

## **Leave of Absence and Withdrawal Policy**

### **Leave of Absence**

#### **Overview**

The purpose of a leave of absence is to allow for a pre-approved, temporary interruption of a student's academic progress due to significant reasons that are out of a student's control. Reasons for a leave of absence may include, but are not limited to, academic performance, board exam readiness, medical concerns, or personal reasons.

#### **General Provisions**

A student who applies for a leave of absence from the Oklahoma State University College of Osteopathic Medicine ("OSU-COM") is responsible for all academic work scheduled up to the official date of the leave of absence determined by the Associate Dean for Enrollment Management. In extraordinary circumstances, the Associate Dean for Enrollment Management may excuse the student from academic responsibilities prior to the official date of the leave of absence.

Time spent in leave(s) of absence is counted toward the single degree limit of six years that a student has to complete the D.O. program. Any student whose leave(s) of absence, for any reason, cumulatively exceeds 24 months will be withdrawn from OSU-COM and must apply for readmission through the traditional admission process pursuant to OSU-COM's policy on withdrawal.

For financial aid purposes, all leaves of absence will be processed as withdrawals beginning with the official date of the leave of absence. Students who take a leave of absence may lose their tuition and fees for the term based on the refund dates and percentages listed in the College Catalog. The use of the term withdrawal in this paragraph does not constitute a withdrawal from OSU-COM under OSU-COM's policy on withdrawal unless the leave of absence cumulatively exceeds 24 months.

Any disciplinary proceeding(s) or meetings for academic issues pending against a student at the time the student's leave of absence is approved may be stayed or may continue upon the discretion of the Associate Dean for Enrollment Management. A student on leave of absence will not be considered an enrolled student, which means the student will not be permitted to participate in any educational activities or clinical assignments and may jeopardize scholarships or tuition assistance that the student is receiving.

#### **Leave of Absence Requests**

To initiate a leave of absence from OSU-COM, a student must submit a fully executed Student Request for a Leave of Absence or Withdrawal (available on the OSU-COM website and in Enrollment Management) to the Associate Dean for Enrollment Management. For a leave of absence for medical reasons, the request must also be accompanied by a letter from a physician or treating health care provider describing the nature of the illness for which the leave is requested and the estimated length of time needed for recovery. OSU-COM may request additional documentation to verify the medical issue. Students who take a leave of absence for medical reasons cannot engage in academic endeavors while the student is attending to medical issues.

A student who completes a preclinical course may not take a leave of absence until the final grade is issued and, if the student earns a “D” or “F” grade in the course, the student has met with the ASC and received a letter from the Dean or designee with a decision regarding the course of action.

Students who are preparing to take a COMLEX (as determined by the Associate Dean for Enrollment Management) must list COMLEX as the reason for the leave of absence, even if other factors contribute to the request (unless the reason is medical). Students who take a leave of absence are bound by the requirements of the Academic Standards Handbook while they are on leave. Students who take a leave of absence with COMLEX as a reason must attest that while on leave they will respond to emails from OSU-COM staff and faculty within one week of receipt and communicate with the Office of Academic Success at least every 30 days. Students who fail to maintain this level of communication without prior written approval may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Students who are approved for a leave of absence for one reason must submit another request for a leave of absence if the reason for their initial leave ends, but they would like to continue on a leave of absence (e.g., a student who is approved for a COMLEX leave of absence must submit another request for a leave of absence if the student passes the COMLEX, but the student wishes to continue a leave of absence for a different reason). Students who are approved for a Medical leave of absence must submit a request to return from a leave of absence as outlined below before they may be approved for another leave of absence, including one that is contiguous with the Medical leave from which the student is returning.

The Associate Dean for Enrollment Management will decide in his or her discretion and based upon satisfactory justification whether to approve a leave of absence request. Before seeking approval and a signature from the Associate Dean for Enrollment Management, the Request must be signed by the Manager of Clinical Education (when the student has received a rotation schedule), a staff member of the Office of Financial Aid, the Director of Academic Success, and the student. After completing the form with these signatures, the student will submit the form to the Associate Dean for Enrollment Management for final verification and to process the request. Students are responsible for obtaining all signatures on the form by requesting them from each signatory unless approved by the Associate Dean for Enrollment Management.

