



# California Health Sciences University

## CHSU STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND LEAVES OF ABSENCE POLICY

### I. PURPOSE

This policy outlines requirements for students to attend, or be excused from, classes. Further, occasionally students decide to take an extended period of time off away from their studies at California Health Sciences University (“University”). Students may take either a Short-Term Leave of Absence (STLOA) or a Long-Term Leave of Absence (LTLOA) for many reasons including but not limited to work, recovering from illness, attending to personal business, military service, to find their true academic direction etc. Because a leave affects a student’s status with the University, as well as the student’s access to various student services, this policy provides information on what students need to know to ensure they are following the official leave process for each type.

### II. DEFINITIONS

*Excused Absence* is an absence from a single class/day that is approved by student’s Office of Academic Affairs. Excused absences are *only* granted for high-stakes circumstances such as examinations, OSCEs, and lab days. Absences for regular class days are classified as unexcused absences, which students should notify their course director.

*Unexcused Absence* is an absence from one (1) to three (3) classes/days that is not approved by the student’s Office of Academic Affairs. Unexcused absences include absences of any type that involve a student missing assignments not designated with high stakes category (typically normal course days without a significant assessment due). For unexcused absences, students should notify their course director.

*Short-Term Leave of Absence* is a temporary absence during the didactic portion of the curriculum when a student will exceed the three (3) day excused absences per course, per semester, as defined in the Duration of Absence Policy in the Student Catalog and Handbook. Students are allowed to take a standard STLOA up to two (2) weeks off during the didactic curriculum with approval once in a twelve- (12-) month cycle. Any additional leaves during the twelve- (12-) month time period from the date the initial STLOA began will be treated as a LTLOA, as discussed below. Due to the nature of the experiential/clinical curriculum students seeking to take an STLOA during any rotation should consult with the Office of Student Affairs and the office handling rotations at their respective college, prior to taking the leave.

*Long-Term Leave of Absence* is an extended absence during the didactic curriculum lasting longer than two (2) weeks. Due to the nature of the experiential/clinical curriculum students seeking to take an LTLOA during any rotation should consult with the Office of Student Affairs and the office handling experiential rotations at their respective college, prior to taking the leave.



## California Health Sciences University

*Unapproved Leave of Absence:* Any student absence exceeding the three (3) day excused absences per course, per semester, as defined in the Duration of Absence Policy in the Student Catalog and Handbook, without appropriate approval for a STLOA or LTLOA as defined under this policy.

### III. REQUIREMENTS APPLICABLE TO ALL ABSENCES

Students are required to provide reasonable advanced written notice of the need for an excuse absence, STLOA or LTLOA. All requests must be submitted through the appropriate online portal (e.g., Brightspace) or in-person with the student's office of Academic Affairs (for excused absences), the student's office of Student Affairs office for (STLOA or LTLOA). The office may require the student to provide documentation before taking leave or upon return from leave, including but not limited to doctor's notes or other documentation evidencing the need for an absence. If required, an explanation of the type of documentation required will be given to the student and a reasonable time to provide the requested documentation will be given before approving or denying a request.

Out of professional courtesy, students should notify their teammates of their absence prior to class when possible (a reason need not be provided).

Abuse of the absence or leave request process is unprofessional and violates the University's student conduct policy. Abuse of such process includes but is not limited to: (1) dishonesty regarding the need for or use of leave; (2) submission of fraudulent documentation supporting the need for leave.

### IV. ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend and participate in all class sessions, all clinical and anatomical teaching sessions, all clinical/experiential sessions, and complete all exams and assessments as scheduled (together defined as "coursework"). Missed coursework has the potential to disrupt individual and team learning, create unfair advantages, and divert faculty and student resources away from teaching and learning. However, occasionally an absence from coursework will be unavoidable.

A student may request an excused absence for personal, emergency, professional, or health-related reasons, as listed below. Consideration of the nature of an absence not defined in the list below is at the discretion of the student's college.

#### A. Excused Absence Request Procedure

To request an excused absence be approved, a student must submit the excused absence request form online via BrightSpace or CHSU.EDU (or the form may be requested from the Academic Affairs office). Following receipt of the form, Academic Affairs office shall review the form and either approve or deny the request and communicate the decision to the student and course



## California Health Sciences University

director(s) of the missed course(s). In all cases, students must submit an excused absence request with as much notice as possible.

Regarding weddings or similar significant events, students are encouraged to consult with their student affair's office and the academic calendar before planning such events.

### B. Duration of Absence

In general, a student may receive up to three academic days of excused absences per course per semester. In total, absences shall not exceed five (5) calendar days per course per semester. Absences exceeding five (5) calendar days may require a student to take a STLOA, LTLOA, or withdrawal. The Student Affairs and Academic Affairs offices for the student's program can provide additional information on the impact of excused and unexcused absences on progression and grading.

### C. Makeup Expectations

Students are responsible for contacting their team for arranging review of missed materials or coursework. Students who do not follow the Excused Absence Policy or the Course Directors instructions for makeup assignments will receive a zero for the missed coursework. If the absence is determined to be unexcused by the Academic Affairs office, the student will receive a zero for the missed coursework.

