

# LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY

It may be necessary for a student to take a leave of absence for personal, professional, academic or medical reasons. It is expected that the student will first discuss a potential leave with the Dean or Associate Dean of their respective program/college prior to initiating the process.

After the initial conversation with the student to assess their need, the Dean of their designee will counsel them on the differences and implications between the types of leave. The process will then continue as outlined in the policy based on the leave selected.

Des Moines University recognizes leaves based on the following conditions:

## Short Term – Faculty Discretion

Students who anticipate missing class for a scheduled medical or personal event, or experience an unexpected, emergency absence of one to three days, must work directly with the faculty members overseeing the course(s) in which they will be absent to make arrangements to make up any missed work. Faculty members are to use their discretion and course guidelines as outlined in the syllabus regarding approval of the absence and conditions for making up any missed work.

## Extended Absence Contract

For students who anticipate being unable to participate in all course requirements or activities for a defined period of time from four to fifteen (4-15) consecutive didactic class days or four to twenty-one (4-21) clinic days, the Extended Absence Contract will be required.

To meet federal regulatory requirements a student must complete all registered credit hours and associated coursework by the end of the term in which the extended absence occurs. Please note that an Extended Absence Contract is not an option for osteopathic medical or podiatric medical students in the clinical phase of training. This provides structure, uniformity, and communication between the student, faculty, program/College administration, and all Student Services departments for these extended absences.

1. Contract must be signed and approved by all parties at least 14 days prior to the anticipated absence, or within 48-hours of the onset of an emergency or unexpected circumstance.
2. No more than one extended absence contract is allowed within a 30-day period.
3. Multiple requests for extended absence contracts within the same academic terms will require additional review by the respective program's Dean or Dean's designee.
4. Any absence that will extend beyond the 15th (didactic) or 21st (clinical) consecutive day will require an official leave of absence.
5. Faculty members for each of the courses affected by the extended absence will be required to provide input on what coursework will be missed and the plan for completion of the missed work including the deadline.
6. Students must be counseled on Financial Aid considerations and possible implications if the extended absence converts to a leave of absence.
7. Des Moines University reserves the right to impose an involuntary leave of absence if the approved timeframe has to be extended and the student does not petition for a voluntary leave of absence.

## Voluntary Leave of Absence

For students who anticipate being unable to participate in all course requirements or activities for a period of time beyond 15 days (didactic) and 21 days (clinical), the student must petition for a Voluntary Leave of Absence.

1. A voluntary leave of absence may be requested for medical (physical or mental), including maternity, personal, scholarly pursuit (dual enrollment, research opportunities, etc.), military deployment (refer to the Student Military Deployment [policy](#)) or other, which must be specified. When requesting a medical leave, a student must include documentation from their healthcare provider identifying the condition and anticipated time needed for the leave of absence.
2. Students are limited to 18 months total of voluntary leave of absence throughout their enrollment in an academic program.
3. Leaves of absence can be granted for up to 1 year (12 consecutive months) at a time.
4. Approval of leaves is subject to individual College policies. These policies can be found in the student handbook.
  - a. Student leave of absence start and end dates, and requested return date, must be approved by the program director or dean.
5. Students must receive Financial Aid counseling and complete the online exit interview.
6. Students taking a leave of absence for medical reasons must provide a medical release prior to their return.
7. In order to return from the leave of absence, the student must notify their specific program of their intent to return in writing. A minimum of 30 days prior to their return is required. For students in the clinical portion of their training, the written notice must be provided and required documentation submitted at least 60 days prior to placement at a clinical site. Any exceptions to these timeframes must be approved by the program chair and dean.
8. When the leave of absence expires, students that have not yet been in communication with the University regarding plans for their return will be contacted. Students that choose not to return may [withdraw](#) from the University; if the University is unable to contact the student then the student will be administratively dropped in lieu of withdrawal.
9. If the student goes on leave which results in a financial balance, all financial obligations to the University must be satisfied prior to their return.

## Involuntary Leave of Absence

Involuntary Leave of Absence is indicated for students who:

- Cannot progress in their curriculum due to established academic policies (i.e. failure to pass Boards or courses required for progression),<sup>1</sup>
- Are facing disciplinary action for violating the Integrity Code or other school policies,<sup>1</sup>
- Are experiencing personal or medical circumstances but refuse to petition for a voluntary leave of absence and their program and/or College's administration believes it is in their best interest to go on leave,
- Have been determined to be a potential threat to others, or threat to themselves (after conducting an individualized assessment).

<sup>1</sup> An involuntary leave for this purpose will be counted towards the maximum time allowed for completion of the degree. Voluntary leaves of absence and

*involuntary leaves not included in this category will not be counted towards the maximum time allowed for completion of the degree.*

1. For students placed on leave of absence for disciplinary reasons, the results of the adjudication process dictate when the student is allowed to return.
2. In order for students to return from an involuntary leave of absence, they must provide documentation that the circumstances necessitating the involuntary leave of absence have been satisfactorily addressed and/or remedied, and they are clear to return.  
In the notification letter from the Dean or their designee, they will be advised of the documentation and the required source of that documentation to satisfy University requirements to return.
3. The program director of dean must approve the student leave of absence start and end dates, and requested return date.
4. When the involuntary leave of absence expires, students that have not yet provided documentation to satisfy the University requirements to return will be contacted. Students that choose not to return may [withdraw](#) from the University; if the University is unable to contact the student then the student will be administratively dropped in lieu of withdrawal.

## **The Process – Extended Absence Contract & Voluntary Leave of Absence**

The Extended Absence Contract and Voluntary Leave of Absence petition are located on the [Registrar's Pulse page](#). These processes are initiated by the student. Please consult with your respective Dean's Office with questions about Extended Absences and Voluntary Leaves of Absence.