Leave of Absence Information

Students are generally allowed one year LOA and may request an additional year. Students are generally not granted more than two years’ total LOA unless pursuing a PhD. Students who do not report after their LOA may be dismissed. You must communicate effectively about your LOA: LOAs are always reported in your MSPE (your “Dean’s Letter”), so we must have accurate, timely information.

**GOING ON LOA**

- **Understand the outcomes of your leave of absence:**
  - *Tuition* billing for your MD is generally capped at 8 semesters unless you are repeating classes/clerkships/rotations because of deficiencies. *Fees* are assessed each semester you are enrolled. Therefore, your LOA may incur more than 8 semesters of fees, depending on the start/end dates of your leave.
  - An LOA places you into a new graduating class—MSPEs reflect your performance in comparison to your graduating class, rather than your matriculating class (there may be an exception to this if you delay your graduation and take a leave after your MSPE has been composed and uploaded to ERAS: in this case, your original MSPE will be used for subsequent ERAS cycles).
  - Your anticipated return date may have an impact on scheduling, available clerkship and rotation blocks, etc. Your schedule must accommodate required in-person activities, such as T3 orientation, or your return from your LOA may be delayed.

- **Request approval for your LOA to begin** by emailing Dr. Kahn (mkahn@tulane.edu). Copy Kim Melerine (kmeleri@tulane.edu) and Allys Dierker (adierke@tulane.edu). In your written request, include the following:
  - The reason for your LOA
  - The exact date your LOA will begin
  - Your anticipated return date

  *Students should request their LOA at least two months before they plan to leave.* Students participating in other programs, such as LEAD, PSP, MD/MBA, MD/MPH, etc. should communicate with all of their Tulane programs, which may have additional LOA procedures.

- **Complete an Interdivisional Transfer (IDT) for a LOA to another Tulane program.** If you will complete another *Tulane* program while on LOA (including PhD work for PSP students, an MPH, MBA, etc.), contact Kim Melerine (kmeleri@tulane.edu) to start the IDT process.

- **Communicate about your schedule before your LOA.** If you need to drop rotations that overlap with your LOA, review your schedule on eMedley. Email SOMSchedule@tulane.edu, indicate the date your LOA will begin, and indicate the exact rotations you need to drop.

- **Communicate about your LOA to other Tulane offices** (including the Office of Financial Aid)
  - *The Office of Financial Aid* needs the exact start/end dates of your LOA to create and adjust your financial aid package. [http://tulane.edu/financialaid/hsc/](http://tulane.edu/financialaid/hsc/)
  - *The Standardized Patient Program* needs to update your SCOPE and TOSCE records. [https://tulane.edu/som/taps/](https://tulane.edu/som/taps/)
  - *Student Health* can help you with the logistics if you need health insurance coverage while on LOA. [https://tulane.edu/health/](https://tulane.edu/health/)
  - *The Office of Admissions and Student Affairs* can place you on your new graduating class’s listserv before you leave or several months before you return. Allys Dierker (adierke@tulane.edu) or Sherrill Harrell (sharrel@tulane.edu) can change your listserv.
Students should read emails carefully while they on LOA to be reminded about required activities, paperwork, registration, etc.

- **Plan for SOM requirements before your return.** Depending on your year and your progress toward your degree, you may have to clear academic deficiencies or pass standardized exams before you can return from your LOA. Have a plan for these **before** your LOA begins so that you do not have to unnecessarily delay your return. (See more information below about returning from your LOA.)

**RETURNING FROM LOA**

Returning from LOA is generally more complicated than beginning your LOA. Plan for logistics carefully, and be proactive in your communication with Tulane SOM about your return.

- **Request approval to return from your LOA** by emailing Dr. Kahn (mkahn@tulane.edu), and copying Kim Melerine (kmeleri@tulane.edu) and Allys Dierker (adierke@tulane.edu). **In your request, include the exact date you will return from your LOA.**
  - T1s/T2s should request to return from their LOA at least **two months before** their anticipated return date.
  - T3s/T4s should request to return from their LOA at least **three months before** their anticipated return date.

Students should also communicate with any other Tulane program in which they are participating, such as PSP, MD/MBA, MD/MPH, etc.

- **Complete an IDT to end your LOA from another Tulane program.** Complete an IDT (as you did to begin your LOA), but start the process with your current Tulane division.

