Policy Title: Medical Student Leave, Withdrawal and Readmission Policy

Policy Number: EC.10.01.170912

Applies to: This policy applies to WSU Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine Medical Students

Date: 11/09/2020

1.0 Policy Statement:
It is the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine policy to process various leaves of absence, withdrawal, and readmission requests.

2.0 Definitions:
Student initiated voluntary leaves of absence:
- Financial leave of absence: Allows a student time to resolve financial issues.
- Medical leave of absence: Allows a student time to address personal health needs including mental or physical illness, injury or disability.
- Pursuit of Academic and Scholarly Interest: Allows a student the opportunity to complete another degree or pursue scholarly interest.
- Personal: Allows a student time to address significant personal circumstances.
- Career Reconsideration: Allows a student an opportunity to pursue a career outside of being a physician.

Required Administrative Leave of Absence: The College of Medicine’s removal of a student from any and all academic and clinical activities for a period of time.

SEPAC: The College of Medicine Student Evaluation, Promotion and Awards Committee.

Medical Student: Matriculation officially occurs on the first day of class in the first year and when an accepted applicant becomes a medical student.

3.0 Responsibility:
Senior Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs

4.0 Procedures:
Voluntary Leave of Absence
To obtain a voluntary leave of absence, students must initiate a request with a College of Medicine Dean of Student Affairs in writing or in person. The request should state clearly the basis of the leave, specifying beginning and end dates, and include contact information while on leave. Students will work with the Office of Admissions, Student Affairs, and Inclusion to coordinate with other college and campus offices including financial aid, registrar, and other entities to provide a profile of consequences to understand the ramifications of the leave of absence. The Office of Admissions, Student Affairs, and Inclusion works with students to identify additional supporting documentation for the leave to be included with the request when applicable. For
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example, a student who requests a medical leave of absence may be required to provide appropriate evidence of the health issue.

A submitted leave of absence request goes to the Student Evaluation, Promotion & Awards Committee (SEPAC) which may grant a leave of absence for up to 1 year.

SEPAC will review and approve (a) any request for a leave of absence for up to one year, (b) a second leave of absence for the same reason, regardless of length, (c) any leave of absence which, when combined with all prior leave of absences (voluntary or administrative), would result in leave from the College of Medicine that exceeds one year, and (d) any leave of absence that affects a student’s ability to graduate within the defined requirements for an MD.

SEPAC reviews the applicable leave of absence request and confirms that all policies and procedures have been followed. If the College of Medicine receives a notice of withdrawal from a student while charges, investigations, or other evaluations are current, the college reserves the right to delay a decision on recording the withdrawal until final determination has been made. Following the stated policies, the college also reserves the right to dismiss a student found to have violated other academic or professionalism policies even if the student submitted a notice of withdrawal prior to its final determination.

When a leave of absence is approved by SEPAC, the Office of Admissions, Student Affairs, and Inclusion will work with the student to ensure appropriate university withdrawal forms or other needed documents are completed. The Office of Admissions, Student Affairs, and Inclusion will notify appropriate campus and college offices when a leave of absence has started. The campus registrar will notify appropriate university offices of the withdrawal and student’s academic status as appropriate.

**Required Administrative Leave**

Every student enrolled at the College of Medicine is expected to participate and perform in a fit and safe manner, consistent with the academic and professional standards of the program. The college reserves the right to remove a student from any and all academic and clinical activities if a student’s behavior fails to meet those standards and that behavior raises significant concern about the safety of the student or others (e.g., patients, other students, faculty, and staff). College of Medicine Administrative Leave of Absences are facilitated by SEPAC.

The College of Medicine expects that all faculty, staff, and students report behavior that threatens the student’s own safety or the safety of others or raises concern about impairment or an inability to function in educational or clinical settings (e.g., drug and alcohol use and/or erratic behavior). If a student poses an immediate threat to self or others, call 911. Otherwise, all other concern notifications or reports can be made by:

1. Submission of an online College of Medicine Incident Card.
2. Personal notification to college personnel that could be an Associate Dean for Clinical Education, a Dean for Student Affairs, the Associate Dean for Accreditation, Assessment and Evaluation, or the Vice Dean for Student and Faculty Experience.
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3. Submission to a campus-based student care network:
   a. Everett Campus Student Care Committee
   b. Spokane Campus AWARE Network
   c. Tri-Cities Campus Cougar Cares Program
   d. Vancouver Campus Aware Network

All reports to College of Medicine systems or personnel will be submitted to SEPAC for immediate review and recommendation. Recommendations may include a leave of absence, fitness for participation evaluation, or dismissal. A College of Medicine Dean for Student Affairs will be in coordination with the Student Affairs leadership at each campus for any campus-based safety network and represent the college in appropriate campus actions, which if appropriate, may include notification to campus security.

Fitness for Participation

If a student is removed from an academic or clinical setting based on a finding of threat to self or others that is determined to be significant, SEPAC may require a Fitness for Participation evaluation before the student may resume classes or clinical rotations. SEPAC notifies the student in writing that the suspension from all student academic and clinical activities remains in effect until such time as a student is returned to the program following a Fitness for Participation evaluation. The student is informed that removal from the curriculum may result in a delay in the student’s progress toward graduation.