### **Return from Leave of Absence**

Before a student may return to educational activities following a leave of absence, the student must submit a fully executed Return from Leave of Absence Form to the Associate Dean for Enrollment Management prior to the ending date of the applicable leave of absence. Students requesting to return from a leave of absence for medical reasons must submit a letter from a physician or treating health care provider stating that the student has recovered from the illness leading to the leave of absence with the written request.

A student who takes a leave of absence for six (6) months or longer is required to complete a drug screen within two months prior to returning to educational activities and/or clinical rotations. Testing cost will be borne by the student and testing will be done in accordance with the procedures outlined in the OSU-COM Drug Screening Policy.

The Associate Dean for Enrollment Management will decide in his or her discretion and based upon satisfactory justification whether to approve requests to return from a leave of absence. Before seeking approval and a signature from the Associate Dean for Enrollment Management the request must also be signed by the Manager of Clinical Education (when the student has received a rotation schedule or will

need one within the following four months), a staff member of the Office of Financial Aid, the Director of Academic Success, and the student. After completing the form with these signatures, the student will submit the form to the Associate Dean for Enrollment Management for final verification and to process the request. Students are responsible for obtaining all signatures on the form by requesting them from each signatory unless approved by the Associate Dean for Enrollment Management.

If the Associate Dean for Enrollment Management approves the request, he or she will determine the student's placement within the curriculum. A leave of absence during Year 1 or 2 generally requires that the student repeat the academic year in which he or she was enrolled at the time of the leave. A leave of absence during Year 3 or 4 generally requires that the student resume the rotation schedule where he or she initiated the leave of absence (with any adjustments as determined by the Office of Clinical Education). Students who are not attending courses or rotations must be approved for a leave of absence during the time they are not participating in the curriculum.

Students who take a leave of absence must maintain their knowledge and clinical skills while they are on the leave. Before returning to the program, the student must comply with the requirements in the Academic Standards Handbook. A student who plans to participate in clinical rotations within four months after returning from a leave of absence must verify with the Office of Clinical Education that he or she has met the following requirements:

- Participated in Transition Week;
- Holds active Advanced Cardiac Life Support and Basic Life Support certification;
- Is current on required immunizations and examinations as confirmed by the Student Health Nurse;
- Is resuming rotations at the same point that he or she began the Leave of Absence;
- Has completed the following within the prior two months:
  - Approved background check;
  - Approved drug screen; and
- Has completed the following within the prior twelve months:
  - Mask-fitting;
  - Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act training; and
  - Electronic health record system training.

### **Requests for Additional Leave**

If a student is unable to return to educational activities by the ending date of an approved leave of absence, the student must submit a new written request to the Associate Dean for Enrollment Management for the additional leave of absence prior to the ending date of the applicable leave of absence. The request must follow each of the requirements applicable to leave requests set forth in this policy, including the submission of a new letter from a physician or treating health care provider, if applicable, as the request for any additional leave is considered a new request.

### **Failure to Contact the Associate Dean for Enrollment Management**

Any student who fails to contact the Associate Dean for Enrollment Management prior to the ending date of the approved leave of absence may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. The Dean or designee will have the sole authority for determining the action.

## **Withdrawal**

### **Overview**

Students may decide that they no longer wish to continue their medical education at OSU-COM. Should a student determine that he or she wants to withdraw from OSU-COM, the student must adhere to the following policies and procedures.

### **General Provisions**

To initiate a withdrawal from OSU-COM, a student must submit a fully executed Student Request for a Leave of Absence or Withdrawal (available on the OSU-COM website and in Enrollment Management) to the Associate Dean for Enrollment Management. The student must submit the request in advance, unless extraordinary circumstances prevent the student from doing so.

