

Chapter 8

LEAVES OF ABSENCE (LOA)

8-1. HIGHLIGHTS

- a. You must submit LOA requests via the web site: <https://www.mods.army.mil/medicaleducation> at least 45 days before the proposed effective date when there is a hiatus in academic progression.
- b. You must be approved for LOA in advance by the Army (without regard to school approval) and may be approved for up to twelve months.
- c. You must request return from LOA at least 60 days before the LOA expires with a letter from the Dean of Student Affairs that confirms the effective date of re-entry into school full-time and graduation date.
- d. You will be placed on LOA for failure to take, pass or provide all results of the USMLE/COMLEX/NBDE/NBEO within the specified period. All entitlements, as well as active duty training, will be suspended during any period of LOA. Fourth year medical/dental/clinical psychology students will be placed on LOA for noncompliance with other PGY-1/AEGD/CP/IP/application requirements (see chapter 12).

8-2. GENERAL

LOA is outlined in AR 601-141, chapter 2, paragraph 2-14d. The regulation can be found under the general information tab <https://www.mods.army.mil/medicaleducation>. Students must request a LOA from the scholarship program when there is an interruption in their academic progression. This is done via the web site <https://www.mods.army.mil/medicaleducation>. Once logged on, personal information should be updated under "update" and leave of absence requests made under "Requests". An LOA generally may be granted for a period of one year or less, but may be extended if considered to be in the best interests of the individual and the government. Leave for other educational pursuits is rarely authorized, and if so, must result in at least a master's degree in a health field.

8-3. LOA APPROVAL

The Scholarship Program Manager must approve all LOA requests in advance. This is done electronically via the web. Approval of an LOA from the scholarship program is separate from any approval from the school. An LOA that is not approved constitutes a withdrawal from school and may result in loss of scholarship eligibility and immediate order to active duty.

8-4. TYPES OF LOA. THERE ARE FIVE TYPES OF LOA

- a. Administrative LOA. Involuntary LOA. It is the only LOA status from which a student can automatically be returned to active status. Students will be automatically placed on an administrative LOA: for noncompliance with administrative or contractual requirements, such as failure to obtain a physical examination, apply to PGY-1, update the address or telephone number, or provide a II USMLE, COMLEX, NBDE, NBEO results; or when medical, security or military service disqualification is first indicated, discharge from the Reserves is requested, or when student or academic status cannot be determined. Failure to apply to the Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS) if mandated by the OTSG GME Division.
- b. Medical LOA. Normally a voluntary LOA when the student requests it. It may become **involuntary** when it is determined that a student has been granted a medical leave by the school without the knowledge of the Student Management Office, or, when the Student Management Office is notified that the student does not meet medical retention standards in AR 40-501, or when otherwise indicated.
- c. Academic LOA. A voluntary LOA when the student requests it. It may be involuntary when the school advises that the student must repeat an academic period, has entered a preparatory or decelerated program, has failed to take or pass step/part 1 or 2 of the USMLE/COMLEX/NBDE/NBEO and part 3 of the NBEO within the specified period or otherwise determined to be appropriate however, a student repeating an academic period over the summer is not placed in an LOA status. When initially placed on an involuntary academic LOA in order to repeat a class or entire semester, the following must be submitted: a letter from the student and the Dean of Student Affairs that confirms the effective date the student will repeat the semester or course; an outline of the

course of action to be taken to correct the deficiency that caused the LOA; projected graduation date; and a copy of the student's current transcript.

d. Personal LOA. Normally a voluntary LOA when the student requests it. The LOA is used for other difficulties that may be encountered by the student.

e. Educational LOA. An Educational LOA for the purposes of completing an additional advanced degree or research is not authorized as part of the normal degree curriculum. It is an exception to HPSP policy and the educational goals of the scholarship program that is rarely approved. If an exception is approved, it is completely subject to the needs of the Service and always limited to one year. Most advanced degrees will not be favorably considered because they do not provide significant Army career enhancement. Non-degree producing endeavors (including research) seldom will be considered favorably, even if they add adjunctive skills that are of relevance to Army medicine. In order to be considered for an Educational LOA, all of the criteria indicated below must be met. A student whose request is approved and who subsequently fails to meet the below criteria will have their LOA revoked and must reapply. The student must:

(1) Be in good academic standing. This means no indication of any prior or present academic problems; a current transcript is required; passage of all applicable board or licensure examinations on the first attempt, in accordance with HPSP policy.

(2) Be in good administrative standing. This means no delinquency or deficiency in compliance with HPSP policy, contractual agreement or general military requirements.

(3) Have successfully completed the Basic Officer Leadership Course.

(4) Provide a letter from the school outlining the requirements, if the school requires the additional training as a graduation requirement.

