

Southeast Missouri Hospital College of Nursing & Health Sciences

Section: Procedure

Subject: Student Leave of Absence (LOA)

The College and program policy encourages students to make steady progress toward completing their program. Thus, a leave of absence (LOA) will be granted only under unusual circumstances. In order to be considered for an LOA, a student must have completed one full semester at the College and must have a current grade point average (g.p.a.) of at least 2.0 in program specific courses, be passing all currently enrolled classes, and be in good financial standing with the college. (The g.p.a. requirement is waived for LOA due to active military service and LOA resulting from medical conditions.)

Circumstances Warranting LOA: An LOA may only be granted under the following circumstances:

- Maternity or paternity leave for the birth or adoption of a baby;
- Family care and medical leave to attend to the serious health condition of the student or a family member;
- Pregnancy associated medical conditions;
- Members of the U.S. military, National Guard, or other armed forces reserve unit called to active duty for the period of active duty and up to one year after returning from active duty;
- Other unanticipated emergencies including, but not limited to, a sudden change in the student's or family member's employment status, which leads to a drastic change in financial status. An absence LOA based on such "hardship" cases may be granted only after the student has made a serious effort to secure financial aid and/or loans. (Students are encouraged to seek assistance from the Financial Aid Office in finding aid or loans.)
- Program Director/Dean discretion, upon review and approval by administrative leadership team (Directors/Deans).

Procedure for Obtaining an LOA: An LOA can only be obtained with the written approval of the Program Director or Dean.

- A student applying for an LOA, or an extension of an LOA, must meet with their Program Director or Dean and complete, sign, and date the Student Leave of Absence Form.
 - In appropriate circumstances, students may be requested to provide documentation supporting their request (e.g., information from a physician indicating a leave is medically necessary);
 - For students requesting military leave, a copy of the military orders indicating the date on which the student must report for active duty should accompany the Student Leave of Absence Form.
- Students must apply as soon as possible, generally before beginning leave unless prevented from doing so by severe emergencies, medical conditions, or military exigencies.

- In addition, if a student is a recipient of federal student aid (e.g., federal grants, loans, Federal Work Study jobs), the student must speak with the financial aid staff before the LOA or extension will be granted.

Financial Aid: Depending on the circumstances, an LOA may impact a student's financial aid status, such as by moving a student from a loan deferral status into repayment or by requiring a return of certain financial aid funds. Students are responsible for understanding their financial aid obligations and the impact of their requested leaves on financial aid. The financial aid staff is available for guidance on these issues.

Parameters of Student Leave of Absence: If approved, an LOA is normally granted for less than one year. In the case of pregnancy and other medical related leaves, an LOA is granted for as long as the student's physician deems medically necessary. In the case of active military service, an LOA may be extended to up to one year after returning from active duty. As the student on LOA status continues to be considered academically a student of the College during the leave of absence, the student may not take courses at other institutions while on leave of absence.

Grades: Students granted LOAs will be withdrawn from all current courses as of the date they submitted complete Student Leave of Absence Forms, including required documentation. Where this occurs before the add/drop date, no grade will appear on the student's transcript; where it occurs after the add/drop date, a grade of W will generally be awarded. In cases of military, pregnancy, and other leaves as deemed appropriate by the Program Director/Dean, students will be given the option of receiving an I (incomplete) grade and the opportunity to complete work at a later date if possible given the coursework at issue.

Readmission: Students granted leaves of absence need not reapply for admission if returning for the semester designated for return (i.e., if returning at or before the expiration of the LOA). Students who do not return for the semester designated for return must apply for readmission.

Refunds and Tuition: Students who are withdrawn from courses due to an approved LOA may receive refunds under the College's institutional refund policy. Students returning from leaves of absence who were withdrawn from courses may take those same courses again without charge where they have paid for the courses in full and have not received a refund; if a student received a refund under the College's institutional refund policy when withdrawn, upon return, the student will be charged a percentage of the current charge for the course that corresponds to the refund percentage to equal full payment—for example, if a student was withdrawn from a course and received a 70% refund, the student will be charged 30% of the current charges for that same course when returning from an LOA.

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Approved by: Administration

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