

Leave of Absence, Withdrawal, and Readmission

When a student's course of study is interrupted, the interruption shall be categorized either as a leave of absence or a withdrawal. In general, a leave of absence is intended for a student who is in good standing, who needs to interrupt his or her enrollment for a short period of time, and who intends to return to the School of Medicine immediately following a leave of absence of a specific timeframe. A leave of absence is considered only in cases where a student requests the leave prior to the start of the following defined phases of the curriculum: Integrated Systems I, Integrated Systems II, Integrated Systems III, Clerkships, and Post-Clerkships. A withdrawal generally is intended for other situations, such as when a student needs to interrupt his or her enrollment for a longer period of time or does not intend to return to the School of Medicine. The process for return following a leave of absence is less demanding than readmission following a withdrawal. Regardless of the time of the absence or withdrawal, the graduation requirements for the MD degree only must be completed within six years of matriculation; extensions to this time frame may be granted only under exceptional circumstances by the Academic Standards and Achievement Committee. For students in the MD/PhD and MD/JD dual degree programs, graduation requirements must be completed within eight years; graduation requirements for students in other dual degree programs must be completed within seven years. Similarly, extensions for students in dual degree programs may be granted only under exceptional circumstances by the Academic Standards and Achievement Committee.

Leave of Absence

a) Description and Conditions

- (i) The Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs has the authority to grant or deny a request for a leave of absence (LOA). A student who is in good standing may submit a written request for a LOA to the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs. The request shall provide an explanation of the reasons for the leave and the expected length of the leave.
- (ii) If the LOA is not granted, the student may instead withdraw from the School of Medicine.
- (iii) A student may be granted only one LOA, and any further absence shall be considered a withdrawal.
- (iv) A LOA normally is granted for no more than one year; under no circumstance will a LOA be granted for more than two years.
- (v) If a student is granted a LOA from the School of Medicine, interrupting a course or clerkship, a grade of W (withdrawal) will be entered on the transcript, designating uncompleted coursework. If/when the student is then re-enrolled, the Academic Standards and Achievement Committee (ASAC) will determine how much of the course

or clerkship graded with a W will need to be repeated. If the student is reenrolled in the course, the final grade will appear in the term in which the coursework is completed. The grade of W remains on the transcript along with any grade subsequently achieved.

(vi) Any student requesting a LOA also must meet with the Director of Financial Aid as a condition of approval from the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs. The meeting may be held in person, by interactive video-conference or by telephone, but not by email or other electronic means. Any student on a LOA must continue to abide by the University's student conduct requirements.

(vii) The Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs may impose additional conditions upon which the leave is granted.

b) Return from LOA

A student who has satisfied all of the conditions of his or her leave of absence may request a return to the School of Medicine by submitting a request to the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs and the School of Medicine Registrar (email: som-registrar@virginia.edu) at least sixty (60) days prior to the return date requested. The student must meet any additional conditions that are deemed warranted by the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs upon return to registration.

A student who has failed to comply with any conditions of his or her LOA, or who does not return to the School of Medicine within the length of time granted, will be deemed to have withdrawn voluntarily, and any request for readmission, as long as the time limits described above still can be met, must be determined by a vote of ASAC.

Withdrawals

a) Description and Conditions

There are four types of withdrawals from the School of Medicine—academic, voluntary, voluntary medical, or involuntary medical. University policy dictates that a grade of W will be entered for each course or clerkship the student attempted but did not complete. The grade of W will remain on the transcript.

- **Academic Withdrawal**—by action of the ASAC in accordance with the Policy on Academic and Professional Advancement, and the Policy on Technical Standards Required for Matriculation, Progression and Graduation. These withdrawals or dismissals may be for academic or professionalism deficiencies.
- **Voluntary Withdrawal**—an action taken when a student voluntarily leaves the School of Medicine for non-medical reasons. Requests for withdrawal must be made to the Office of Student Affairs and must be approved by the Associate Dean

for Admissions and Student Affairs. Students who withdraw voluntarily from the University will have the notation “Withdrew: DATE” recorded on their permanent academic record and their official transcript. Any courses that have not begun will be dropped from the student’s record. A grade of W will be entered for each course or clerkship in progress at the time of the withdrawal. The grade of W will remain on the transcript.

- **Voluntary Medical Withdrawal**—only approved with recommendation of a physician or other licensed independent practitioner (LIP). Requests for withdrawal for medical reasons must be made in writing to and approved by the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs. Subsequent medical clearance from the Student Health Center, or physician or other LIP approved by the Student Health Center, is required for readmission.
- **Involuntary Medical Withdrawal**- Although a Voluntary Medical Withdrawal is preferable, the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs, with the concurrence of the Senior Associate Dean for Education, may place a student on an Involuntary Medical Withdrawal.

Prior to placing student on Involuntary Medical Withdrawal:

(i) The School of Medicine shall conduct an individualized assessment of the student and give careful consideration to the opinions and recommendations of the student’s treating physician or mental health professional, if available, along with the opinions and recommendations of the healthcare professionals consulted by the School of Medicine.

- a. The School of Medicine will encourage the student to provide any other additional information that the student believes is relevant to the determination.
- b. The School of Medicine will respect the student’s confidentiality, and only require the student to provide a medical release for access to the student’s medical and mental health records as reasonably necessary to complete its individualized assessment.

