AUC OFFICIAL LEAVE POLICIES

(Post-5th Semester)

Official Leave – General Provisions

1.1  An Official Leave may only be granted for the reasons set out below. Students should be aware that approval of a request for Official Leave is not automatic, and proof of the justification may be required prior to a decision on the request.

Medical

1.1.1  An illness or medical condition sufficiently serious as to preclude the student from undertaking normal daily activities.

Personal

1.1.2  Tragedy in the immediate family or unexpected financial difficulty, which renders it impossible for the student to continue his or her medical studies.

Academic

1.1.3  To study for and take the USMLE or to cover a gap in scheduled clinical rotations.

1.2  The length of an Official Leave may be for less than an entire semester of enrollment (a “short-term leave”) or, if approved prior to registration, for an entire semester ("a long-term leave").

1.3  AUC administration will determine the proper characterization and treatment of an Official Leave request depending on the student’s status as either a basic science student or clinical student, and the timing and length of the request. There are significant financial aid and grading consequences that flow from this determination.

1.4  No Official Leave may be granted for more than one semester time period at a time. A request for a subsequent period of Official Leave must be made by the student and submitted to the appropriate office no later than two weeks prior to expiration of the current period of leave.

1.5  A student contemplating an Official Leave should consult with a financial aid officer to determine whether his or her student loan status will be affected. Students should be aware that
1.5.1 taking a short-term Official Leave may affect their Satisfactory Academic Progress; and
1.5.2 taking consecutive Official Leave(s) of more than one term in duration may result in their Financial Aid obligations going into repayment status.

1.6 Students should be aware that taking an Official Leave does not exempt them from any academic requirements of the University.

1.7 Students who are absent without an approved Official Leave at any time during a term of enrollment will be considered AWOL, and will be immediately and automatically withdrawn from the register of enrolled students. Any student who is AWOL during a term may have his or her course grades for that term recorded as an F. A student who has been AWOL and subsequently withdrawn from enrollment must reapply to the University for readmission. Such a student should not assume that he or she will be readmitted.

Official Leave – Students who have Completed Basic Sciences but not Passed Step 1

2.1 Students who have completed the basic sciences and intend to take a leave to study and sit for the USMLE Step 1 must submit a completed Official Leave Request Form and required supporting documentation (see below) to the Office of Clinical Student Affairs ("OSCA") at MEAS. Upon receipt, the student's completed Official Leave Request Form and supporting documentation will be forwarded to the appropriate dean (or designee) for review. Students should anticipate that two weeks may be necessary to process a request for Official Leave, and should therefore allow sufficient time for approval to be granted to avoid becoming AWOL. The approval or denial of the student's Official Leave Request will be confirmed by email.

2.2 As set out below, the maximum cumulative duration of Academic Official Leave to take the USMLE is three terms, unless exceptional circumstances are demonstrated which would justify approval of a fourth term by the CAO (or designee).

2.3 A student who has successfully completed the Basic Sciences and intends to submit a **first time** request for a long-term Academic Official Leave to study or sit for the USMLE must also submit the following documentation with the Official Leave Request Form:
2.3.1 a signed copy of the Clinical Orientation Form recording his or her agreement to take Step 1 within 4 months of completing the basic sciences; and

2.3.2 a copy of his or her Thompson Prometric final test date confirmation for taking Step 1 within the proposed leave period.

The student’s agreement to take Step 1 on or before the date specified will become a condition of the student’s Academic Official Leave, if approved. Failure to comply with this condition may result in denial of any further leave request.

2.4 A student who intends to request a long-term Academic Official Leave for a second consecutive semester to study or sit for the USMLE Step 1 must also submit the following documentation with the Official Leave Request Form at least one month prior to expiration of the current leave period:

2.4.1 a copy of the USMLE receipt as proof of attendance and completion of each Step 1 exam taken during the prior Academic Official Leave period;

2.4.2 a copy of the USMLE result sheet, front and back, for each Step 1 exam taken during the prior Academic Official Leave period;

2.4.3 a copy of his or her Thompson Prometric final test date confirmation for taking Step 1 within the proposed leave period;

2.4.4 a detailed action plan with timeline setting out the student’s strategy for passing USMLE Step 1; and

2.4.5 an official ECFMG transcript must be provided to the Clinical Department at MEAS prior to expiration of the second leave period, if approved.

