

# LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Any leaves of absence may not exceed one year cumulatively or six months within a single leave during the student's matriculation unless specifically granted as an exception by the Dean of LUCOM. Leaves of absence<sup>1</sup> do not extend the maximum of six years from matriculation to complete all requirements for graduation or face dismissal from the COM. If the student does not meet the requirements established for return within that time frame, they will automatically be considered a voluntary withdrawal. The specific time frame of the leave of absence is dependent on the ability of the student to return to classes within the curricular framework and to complete the required course work in the time and sequence dictated by the faculty and the curriculum. A student may not be allowed to return in the middle of a course or semester, but may be directed to begin after a leave of absence during a specific starting point such as a start of a semester, system, etc. While on a leave of absence, a student is not eligible to make up incomplete class work, remediate any examinations, or take the COMLEX examinations or Step 1 or Step 2 of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) unless specifically granted that ability by the Dean of LUCOM.

Any student who is absent from classes or clinical rotation for five consecutive school days and has not contacted the Office of Admissions and Student Services, the Office of Medical Education, the Office of Clinical Education or the Office of the Dean, will be considered to have voluntarily withdrawn. The student may be required to appear before the Student Progress Committee and is subject to dismissal from the COM. The student will also be withdrawn from any courses currently in progress. A designation of W, WP, or WF for withdrawal will be noted on the student's transcript for each course as indicated by policy.

To be accepted back into the College after any leave of absence, the student must write a letter addressed to the SPC or the Dean at least 60 days before their intended return unless otherwise specified, which satisfactorily addresses the circumstances of the prolonged absence that mandated the administrative leave and a written request for reinstatement. The student must also demonstrate to the Dean's satisfaction that a reasonable likelihood exists that the reason for the prolonged absence will not reoccur. The Student Progress Committee will evaluate and make recommendations to the Dean concerning the student's status.

All decisions made by the Dean concerning a student's administrative or voluntary leave of absence will be final. As a result of any Leave of Absence, a student will no longer be accounted for in the class rank calculations.

## Administrative Leave of Absence

An administrative leave of absence is a mandatory leave of absence imposed by the Dean with or without recommendations of the Student Progress Committee. During the leave, the Office of the Dean and the COM will provide the student the opportunity to rectify, seek rehabilitation or treatment for the problem that precipitated the directed leave. To be accepted back into the program after an administrative leave of absence, the student must be able to demonstrate to the Dean's satisfaction that the pre-established requirements have been met, that they show reasonable likelihood that previous problems have been resolved, will not recur, and that the student is prepared to meet all of the demands and requirement of the curriculum satisfactorily and in the time period directed by the curriculum.

## Voluntary Leave of Absence

A voluntary leave of absence is one that is requested by a student to temporarily withdraw from classes for personal, financial, or medical reasons. Students should call, email or visit the LUCOM Registrar's Office to request a leave of absence. Students on academic probation requesting a leave of absence must meet with the Student Progress Committee who will review the request and make a recommendation to the Dean. The Dean will then determine whether or not the leave of absence is to be granted. A voluntary leave of absence will not be granted in excess of one year either cumulatively or six months within a single leave during the student's matriculation unless exception is granted by the Dean. If approved, and the student is in good academic standing, the student may be allowed to reenter the program at the end of the leave without any need for reapplication, remediation, or reevaluation.

A voluntary leave of absence request will be considered only for the following reasons:

- Medical (physical or mental).
  - Documentation from the student's healthcare provider identifying the condition and anticipated time needed for the leave must be provided
  - Students requesting a leave of absence for medical reasons must have a licensed physician (M.D. or D.O.) or other medical professional with appropriate peer-recognized expertise or certification in the area outline the reason for the student's request for a medical (physical or mental) leave of absence. The physician's documentation must be sent on department/center/clinic letterhead and signed by the evaluating physician.
    - When intending to return from a medical leave of absence, the student must provide documentation from their licensed evaluating physician that certifies their physical and/or mental health is sufficient to permit them to continue in their medical education
- Evaluation updates from the student's evaluating/treating physician can be required by LUCOM during the leave of absence for medical reasons.
- Family emergency
- Financial Emergency
- Educational pursuit of academic endeavor other than regular classroom work
- Research, either through an established internship program or planned research with a LUCOM faculty member. A written letter of support from the research advisor must accompany the LOA request.
- Active military service (a copy of military orders must be provided)

A voluntary leave of absence cannot be used to avoid dismissal for academic or disciplinary reasons.

- A student will not be granted more than two total student requested leaves of absence within the program of study at LUCOM leading to a DO degree.
- Students placed on a student requested LOA will have the time of leave counted towards the six- year time limit used by state licensing boards and medical school accrediting bodies. Leaves of absence do not extend the maximum of six (6) years from matriculation into medical school to complete all requirements for graduation.
- Students on leave of absence will not be considered actively enrolled and therefore, are not permitted to participate in any educational

activities, extracurricular activities, campus services, or clinical assignments of any kind.