The Associate Dean for Enrollment Management will decide in his or her discretion and based upon satisfactory justification whether to approve a withdrawal request. Before seeking approval and a signature from the Associate Dean for Enrollment Management, the Request must be signed by the Manager of Clinical Education (when the student has received a rotation schedule), a staff member of the Office of Financial Aid, the Director of Academic Success, and the student. To complete the form, the student must settle all outstanding financial obligations and complete financial aid exit counseling, if applicable. After completing the form with these signatures, the student will submit the form to the Associate Dean for Enrollment Management for final verification and to process the request. The Associate Dean for Enrollment Management will terminate access to college resources.

At the time a withdrawal is granted, the Registrar will make an entry on the official permanent record indicating the academic standing of the student. "Withdrawal (WP), in good standing," will be recorded if the student is not on academic probation and has received no course grades or averaged examination grades less than 70% during the semester in which the withdrawal is requested. "Withdrawal (WU), not in good academic standing," will be recorded if the student is on academic probation or has received course grades or averaged examination grades less than 70% during the semester in which the withdrawal is requested.

Any student who does not complete this process for voluntary withdrawal will not be entitled to an official withdrawal and consequently will not be considered for readmission at a later date. The Associate Dean for Enrollment Management may accept a Student Request for a Leave of Absence or Withdrawal without the student's signature to effect a withdrawal when a student is not on an approved leave of absence and does not participate in any academic activities or respond to communication from the Associate Dean for Enrollment Management for more than four (4) weeks. Readmission following withdrawal is not assured. Following withdrawal, if a student wishes to resume study at OSU-COM, he or she must submit an application for readmission through the traditional admission process unless extraordinary circumstances exist that OSU-COM may consider in readmitting a student outside of the traditional admission process.

## **Refund Policy**

Students who take a leave of absence or withdrawal during a semester may be required to refund financial aid dollars based on federal law. This possibility is one of the reasons students are required to

meet with the Director of Financial Aid when requesting a leave of absence or withdrawal. The student and the Director of Financial Aid will discuss the impact of the student’s decision on student loans and scholarships (if applicable).

When a student takes a leave of absence or withdraws, OSU-COM will generally follow the refund schedule for tuition and fees outlined in the Catalog. However, OSU-COM may adjust tuition and fee charges for a student who takes a leave of absence or withdrawal during their 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> years of medical school. OSU-COM will calculate the tuition and fees that may be refunded to a student who takes a leave of absence or withdrawal during the clinical years according to the following schedule, which is based on the number of rotations the student has completed:

***Tuition and Fees Refund Rates for Students Taking a Leave of Absence or Withdrawal in Clinical Years***

<b>Number of Rotations Completed</b>	<b>Percentage of Tuition and Fees Refunded</b>
1	83.33%
2	66.67%
3	50.00%

OSU-COM will not adjust tuition and fee charges for students who complete four (4) or more rotations during a semester during the clinical years. Regardless of the percentages listed in the table above, OSU-COM will charge each student a minimum of \$1,000 for fees per semester to cover the costs it incurs and recoups via fees.

If a student who has taken a leave of absence or withdrawal returns and re-enrolls at OSU-COM during the clinical years, OSU-COM may adjust tuition and fee charges for the student for one semester if the semester is scheduled to include fewer than four (4) rotations. OSU-COM will calculate the tuition and fees that may be prorated for a student according to the following fee schedule, which is based on the number of rotations the student is scheduled to complete:

***Prorated Tuition and Fees for Students Returning from a Leave of Absence or Withdrawal in Clinical Years***

<b>Number of Rotations Scheduled for Semester</b>	<b>Prorated Percentage of Tuition and Fees</b>
1	16.67%
2	33.33%
3	50.00%

OSU-COM recognizes that the semester in which a student completes fewer than four (4) rotations after returning from a leave of absence or withdrawal may be the semester to which the student is returning or may be the final semester the student completes based upon what the student and the Dean or designee determine is in the student’s best interest. This refund policy will apply to a semester in which the student completes fewer than four (4) rotations, but in no event will the student be eligible for prorated tuition and fees in more than one (1) semester after returning from a leave of absence or withdrawal. If a student receives prorated tuition and fees for a semester after returning from a leave of absence or withdrawal and does not complete the scheduled number of rotations, OSU-COM will not

prorate additional tuition and fees unless the student is granted another leave of absence or withdrawal.