(ii) Based on the individualized assessment, the School of Medicine will determine whether, and what, reasonable modifications can be made that would be effective to allow such student to continue to attend classes or engage in clinical training and otherwise participate in its educational programs while seeking treatment for, or recovering from, any related medical or mental health conditions.

(iii) However, in the event that the School of Medicine also considers whether the student poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others, the School of

Medicine will make an individualized assessment based on reasonable judgment that relies on current medical knowledge or on the best available objective evidence, to ascertain the nature, duration, and severity of the risk; the probability that the potential injury will actually occur; and whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures or the provision of auxiliary aids or services will mitigate the risk.

The School of Medicine will require an Involuntary Medical Withdrawal for a student only if:

- a) after the individualized assessment; consultation with the Student Health Center, physician, or other LIP; and careful review and consideration, the School of Medicine concludes that the student's continued participation in its educational programs would require modifications that would be unreasonable or would fundamentally alter the nature of those programs;
- b) the student rejects all reasonable modifications offered by the School of Medicine and the student cannot meet the School of Medicine's essential eligibility requirements and technical standards to continue to participate in its educational programs, or
- c) even with the provision of all of the reasonable modifications offered by the School of Medicine, the student cannot meet the School of Medicine's essential eligibility requirements and technical standards;

If the School of Medicine decides to impose an Involuntary Medical Withdrawal, the School of Medicine will advise the student in writing through University of Virginia email of the leave and duration, any restrictions from coming on campus or entering a clinical site and available academic appeals procedures. The School of Medicine shall document the decision as well as the underlying facts, assessments and determinations.

An Involuntary Medical Withdrawal is an academic decision and is not a disciplinary action. However, separate disciplinary action may result from the underlying behavior of the student pursuant to the Student Code of Conduct.

NOTE: In emergency situations, the Dean, or the Dean's designee, in the exercise of reasonable judgment, may bypass some or all of the above steps and considerations in order to ensure campus or clinical safety and/or the safety of the student, other students, or patients, and may suspend a student provisionally pending formal consideration of the relevant issues by the appropriate committee, e.g., ASAC, University Judiciary Committee, at the earliest possible opportunity. Nothing in this or other policies shall be construed to prevent the School of

Medicine from requiring students at all times to meet the School of Medicine essential eligibility requirements and technical standards.

b) Use of University Services while Withdrawn

Students withdrawn may not use instructional services and/or university facilities. The School of Medicine identification badge, and associated privileges such as parking and facilities access, must be inactivated upon withdrawal.

c) Readmission

- Unless dismissed by the University or the School of Medicine, a student who has withdrawn may seek readmission by submitting a request to the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs and the School of Medicine Registrar (email: som-registrar@virginia.edu) at least sixty (60) days prior to the return date requested.
- A longer period of notification might be necessary if scheduling of clerkships or electives is involved. Acceptance for readmission will depend on availability of positions in the clerkships/electives. Applications for readmission will be kept on file and will be considered in the order received, as positions become available. Students who withdraw before taking Step 1 and the Transition Course (Introduction to the Clerkships) can re-apply for the spring semester in the next academic year. Once enrolled the student can take Step 1 and the Transition Course (only offered once per year). Clerkship assignment will be based on current availability and any assignments made prior to the withdrawal will not be reserved.
- All students returning from a withdrawal must receive clearance from the University's Dean of Students to return. This will be coordinated by the School of Medicine's Registrar.
- A student granted a voluntary withdrawal for medical reasons will require subsequent medical clearance from the Student Health Center, or physician or other LIP approved by the Student Health Center, as a condition for readmission.
- A student placed on an involuntary withdrawal for medical reasons will require subsequent medical clearance from a physician or other LIP, approved by the School of Medicine, as a condition for readmission.
- A student withdrawn for academic, professionalism or administrative reasons or a student who has academic or professionalism deficiencies at the time of withdrawal must be reviewed and approved to return by ASAC. Students whose request for readmission is denied by ASAC will have the right of appeal, per the Policy on Academic and Professional Advancement.

- All students returning from a withdrawal must re-attest to their ability to meet the Technical Standards, with or without reasonable accommodation.
- If granted readmission, the student shall be required to adhere to any changes in policy or curriculum that occurred during the absence.
- Students approved for readmission shall be re-enrolled in any courses that were graded W or F at the time of withdrawal. Both of these grades remain on the transcript, along with subsequent grades. The ASAC shall determine how much of the course or clerkship will need to be repeated to satisfy requirements. ASAC shall make this decision with consideration of the recommendation of the Course/Clerkship Director and based upon the Policy on Academic and Professional Advancement. The chair of ASAC will notify the student in writing of the committee's decision.
- Failed courses shall be repeated in their entirety.
- Students whose period of withdrawal is greater than two years must reapply to the School of Medicine through the Office of Admissions.
- Students who have been dismissed shall not be offered readmission.
- The School of Medicine reserves the right to impose any additional conditions upon a student seeking readmission after a withdrawal, and to refuse consideration based on the relevant time limit on matriculation to graduation (see paragraph one of this document).