- A student may not be allowed to return in the middle of a course or semester, but may be directed to begin after a leave of absence during a specific starting point such as a start of a semester, or new academic year, etc.
- While on a leave of absence, a student is not eligible to make up incomplete class work, remediate any examinations, or take the COMLEX Level 1 or Level 2 CE examination or Step 1 or Step 2 of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE). These are professionalism, academic, and administrative requirements that all students must honor at LUCOM.
- As a result of any Leave of Absence, a student will no longer be accounted for in the class rank calculations.
- A voluntary leave of absence will not be granted in excess of one (1) year either cumulatively or six (6) months within a single leave during the student's matriculation unless exception is granted by the Office of the Dean.
- If a student is approved for a leave of absence while they are currently not in good standing, are under review for a disciplinary action, or have a disciplinary action imposed on him or her, then the student may not be reinstated to the College without a review by the SPC. Upon completion of its review, the SPC shall make a recommendation to the Dean to reinstate or not reinstate the student. If the student is denied reinstatement, his or her status will be changed to either a withdrawal or a dismissal. If appropriate, students may be reinstated with disciplinary action requirements at the beginning of their readmission.

If a student is granted a leave of absence while current course work is still in progress, they will be withdrawn from those courses. In all such cases an appropriate designation for each course in progress will be entered on the transcript as follows: a W, if no graded course work has been completed; a WP, if graded course work has been completed and is at a passing level; and a WF, if graded course work is not at a passing level. In such cases of withdrawal from a course, students will be required to complete all course requirements when they return from their leave of absence in compliance with repeat protocol.

## Leave of Absence Records

Leave of absence records and the date of each determination shall be placed in the student's permanent record.

## Withdrawal from College

Withdrawal is a voluntary resignation by the student under which they surrender all rights and privileges as a student in the COM. A student fails to attend classes or be present at their assigned clinical rotation site for five (5) consecutive calendar days without written notification to the Dean as to the reason for the absence, as well as their intention to continue studies in the College, shall be considered withdrawn from the College.

To return to school after withdrawal, the student must apply for readmission through the Office of Admissions and Student Services.

Withdrawal in good standing is a designation that is placed on the transcript to indicate to anyone receiving those transcripts that the individual had passed all previous courses and was currently passing the courses that they were enrolled in at the time of the withdrawal.

Withdrawal not in good standing indicates that either the student has unremediated failures in previous courses or the student is currently failing a course they are taking at the time of withdrawal.

These withdrawal designations are intended to serve as notification to any academic institution, including LUCOM if the student should reapply, the status of the student at the time of their withdrawal.

Once a student withdraws from the COM, they will no longer be accounted for in the class rank calculations.

## Withdrawal from a Course

Withdrawal from a course or courses must be distinguished from a withdrawal from the College (see "Withdrawal" section).

A student who has no graded course work or who has passing course work in a course in progress may withdraw from a course at any time before the final examination. Students should call, email or visit the LUCOM Registrar's Office to request a withdrawal from a course. Students will receive a notation of W on their transcript, if no graded course work has been completed, or WP, if graded work has been taken and completed at a passing level.

A student who has failing course work in a course in progress can only withdraw with grade of 'W' if less than 50 percent of the course has been completed and if they have received approval from either the Office of the Dean or the Senior Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. A course will be considered 50 percent completed when half of all of the lectures, labs, or small group sessions have been delivered. In cases where 50 percent has been completed, the student will receive a notation of WF on their transcript to indicate that withdrawal occurred while the student was failing completed course work.

During an academic year, a student will be allowed to withdraw from no more than one course while failing. These guidelines may not apply to students placed on a leave of absence. In such instances, all cases will be individually reviewed (see "Leave of Absence" section).

As a result of any course withdrawal, with exception to courses not specifically required for graduation, a student will no longer be accounted for in the class rank calculations.

## Requesting Leave of Absence or Withdrawal

A student intending to pursue a leave of absence, course withdrawal, or program withdrawal must request the appropriate form from the LUCOM Office of the Registrar. Provision of this form begins the official leave of absence and withdrawal process.

## Auditing

Students may request to audit classes they previously passed to remain up to date on the content. Auditing will be available only through permission from the Dean. Auditing students will be permitted to attend lectures and have access to the course material, including lecture-capture. The student will not be permitted to participate in class evaluations or assessments. Auditing students will not participate in labs or team activities. OMM and PCM courses are not available to be audited. Auditing students may be charged for their attendance at the same rate as students on altered degree plans unless otherwise specified by the Dean. Audited courses will appear on the student's transcript and be notated accordingly with a grade of "AU".

<sup>1</sup> 5.3 Safety, Health, and Wellness, 6.3 Maximum Length of Completion