine whether such access is granted.

- 2.3. During a Medical LOA, the student must maintain an agreed-upon schedule of contact with CFA to provide updates regarding progress and anticipated return to the Program. CFA will communicate with Student Affairs, as required.
- 2.4. For other types of LOA, the student must remain in contact with Student Affairs.
- 2.5. For students on an Unspecified LOA, once the type of LOA has been clarified by Student Affairs, CFA or CPSBC, it will be updated in the Leave-of-Absence tracking tool.

3. Preparing to Return from Leave

3.1. Academic and Clinical

- 3.1.1. An SDSS may be convened upon return from the LOA to develop an academic plan, at the discretion of the RSPS or SPRB.
- 3.1.2. The SDSS/RSPS/SPRB will determine whether the student will be offered or required to complete a Return to Studies (RTS) Requirement.

3.2. Administrative

- 3.2.1. The process of reinstatement to continue studies may take up to three months.
- 3.2.2. Students returning from a Medical LOA must contact CFA at the earliest opportunity to facilitate a return to studies. CFA will:
 - 3.2.2.1. request and assess documentation from the relevant health practitioner(s) to confirm fitness to return to the Program and any limitations or restrictions;
 - 3.2.2.2. inform Student Affairs about the student's fitness to return to the Program;
 - 3.2.2.3. assess any requests or recommendations for accommodations, either for the RTS Requirement or on an ongoing basis, and discuss these with the Program; and
 - 3.2.2.4. inform the student and Student Affairs directly about any recommended accommodations.
- 3.2.3. A student on Medical or Parental LOA must also contact the CPSBC to begin the process of reactivating their educational license.
- 3.2.4. For Medical LOA, the program requires confirmation from CFA of fitness to return and confirmation from the CPSBC of reactivation of the student's license.
- 3.2.5. The Associate Dean, Student Affairs will contact the CPSBC to inform them that the student will be returning and of the student's start date.
- 3.2.6. For all types of LOAs, the site RAD or designate will inform the student in writing of the return from LOA date and will outline the requirements for return from the LOA.
- 3.2.7. The Program Managers, Assistants, Student Affairs, and UBC Enrolment Services will:
 - add the student to the class list and listservs
 - enable access to the learning management and assessment systems
 - enable registering for courses
 - make tuition adjustment

3.3. Students returning from an LOA to a new MDUP site following a permanent site transfer

The following applies when a student is returning from an LOA to a new site following a permanent site transfer:

- 3.3.1. The student should communicate with Student Affairs at their new site.

- 3.3.2. SDSS/RSPS/SPRB decisions relating to RTS will be informed by the recommendations of the RSPS at the student’s prior site. The RSPS at the student’s prior site will make the following recommendations to the RSPS at the student’s new site:
- Whether a RTS Requirement is indicated and, if so, if it is recommended or required.
 - Whether an SDSS is required to develop a plan to support the student’s return from LOA.
 - The recommended re-entry point into the Program.

Review History

Action	Committee	Date	Status
Reviewed	MD Undergraduate Education Committee	20 April, 2015	Approved
Revised	Policy Advisory Subcommittee	20 July, 2017	Revised
Reviewed	Student Affairs (Procedures only)	7 August, 2017	Revised
Reviewed	Student Assessment Subcommittee	10 August, 2017	Reviewed
Revised	Policy Advisory Subcommittee	7 September, 2017	Revised
Reviewed	Legal Counsel (by email)	September/October 2017	Revised
Reviewed	Policy Advisory Subcommittee	2 November, 2017	Revised
Revised	Legal Counsel	November 2017	Revised
Reviewed	Policy Advisory Subcommittee	7 December, 2017	Endorsed
Reviewed	MD Undergraduate Program Committee	11 December, 2017	Deferred
Reviewed	MD Undergraduate Program Committee	15 January, 2018	Approved
Reviewed	Policy Advisory Subcommittee	2 August, 2018	Endorsed
Reviewed	Undergraduate Medical Education Committee	20 August 2018	Approved
Reviewed	Policy Advisory Subcommittee	7 March 2019	Revised
Reviewed	Policy Advisory Subcommittee	4 April 2019	Endorsed with revisions
Reviewed	Undergraduate Medical Education Committee	9 April 2019	Approved
Revised	Legal Counsel	25 April 2019	Revised
Revised	Policy Advisory Subcommittee	6 June + 4 July 2019 + by email	Endorsed
Reviewed	Undergraduate Medical Education Committee	15 July 2019	Approved
Reviewed	Policy Advisory Subcommittee	18 August 2022	Endorsed
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Reviewed	Undergraduate Medical Education Committee	20 November 2023	Revised
Revised	Policy Advisory Subcommittee	18 January 2024	Revised
Reviewed	Legal Counsel	31 January 2024	Endorsed
Reviewed	Undergraduate Medical Education Committee	5 February 2024	Approved
Revised	Policy Advisory Subcommittee	15 February 2024	Revised
Reviewed	Undergraduate Medical Education Committee	4 March 2024	Approved