### D. High Stakes Excused Absence Categories and Criteria

Excused absences are *only* granted for high-stakes circumstances such as examinations, OSCEs, clinical/anatomical teaching sessions, and lab days. Following the submission of the High Stakes Absence Request Form to via the online portal, it will be determined if an absence will be excused or unexcused for the course based upon the categories and criteria below.

May Request	May Not Request
Medical (self or immediate family)	Car breakdown (please call for alternative transportation if urgent)
Military duty	Work scheduling
Professional leave (requires 14-day advanced notice)	Professional leave without required 14-day notification.
Immigration & Naturalization	



## California Health Sciences University

Jury duty (Students are required to immediately report if summoned to Jury Duty to their College's Office of Student Affairs)	
Legal	
Bereavement (up to five days for parent, spouse/partner, or child; up to three days for all other others at the discretion of College)	
Traffic Accident (law enforcement report required)	

### V. SHORT-TERM LEAVE OF ABSENCE PROCESS

Students may begin the STLOA process by speaking with the Office of Student Affairs and complete a STLOA form. Part of this meeting with the Office of Student Affairs will include discussion of the student's ability to graduate within the maximum timeframe within the student's respective college.

The STLOA Request Form is available to students by visiting the website or by reaching out to the University Registrar. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from providing a prior written request, as required by this policy, before the leave begins, the Dean may, but is not required to, make exceptions to this process on a case by case basis. Non-attendance in classes does not constitute notification of intent to apply for a leave of absence.

Students must then obtain all required signatures and submit the form to the Office of the Registrar. Generally, a letter will be emailed and mailed to the student within five (5) calendar days after the Office of the Registrar's receipt of the request to state whether the leave is approved and to provide information regarding the student's leave and subsequent return to the University. CHSU reserves the right to impose conditions upon the student's return that will be communicated either in this initial letter or in subsequent correspondence to the student approving the leave to the student.

Students needing to take a leave longer than an approved STLOA must seek such approval from their college Dean. These will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and students may be required to instead take a LTLOA and/or withdrawal from the University.



## California Health Sciences University

### **VI. LONG-TERM LEAVE OF ABSENCE PROCESS**

A student seeking to take a LTLOA will first meet with the Student Affairs office of their respective college. During this meeting students should discuss their ability to graduate within the maximum timeframe required by the college the student attends. All LTLOAs should be requested in writing - the LTLOA Request Form is available to students by visiting the website or by reaching out to the University Registrar. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from providing a prior written request, their college Dean may, but is not required, make exceptions to this process. Whenever practical, a student should submit their written request for a LTLOA at least thirty (30) calendar days in advance of the start of the upcoming semester or thirty (30) calendar days before the end of the current semester. Non-attendance in classes does not constitute notification of intent to apply for a leave of absence.

Students who take a LTLOA that, at a minimum, extends through the end of the semester shall be considered withdrawn for the purposes of grading and tuition refund only, but not withdrawn from the University. The student's final grades will be processed as outlined in the Student Withdrawal Policy. As LTLOAs have a significant impact on a student's student loans and scholarships, students should contact the Financial Aid Office about the implications related to their LTLOA. Student should also refer to the CHSU Tuition Refund Policy regarding the student's potential eligibility for a tuition refund.

Students will receive a letter via email and mail once a decision has been made regarding the LOA within five (5) calendar days, or in rare or extraordinary circumstances, not to exceed ten (10) calendar days. CHSU reserves the right to impose conditions upon the student's return that will be communicated either in the initial letter to the student approving the leave or in subsequent correspondence to the student. For example, students granted a LOA for health-related purposes must have a health care professional certify in writing that they are approved to return to the University prior to the student's anticipated return date.

The completed Leave of Absence form must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar before the leave of absence is granted. The date of leave of absence status is the date that the Registrar receives the signed Leave of Absence form, except in case of extenuating circumstances.

Should a student wish to take a leave longer than initial LTLOA granted to the student must re-apply for an additional new LTLOA following the same LTLOA process.

### **VII. UNAPPROVED LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Any student on an Unapproved Leave of Absence is a violation of this policy and may result in consequences for the student, up to and including dismissal from the University.



## California Health Sciences University

### VIII. RETURNING FROM A LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Students approved for a leave of absence can return to their college and to classes without reapplying to the University if the return is within the approved time frame as recorded in the Leave of Absence Approval letter and any relevant University approved extensions of such leave. Prior to returning to the University students are required to comply with all conditions for the student's return as stated in correspondence to the student by the University. A student granted a LOA with conditions may be required to meet with a student affairs staff member before returning to the University. For LTLOA, students must submit their intent to return in writing to the University Registrar within ninety (90) calendar days of the anticipated return to the didactic portion of the curriculum and thirty (30) calendar days for the experiential/clinical curriculum. While CHSU will make efforts to stay connected with the student on their return, it is the student's ultimate responsibility to duly inform the administration of any delays to their return or needs for further extensions.

Students failing to return to the University following the approved timeframe for the LOA will be considered to be on an Unapproved Leave of Absence and may be dismissed from the University.

- 
- Policy Owner: Provost
  - Effective Date: 6/13/2019
  - Revised Date: 7/24/2019
  - Approval by President Date: 7/24/2019
  - Approval by Provost Date: 7/24/2019