The student’s compliance with the approved action plan will become a condition of the Academic Official Leave, if granted. Failure to comply with any condition may result in denial of a further leave request. In particular, if the student does not sit for the USMLE Step 1 as agreed, his or her request for an additional period of leave will likely be denied. It is recommended that if the student receives a failing Step 1 score for the second time, he or she enroll in a USMLE Step 1 prep program immediately.

2.5 A student who intends to request a long-term Academic Official Leave for the third consecutive semester to study or sit for the USMLE Step 1 must also submit the following documentation with the Official Leave Request Form at least one month prior to expiration of the current leave period:

2.5.1 a copy of the USMLE receipt as proof of attendance and completion of each Step 1 exam taken during all prior Official Leave periods;
2.5.2 a copy of the USMLE result sheet, front and back, for each Step 1 exam taken during all prior Official Leave periods;

2.5.3 a copy of the receipt for payment for a USMLE Step 1 prep program confirming current or scheduled enrollment during the proposed leave period;

2.5.4 a copy of his or her Thompson Prometric final test date confirmation for Step 1 within the proposed leave period;

2.5.5 any other records confirming compliance with the prior Academic Official Leave action plan;

2.5.6 a further detailed action plan with timeline setting out the student’s strategy for passing USMLE Step 1 during the third requested leave period; and

2.5.7 an official ECFMG transcript must be provided to the Clinical Department at MEAS prior to expiration of the third leave period, if approved.

The student’s compliance with an approved action plan will become a condition of the Academic Official Leave. Failure to comply with any condition may result in denial of a further leave request. In particular, if the student has not taken the USMLE Step 1 exam as agreed, his or her request for any further period of leave will be denied.

2.6 One month prior to expiration of a third consecutive term of Academic Official Leave, a student may request that the CAO (or designee) approve a fourth term of leave, which may only be justified by extraordinary circumstances. In addition to the completed Official Leave Request Form, the student will also be required to provide:

2.6.1 a copy of the USMLE receipt as proof of attendance and completion of each Step 1 exam taken during all prior Academic Official Leave periods;

2.6.2 a copy of the USMLE result sheet, front and back, for each Step 1 exam taken during all prior Academic Official Leave periods; and

2.6.3 such other documentation as the CAO may request.

If the CAO is satisfied that the student has used his or her best endeavors to pass Step 1 over the prior three long-term leave periods and has complied with all conditions of leave previously imposed, such leave may be granted.

2.7 If any student has not reported a passing USMLE Step 1 score by the end of the 4th term of Academic Official Leave, he or she will be dismissed from the University on academic grounds. Such student will have a right of appeal to the Student Evaluation and Promotions Committee.
2.8 Students who have not passed the USMLE Step 1 and who wish to apply for an Official Leave for medical or personal reasons must their completed Official Leave Request Form to MEAS. The maximum cumulative time period for medical or personal leave for students who have not passed USMLE Step 1 is two semesters.

Official Leave - Clinical Students

Medical & Personal Leave

3.1 Clinical students who intend to apply for an Official Leave on medical or personal grounds that will conflict with a scheduled rotation must first obtain the written permission of the clerkship Program Director and submit this with their completed Official Leave Request Form to MEAS. Students should note that taking leave during clerkships is discouraged and such leave will not be granted unless it is absolutely necessary for the health and well being of the student. The maximum cumulative time period for medical or personal leave for clinical students is two semesters.

Academic Leave

3.2 Clinical students receive Federal Financial Aid based on confirmation of scheduled rotations. If there is a break in the student's scheduled rotations, the clinical student must lodge an Official Leave Request Form in advance, so that his or her current enrollment status may be tracked and reported to federal financial aid authorities. Therefore it is essential for all clinical students to request and obtain approval for an Official Leave prior to any break in their rotation schedule. Any Academic Leave undertaken during clinical years should preferably be short term (less than 16 weeks).