LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY

Leave of Absence

Introduction. A student who has initiated coursework may take an approved leave of absence (LOA) for reasons of 1) military service, 2) family care, 3) serious illness or 4) another reason deemed adequate for interrupting graduate studies. The LOA may be for up to one year (12 months), taken in segments or all together. A LOA stops the clock for whatever segment of the program they are in (e.g., pre-comps, post-comps) but does not extend the time limits allowed for completion of degree. Students on F-1 or J-1 visas are not eligible for a LOA.

Application and Approval. A LOA should be requested prior to starting the leave. To take a LOA, a student must meet with their faculty advisor to discuss the request and then submit a completed form stating the start date, end date, and reasons for the leave. The form should be signed by the student, the recommending advisor, and doctoral program director (if student is enrolled in a doctoral program) before forwarding to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs for action. The Associate Dean will return the form to the student with “written notice” of the action regarding the request, including any conditions of reinstatement.

Finances. Financial obligations to the University for past periods of matriculation are not waived by a LOA. Students receiving financial support for their studies should be aware that taking a LOA may mean suspension or cessation of that support. Any student with university funding (i.e., stipend, fellowship, other assistantship) who is requesting a LOA should consult with the program director, department chair, and PI of relevant grants to determine the impact of a LOA on their support. Additional UAMS policy related to financial support during LOAs can be found at http://studentfinancialservices.uams.edu/awards-division/leave-of-absence/.

Reinstatement or Renewal. At least 30 days prior to the conclusion of a leave of absence, a student must submit a letter to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs stating his/her intent to be reinstated or the desire to renew the leave (if the leave taken has not totaled to 12 months). If reinstatement is requested, any financial liabilities and other conditions of reinstatement must be completed. The conditions of reinstatement are determined at the beginning of the LOA by the COPH and will be specified in writing when the student is notified of the LOA’s approval.

Automatic Withdrawal. A student who neither applies for reinstatement nor requests renewal of the LOA will be administratively withdrawn from the rosters of the COPH at the end of the LOA and notified by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. After such withdrawal, if the student desires to resume his/her studies, the student must apply for readmission through SOPHAS.