- **Fulfill outstanding academic requirements (including clearing academic deficiencies and passing standardized exams).** Clear all academic deficiencies and meet all class-appropriate academic requirements before you can return from your LOA.
  - Resolve any incomplete grades or conditional grades before you can complete additional courses or rotations.
  - Know how your LOA will affect standardized exam requirements.
    - SCOPE (T2) and TOSCE (T3) are required for graduation. Contact the Standardized Patient Program for questions/scheduling concerns. [https://tulane.edu/som/taps/](https://tulane.edu/som/taps/)
    - Step 1 is required to progress from T2 to T3 year. T2s on LOA before their T3 year begins must pass Step 1 before they may return for clinical rotations.
    - Step 2 CK and CS are required for graduation. It is recommended that students take Step 2 no later than the December before they plan to graduate. Students should consider taking Step 2 earlier to be competitive for the Match.

- **Consider important class-related activities such as T3 orientation and other requirements.** Depending on what year (T1, T2, T3, T4) you are returning as, you may need to complete required activities, in addition to the academic requirements outlined above, before you can return.
  - Students returning to any year must complete requirements such as bloodborne pathogen training, registration confirmation, and honor code acceptance. Contact Kim Melerine (kmeleri@tulane.edu) at least two months before the end of your leave for details.
  - Students returning as new T3s **must** participate in T3 orientation. Students returning from LOA who have not yet participated in T3 orientation (or whose LOAs have been lengthy, or during times after a shift in EHR systems or facility requirements) are advised to participate.
in T3 orientation even if they are still on leave during orientation. Students who wish to return from LOA but choose not to participate in T3 orientation may not begin clinical rotations until they themselves have scheduled and completed all individual components of orientation, including Tulane Hospital, UMCNO, VA, Environmental Health and Safety, Student Health, and others. *Because of the difficulty students will have scheduling each of these components on their own, it cannot be stressed strongly enough that students should make every effort to participate in T3 orientation.*

T3 orientation is generally held in the first week of May. Contact Roberta Cartaginese (rcartag@tulane.edu) or Carmen McCaffery (cmccaffery@tulane.edu) for more details about orientation activities.

- **Consider your schedule**
  - T1s and T2s will return to their new graduating class in time to complete any requirements they did not complete with their original matriculating year.
  - T3s should make every effort to return to their new graduating class in time to participate in T3 orientation and begin with their class. Orientation generally begins at the very beginning of May, and T3 core clerkships begin the Monday after orientation. T3s who return off cycle with the T3 year are not guaranteed particular clerkships during particular blocks and will be scheduled according to rotation availability.

Students who will be returning in time to participate in orientation and begin T3 clerkships in May may participate in the process of requesting a donut path preference, which generally happens between late February and early March before the T3 year begins. It is the student’s responsibility to email Allys Dierker (adierke@tulane.edu) by December before the T3 year begins to make sure they are able to login to eMedley and request a donut path preference. Returning T3s will not be assigned rotations before donut path preferences are chosen by rising T3s. Students may be denied the ability to request a donut path preference if they are not in good standing or have academic deficiencies that have not been resolved.

- T4s should be aware of their remaining requirements and their remaining time until graduation. Rising T4s who are on leave but intend to return may be assigned a lottery number and participate in T4 scheduling, which generally happens in mid January through early March, to schedule rotations. Returning T4s will not be scheduled for rotations before the T4 scheduling period. It is the student’s responsibility to email Allys Dierker (adierke@tulane.edu) by September before the T4 year begins to request to be included in the registration lottery. Students may be denied a registration lottery number if they are not in good standing or have academic deficiencies that have not been resolved.

- **Communicate your return from LOA to other Tulane offices** (including the Office of Financial Aid).
  - The Standardized Patient Program needs to know that you are changing your graduation class so their SCOPE and TOSCE records are accurate. [https://tulane.edu/som/taps/](https://tulane.edu/som/taps/)
  - Student Health can help you with the logistics of updating your immunization records, drug tests, TB screening, etc. [https://tulane.edu/health/](https://tulane.edu/health/)
  - The Office of Admissions and Student Affairs can place you on the listserv for your new graduating class before you leave or several months before you return. Allys Dierker (adierke@tulane.edu) or Sherrill Harrell (sharrel@tulane.edu) can change your listserv subscription.