



PROGRAM EXTENSIONS – ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL

EFFECTIVE DATE:	5/13/2024	NEXT REVIEW:	2/1/2026
APPROVAL:	Policy Committee, CAC, Faculty Assembly	DATE:	3/21/2024
CATEGORY:	Academic		
APPLIES TO:	Students in the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) Program		
CONTACT:	COM Registrar		

REFERENCES AND RELATED POLICIES:

- COCA Standards for Continuing Accreditation (effective 2023)
 - MSUCOM Policy on Maximum Duration of Program
 - MSU Spartan 365 email and related Office 365 software with OneDrive, including Microsoft Office desktop applications policy.
 - MSU Health Insurance Plan
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PURPOSE

The extension policy for medical students is designed to provide students with the opportunity to temporarily suspend their medical education while maintaining their academic standing. This policy aims to support students' personal well-being, address unforeseen circumstances, and enable them to return to their studies with minimal disruption.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Academic Extension

An academic extension applies to a student who is unable to progress in the curriculum due to failure to meet a degree requirement of the present semester or phase of the curriculum. If the return from the academic extension occurs after semester six (6) and the duration is two (2) or more consecutive semesters, the student must successfully pass a college-directed clinical skills assessment for reentry. Failure to participate in or successfully remediate the clinical skills assessment will result in evaluation by the COSE for determination of the student's academic standing.

1. A student is required to declare their intent to return through the Office of the COM Registrar and must adhere to the College degree requirements and policies that are in effect at the time of reentry.
2. During an academic extension, a student must continue to meet college requirements as specified by the Office of the COM Registrar.
3. Elapsed time during an academic extension will count toward the maximum duration of the

curriculum, as defined in the duration policy.

Leave of Absence

Medical students enrolled in the DO program are eligible to apply for a leave of absence if they encounter circumstances that impact their ability to continue their studies. Reasons for a leave of absence may include medical conditions, personal or family emergencies, academic difficulties, or the pursuit of other educational opportunities.

1. Students seeking a leave of absence must submit a leave of absence request form to the COM Registrar. The request should explain the reasons for the requested leave and supporting documentation where applicable (e.g., medical certificates, official statements).
2. Leaves are granted for a term or specified period, typically not exceeding one academic year. Extensions of the leave period may be considered upon reevaluation of the student's situation.
3. A leave of absence will not supersede a student's academic standing or extension.
4. The duration of the leave of absence will be counted toward the maximum time for completion of DO degree requirements which is six years.
5. During a leave of absence, a student must continue to meet college compliance requirements as specified by the COM Registrar.
6. Students who are not enrolled for three or more consecutive semesters will lose access to Office 365 software with OneDrive, including Microsoft Office desktop applications (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook), per MSU policy.

Returning from a leave of absence

Students are required to declare their intent to return through the COM Registrar. A student who returns to the D.O. program after a leave of absence must adhere to college degree requirements and policies that are in effect at the time of reentry with the class that the student joins. If the return from the leave of absence occurs after completion of semester six (6) and the duration is two (2) or more consecutive semesters, the student must successfully pass a college-directed clinical skills assessment for reentry. Failure to participate in or successfully remediate the clinical skills assessment will result in evaluation by the COSE for determination of the student's academic standing.

Extended leave of absence (leaves extended beyond six-year timeline)

1. In rare and unusual circumstances, a student may request an extended leave of absence from the D.O. program for no more than two (2) years.
2. Examples of an extended leave of absence may include but are not limited to a major personal health issue; called for active military duty; seeking an unrelated degree or program, such as entering a religious order; pursuing a unique research fellowship opportunity.
 - a. A request for an extended leave of absence must be submitted in writing. Please see maximum duration policy for details. All requirements for reentry to the D.O. program

as defined elsewhere in this policy will apply on return from an extended leave of absence.

- b. When a student returns from an extended leave of absence, they may be required to participate in assessment of their knowledge and/or clinical skills and may be required to complete remedial activities if indicated and as defined by the Division of Medical Education.

Discontinuation after leave

In cases where students decide not to return from their leave of absence and choose to discontinue the DO program, they must formally inform the COM Registrar of their decision. The discontinuation process and any related policies will then apply. If the COM Registrar does not hear from a student and the student is unresponsive to communications from the college, the COM Registrar will email, phone, and send a letter through certified mail, notifying the student that they will be discontinued from COM.

Impact on Academic Standing

Students approved for a leave of absence or on an academic extension will have their standing reviewed at the end of each term if the student incurs an N grade(s) or a numerical grading basis of less than a 2.0. The leave period counts towards the maximum time allowed for program completion (six years for the DO program, please see the maximum duration policy). Students must meet all the necessary academic and compliance requirements and achieve satisfactory academic progress upon their return.

Financial Information

Students on an approved leave of absence will not be charged tuition or fees during their absence unless they enroll in elective coursework. However, any financial aid, scholarships, or loans received may be affected by the leave, and students are encouraged to consult with the financial aid office to understand the potential implications.

Student Insurance

When enrolled in courses, students are enrolled automatically in the MSU student health insurance plan (SHIP) which offers health coverage for students and their eligible dependents through Blue Care Network (BCN). To maintain health insurance through MSU, a student must maintain at least one or more credits for the enrollment period or contact Human Resources to pay by credit card while on an academic extension or leave of absence.

Returning from Leave

At the end of the approved leave period, students are expected to resume their studies as per the designated academic calendar. Prior to returning, students must inform the Office of the COM Registrar of their intention to re-enroll, and the office will guide them through the reintegration process. In some cases, students may be required to undergo certain assessments, take courses, or orientation activities to ensure a smooth transition back to the program.

Communication and Confidentiality

All matters related to a student's leave of absence will be handled with confidentiality and sensitivity. Only authorized administrative personnel will have access to the student's leave status. Students may choose to disclose their leave of absence to faculty or colleagues as they see fit.