Fitness for Participation evaluations are carried out by licensed health care providers agreed upon by SEPAC and a Dean for Student Affairs in consultation with the student. The student is responsible for any costs associated with the evaluation and any costs associated with required follow-up evaluations or treatment.

Students who decline to secure a required Fitness for Participation evaluation are subject to dismissal from the College of Medicine.

A Fitness for Participation evaluation must be submitted to the Office of Admissions, Student Affairs, and Inclusion who forwards the results to SEPAC as appropriate. SEPAC is responsible for determining whether what, if any, conditions the student must meet to return to the curriculum (i.e., remediation).

Credit for Term

If students are partially through a term when they take a leave of absence or are placed on administrative leave, they are asked to repeat that term unless an appeal to SEPAC is granted. Students wishing to appeal to SEPAC do so by meeting with a Dean for Student Affairs to prepare an appeal. SEPAC evaluates the appeal to determine if credit can be given for that term or if other arrangements to complete that term can be arranged within university and college policies.

If a third-year or fourth-year medical student takes a leave during a clinical rotation, the number of weeks of instruction earned (if any) will be determined by either the Course Director or Clerkship Coordinator.

Fifth year option

The College of Medicine provides a fifth-year tuition plan for students who are required to
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take a fifth year of medical school. Eligible students pay a tuition cost that is 10 percent of full tuition, plus full mandatory fees. Prorated amounts are calculated based on the number of terms that a student is taking within the fifth year (e.g., prorated 10 percent tuition cost of 1 term). If a student passes a term, the student does not have to repeat it.

Return to the College of Medicine

All students on leave must submit a letter of intent to return, specifying the effective date of return, to the Office of Admissions, Student Affairs, and Inclusion at least one month (30 calendar days) in advance of the return date to pre-clerkship curriculum and at least two months (60 days calendar) in advance of the return date to clerkship curriculum. If SEPAC includes additional requirements for returning to the curriculum, the letter must also indicate how the student has met these requirements and including appropriate documentation if needed (e.g., physical and mental assessment by a health care provider). In collaboration with the Office of Admissions, Student Affairs, and Inclusion, students should consult with the registrar, financial aid office, and other relevant offices to select a date of return and be aware of the potential ramifications. Documentation should accompany the request, if applicable.

Students who temporarily leave the curriculum because of a leave of absence have their status converted to enrolled student when appropriate documentation is received and approved by SEPAC that the student is ready to return. Students returning from leave have their academic records reviewed to determine their education plan which includes determining their status: 1) promotion to the next year; 2) eligibility to retake examination(s); 3) what courses they must (re)take; and/or 4) dismissal for failure to progress. Any curricular changes in the content or assessment methodology may necessitate modifications in the student’s educational plan. Based on this review, a student’s anticipated graduate date may be modified.

Students who do not return to the College of Medicine at the conclusion of the approved leave of absence or do not submit the required requests by the required time will be withdrawn administratively. The action is reported to SEPAC for review and approval. Students who have been withdrawn administratively from the college and wish to be readmitted should refer to the Readmission from Voluntary Withdrawal section.

Voluntary Withdrawal

A student in good standing may choose to voluntarily withdraw from the College of Medicine with the intent not to return as an enrolled student.

To voluntary withdraw, students must initiate a request with a Dean for Student Affairs in writing or in person. Students work with the College of Medicine Office of Admission, Student Affairs, and Inclusion to coordinate with other offices including financial aid, registrar, and other entities to fully understand the ramifications of the withdrawal. Students will be referred to the College of Medicine Tuition Refund Policy during this process.

Readmission from Voluntary Withdrawal

Former students who withdrew in good academic standing from the College of Medicine may petition for readmission within 12 months from the effective date of the withdrawal
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(e.g., student decides medical school is not their career path and withdraws, but within a year feels they are ready to pursue medicine). All petitions for readmissions must be in writing with all correspondence directed to SEPAC through the Office of Admissions, Student Affairs, and Inclusion. The petitioner may ask to appear in person before SEPAC. All written materials are distributed to SEPAC membership prior to the meeting at which the petition is reviewed. SEPAC decides to readmit or not based on the merits of the student's rationale for readmission and the student's likelihood of success. If SEPAC rejects the petition, further petitions from the former student are not accepted.

If SEPAC readmits the student, it refers the readmitted student to the appropriate College of Medicine committees and offices for the development and implementation of an appropriate curriculum plan, including the point of re-entry into the curriculum. Any plan generated by college committees or offices is subject to approval by SEPAC. Students who withdraw in good academic standing to pursue another advanced degree may petition for an extension beyond the one-year deadline for readmission.

Former students who do not petition for readmission within 12 months following withdrawal or are not granted an exception to this time limit must re-apply to the first-year class through the admissions process and meet all requirements for that enrollment year. Unless granted an exception to this time limit, former students seeking readmission must apply to the College of Medicine through the admissions process.

5.0 Related Policies
College of Medicine Tuition Refund Policy
College of Medicine Technical Standards Policy
Medical Student Promotion, Dismissal, and Graduation (SEPAC)

6.0 Key Search Words
Leave of absence, voluntary leave, failure to return

7.0 Revision History

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Responsible Office: Office of Admissions, Student Affairs, and Inclusion
Policy Contact: Assistant Dean for Student Affairs
Supersedes: EC.10.01.170912 approved 12/20/2019