(5) Not currently be or have previously been in a leave of absence status for any reason.

(6) Include justification of the acquired adjunctive skills that are of relevance to Army medicine if requesting non-degree producing endeavors (including research).

8-5. LOA PROCEDURE

LOA and return from LOA must be requested and processed on line using the Medical Education web site: <https://www.mods.army.mil/medicaleducation>.

a. Requesting LOA. Once logged on personal information should be updated under "Update" and leave of absence requests made under "Requests". LOA requests must be submitted at least 45 days before the LOA effective date. If this time frame cannot be met, direct telephonic notification of the Student Management Office must occur. Any entitlements received after the LOA effective date must be repaid.

(1) The LOA request should include a detailed justification for the LOA and its proposed duration. The Student Management Office will determine the period of the LOA, if it is omitted from the request.

(2) A letter from the Dean of Student Affairs indicating the LOA period, the student's class standing, revised graduation date and reasons for the LOA must be sent separately to the Student Management Office at: Defense Health Headquarters, Office of the Surgeon General of the Army, ATTN: DASG-PSZ-M, 7700 Arlington Boulevard, Falls Church, VA, 22042, or faxed to (703) 681-8044/1837.

b. Return from LOA. Reinstatement requests are submitted as prescribed for submission of LOA requests in paragraph 8-4a above.

(1) Administrative LOA. Return from an administrative involuntary LOA is automatic after the issues that prompt the LOA are resolved.

(2) Medical LOA. The participant must initiate removal from LOA status to ensure timely resumption of entitlements. Return from a voluntary LOA IS NOT automatic. Return from a medical LOA additionally requires a medical specialty consultation (evaluation) from a physician.

(3) Academic LOA. A participant is evaluated for retention in the HPSP under a due process (chapter 9) at the first indication of academic difficulty. If retained in the program, the participant must initiate removal from LOA status. In order to return from academic LOA based solely on repeating a class or entire semester, the following must be submitted: a letter from the Dean of Student Affairs that confirms the effective date the student started the semester following the LOA; an outline of the course of action taken to correct the deficiency that caused the LOA and its result; projected graduation date; and a copy of the student's current transcript. Academic LOA based solely on failure of licensure examinations or to provide scores of licensure examinations is automatically void upon receipt of passing scores and entitlements are retroactively reinstated if there are no other academic issues, such as interruption of

academic progression, multiple academic LOA, multiple failure of a step/part of licensure examinations or other issues. In such cases, LOA is not automatic, may require additional documentation and entitlements are not retroactively reinstated for periods of remediation or school absence, or disenrollment from the Program could occur. The request for return from LOA must include a letter from the Dean of Student Affairs that confirms the effective date of re-entry into school and new anticipated graduation date.

(4) Voluntary, personal, and educational LOA. The participant must initiate this request to ensure timely resumption of entitlements. Return from these categories of LOA IS NOT automatic. A request for reinstatement must be made at least 60 days before the LOA expires in order to allow adequate time to restore entitlements. The request must include a letter from the Dean of Student Affairs that confirms the effective date of the student's re-entry into school and new anticipated graduation date.

(5) In all instances, failure to request return from LOA may result in loss of scholarship eligibility.

8-6. EFFECT ON ENTITLEMENTS

All entitlements, as well as active duty training, are suspended during any period of LOA.

a. Recalculation of entitlements. Normally shortens the period of stipend pay relative to other entitlements by up to 45 days prior to graduation. This is influenced by the length of the LOA, timely notification, and the fact that stipend pay is continuous (except during ADT) even when classes are not in session. Recalculation is performed by:

(1) Subtracting the LOA period from the total entitlements period (period from the HPSP entry date to the standard projected graduation date of 10 May of the graduation year) to arrive at the remaining (unused) entitlement.

(2) The remaining entitlement is then added to the LOA reinstatement date (date of return from LOA) to arrive at the stipend termination date (date stipend entitlements will cease).

b. Notice of expended entitlements. The LOA restoration letter will outline expended benefits, stipend termination date, entitlement restoration effective date, and remaining benefits. The letter is sent upon receipt of a request to return from LOA.

c. Retroactive entitlement restoration. Entitlements are restored retroactively only when students are placed in an administrative LOA status or academic LOA based on failure of licensure examinations and after the appropriate requirements are met. Restoration will not occur if the student becomes ineligible for HPSP participation. Otherwise, scholarship entitlements are restored as of the last of the four dates indicated below:

- (1) The date that all requirements for returning from LOA are met; or,
- (2) The day after the last day of the LOA; or,
- (3) The date that the Command Surgeon, U.S. Army Recruiting Command (USAREC) determines the participant is medically qualified for Reserve retention; or,
- (4) The date that the Office of The Surgeon General approves a waiver of a medically disqualifying condition.