



**California Health Sciences University**  
COLLEGE OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE (COM)  
STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND LEAVES OF ABSENCE POLICY

**I. OMS-I & OMS-II**

Students are required to attend and participate in all class sessions, all clinical and anatomical teaching sessions, all clinical sessions, and complete all exams, assessments, evaluations, and assignments as scheduled (together defined as “coursework”). Missed coursework has the potential to disrupt individual and team learning. However, occasionally an absence from coursework will be unavoidable.

The College of Osteopathic Medicine defines the following as:

*Excused Absence* is an absence from a single class or a single day that is approved by the Office of the Student Affairs. Excused absences are *only* granted for high-stakes circumstances such as examinations, objective structured clinical examinations (OSCEs), lab sessions, and other curricular course requirements as identified by the course director.

*Unexcused Absence* is an absence from one (1) to three (3) consecutive days during which an examination, OSCE, or lab session occurs that is not approved by the Assistant/Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Enrollment.

**A. Excused Absence Policy**

Students may be excused from examinations, OSCEs, and lab sessions in the event of a medical illness (self or immediate family), jury leave, military leave, an unforeseen emergency event that was not predictable, or bereavement of a parent, spouse/spouse’s parent, or child). The student must be able to provide documentation verifying the medical illness or emergency situation in order to be excused. Students are required to provide advance notice, if possible, and complete the following process to submit an excused absence:

1. A student must submit the excused absence request form to the Office of Student Affairs with documentation explaining the need for an absence.
2. Following receipt of the form, the Student Affairs Office shall review the form for approval of the request.
3. Upon approving or denying the request, the Student Affairs Office will communicate the decision to the student and course director(s) of the missed course(s).



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Students are responsible for contacting their team(s) for arranging review of missed materials or coursework. If the absence is determined to be unexcused by the Office of Student Affairs, the student will receive a zero for the missed coursework and may be referred to the Students at Academic Risk Committee (“StARC”) or to the Student Progress Committee for review.

### II. OMS-III & OMS-IV

Attendance at all clerkships and assigned activities during clerkships is mandatory. If the student needs to miss time from a clerkship, the student is required to consult with the Office of Student Affairs and the Office of Clinical Education. The Office of Student Affairs is responsible for developing procedures and forms for filing a leave. The form must also include details of the make-up of time missed for the absence request to be approved.

#### A. Leave of Absence Policy

Under certain circumstances, students may request a Leave of Absence (LOA) for selected reasons including but not limited to, recovering from illness, military service, or personal circumstances, etc.

#### B. Leaves of Absence Definition

*Leave of Absence* is an extended absence during the didactic curriculum lasting more than three (3) consecutive days. Leave of Absence (LOA) for selected reasons including but not limited to, recovering from illness, or, military service, or personal circumstances, etc. Due to the nature of the clinical curriculum students seeking to take LOA during any rotation consult with the Office of Student Affairs and the Office of Clinical Education, prior to taking the leave.

A student seeking to take a LOA will first meet with the Student Affairs office. During this meeting students should discuss their ability to graduate within the requirements outlined in the COM Graduation Policy. All LOAs should be requested in writing. The LOA Request Form is available on the CHSU website or from the University Registrar. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from providing a prior written request, the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and Enrollment may make exceptions to this process. Whenever practical, a student should submit their written request for a LOA at least thirty (30) calendar days in advance of the start of the upcoming semester or thirty (30) calendar days before



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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 LOA 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 an LOAs has a significant impact on student loans and scholarships, as well as the total cost of the student's attendance at the COM, students should contact the Financial Aid Office about the implications related to their LOA. 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 generally within five (5) calendar days of the decision. 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 may be required to 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 LOA 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 the initial LOA granted to the student, she/he must re-apply for an additional new LOA following the same LOA process.

### **C. Unapproved Leave of Absence**

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

### **D. Returning from a Leave of Absence**



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Students approved for a leave of absence may return to the COM and to classes without reapplying to the College of Osteopathic Medicine 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 College of Osteopathic Medicine, 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 the Office of Student Affairs before returning to the College of Osteopathic Medicine. For LOA, students must submit their intent to return in writing to the University Registrar within thirty (30) calendar days of the anticipated return to the pre-clinical portion of the curriculum and thirty (30) calendar days for the clinical curriculum, for leaves that are longer than thirty (30) days in length. 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 College of Osteopathic Medicine following the approved timeframe for the LOA will be considered to be on an Unapproved Leave of Absence and may be dismissed from the College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Abuse of the absence or leave request process is unprofessional and violates the University's Student Conduct and Professionalism 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. Abuse of this policy may result in an appearance before the Student Progress Committee and ultimately dismissal from the University.

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- Policy Owner: Dean of COM
  - Effective Date: 4/03/2020
  - Approval by President Date: 4/03/2020
  - Approval by Provost Date: 4/03/2020