



## Extension (Academic & Personal) Policy

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Policy Category:	Academic
Policy Applies To:	Students in the Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) Program
Policy Contact:	COM Registrar

### References and Related Policies:

- COCA Standards for Continuing Accreditation (effective 2023)
  - See also: MSUCOM Policy on Maximum Duration
  - 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, aiming 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.

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 and COM Compliance.
3. Elapsed time during an academic extension will count toward the maximum duration of the curriculum, as defined in the maximum duration policy.
4. Students who return from an academic extension after two (2) or more consecutive semesters away from the core curriculum the student must successfully complete College-directed return readiness coursework and/or assessment as a condition of reentry, as determined by the College. Enrollment in return readiness coursework may result in tuition charges. Failure to participate in or successfully complete required return readiness activities will result in evaluation by the Committee on Student Evaluation (COSE) for determination of the student's academic standing.

#### 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 support documentation where applicable (e.g., medical documentation, 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 Compliance Policy.
6. Students who are not enrolled for three or more consecutive semesters may 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 cohort 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 complete College-directed return readiness coursework and/or assessment as a condition of reentry, as determined by the College. Enrollment in return readiness coursework may result in tuition charges. Failure to participate in or successfully complete required return readiness activities will result in evaluation by the Committee on Student Evaluation (COSE) for determination of the student's academic standing.

### **Extended Leave of Absence (leaves extended beyond the 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, being called for active military duty, seeking an unrelated degree or program, such as entering a religious order, or pursuing a unique research fellowship opportunity.
  - a. A request for an extended leave of absence must be submitted in writing. Please see the 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. If the return from a leave of absence occurs after two (2) or more consecutive semesters away from the curriculum, the student must successfully complete College-directed return readiness coursework and/or assessment as a condition of reentry, as determined by the College. Enrollment in return readiness coursework may result in tuition charges. Failure to participate in or successfully complete required return readiness activities will result in evaluation by the Committee on Student Evaluation (COSE) for determination of the student's academic standing.

### **Discontinuation After Leave or Academic Extension**

Students who decide not to return from an approved leave of absence or academic extension must formally notify the COM Registrar in writing of their decision to discontinue from the D.O. program. Upon notification, the college will apply standard discontinuation procedures from related policies. If a student does not respond to college communications by the scheduled return date, the COM Registrar will attempt to contact them via email, phone, and certified mail. If the student remains unresponsive after these documented contact attempts, the COM Registrar will process discontinuation from the program.

### **Academic Standing During Leave**

Students approved for leave of absence, or that are placed on academic extension, are subject to an academic review at the end of each term in which they enroll in electives outside the core curriculum. The academic standing will not change until the student has returned and completed core curriculum, and any failed courses during the extension will be recorded. Students returning from leave must satisfy all academic and compliance requirements to demonstrate satisfactory academic progress and continue in the program.

### **Financial Aid Information**

Students on approved leave of absence will not be charged tuition or fees during their absence unless they enroll in elective coursework. Students should be aware that leave of absence status may affect financial aid eligibility, scholarships, and student loans. Students are strongly encouraged to consult with the Office of Financial Aid before requesting leave to understand the implications for their specific financial aid package and loan repayment obligations.

### **Student Health Insurance**

When enrolled in courses, students are enrolled automatically in MSU Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP). MSU SHIP and Graduate Assistant Health Insurance Plan (GAHIP) are administered by [Academic HealthPlans \(AHP\)](#) with [Aetna](#) providing the health insurance coverage. MSU's [Olin Health Center](#) offers care to students, Graduate Assistants and visiting scholars. To maintain health insurance through MSU, a student must maintain at least one credit for the insurance enrollment period or contact MSU 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 attend orientation activities to ensure a smooth transition back to the program.