

SENATE ACTION FORM

No. 1226

Subject: Leave of Absence policy, Graduate Catalog

Reference to Senate Minutes dated: January 31, 2022

Senate Action:

MOTION: APC – It is moved to approve the Leave of Absence policy for inclusion in the Graduate Catalog

VOTE: Approved by voice vote.

Response requested:

Approval for placement in University Catalog

Approval for placement in University Regulations

Recommendation to Board for placement in Board Policy Manual

None (sent as information item)

Other action requested/comments:



Faculty Senate Chair

02/24/2022

Date

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Administrative review of Senate action (unnecessary for information items):

Reviewed by **VPAA/Provost**. Check if comments attached

Reviewed by **General Counsel**. Check if comments attached

Presidential action:

Approve Reject Return to Senate for discussion/modification (comments attached)

President/Designated Administrative Officer _____
Date

Date of Board approval (if applicable): not applicable

PLEASE RETURN SIGNED ORIGINAL AND ATTACHMENT TO THE FACULTY SENATE OFFICE, CARTER HALL 2004, BOX 75.
Faculty.Senate@unco.edu

New policy for inclusion in the Graduate Catalog

Clean copy version below.

Leave of Absence (LOA) Policy

A Leave of Absence (LOA) is a temporary pause of graduate study that permits a graduate student in good academic standing to postpone their graduate program for a defined period of time. In the event of circumstances that interfere with continuation of a degree program, a graduate student may apply for a LOA. If approved, the LOA allows a student to stop the term clock on a degree program and then rejoin the program without reapplying to the university. A student may be granted a LOA for a minimum of one semester and up to one calendar year for reasons, including but not limited to, medical, family, financial, and work. A student may request a LOA a maximum of two times during their graduate program, and the total time of all approved LOAs may not exceed two (2) calendar years.

A graduate student who wishes to request a LOA shall initiate a conversation with their academic and/or research advisor to discuss how the LOA impacts their ability to complete the program (e.g., consequences of being out of sync with graduate cohort; missing required courses taught during their absence; loss of research resources; restricted access to laboratories or campus resources; and loss of assistantship or scholarship funding). If a student decides to request a LOA, they shall complete the electronic LOA Request Form, and affirm their understanding of the potential implications the LOA may have on their program completion. The student shall obtain approval(s) relevant to their program:

- Academic and/or research advisor
- Graduate program coordinator, department chair or school director
- Center for International Education (if the student indicates status as an international student)
- Director of Financial Aid (if the student indicates receiving Title IV funding or student loans)
- Graduate School Assistantships and Scholarships Specialist (if the student indicates holding a graduate/teaching assistantship, Graduate Dean's Scholarship, or other university scholarship award)
- Director of the Office of Sponsored Programs (if the student indicates any funding, including an assistantship, paid through a research grant)
- Graduate Dean (or designee)

After verifying that the student is in good academic standing, and terminating any scholarships or assistantships awarded through the Graduate School for the time of the LOA, the Graduate School shall forward the completed form to the Registrar's Office.

An official LOA begins only after the student receives a copy of the request form with the Graduate Dean's (or designee's) signature confirming final approval.

Application for a LOA must be received by the Graduate School before the last day of classes in the semester for which the LOA is requested. A LOA shall not be granted retroactively after the end of the semester.

An approved LOA stands in lieu of registering for the minimum of one (1) credit hour. It is also in lieu of paying the Continuous Registration fee.

A student on a LOA cannot:

- receive a graduate assistantship, fellowship, scholarship, or financial aid from the university;
- be employed as an hourly student worker;
- enroll in student health insurance;
- enroll in UNC courses;
- take comprehensive exams;
- convene a dissertation or thesis proposal hearing;
- convene a dissertation, thesis, or scholarly project defense; and/or
- graduate.

A student receiving funding or financial aid of any kind should be aware of consequences that non-enrollment may have on aid or loans. For a student receiving federal financial assistance, the U.S. Department of Education regulations require the University to report the student as non-enrolled when they take a LOA for one (1) semester or more. The “withdrawn” or “non-enrolled” status may trigger the beginning of the Federal Stafford Loan grace period and/or the starting of repayment of the Federal Supplemental Loan for Students. Upon returning to UNC, if a loan is requested, new loan applications must be submitted and an in-school deferment form must be filed.

For an international student, a LOA approved by the university does not mean that the student is in compliance with visa and immigration regulations. The student should consult with CIE for more information.

Student Instructions

- Confer with your academic and/or research advisor and relevant offices (e.g., Financial Aid, Graduate School, CIE) regarding the impact of a LOA on your financial, academic, and work-related circumstances.
- Confer with your academic and/or research advisor, or the department chair/ school director about any changes that may affect your program.
- Confer with the Graduate School on the resources that will be available to the student during a LOA.
- If after the above review and consultation, you choose to request a LOA: Complete and sign the electronic LOA Request Form.

Administrative Actions

- Once the LOA Request Form has been submitted by the student, it is sent to the graduate program advisor and department chair/school director for their signatures.
- The Form then goes to the appropriate unit(s) for signature(s) as indicated by the student’s responses (CIE, Financial Aid, Graduate School, etc.).
- If the request is approved, a registration hold is placed on the student’s account. The student is not able to register for courses during the LOA period. A reinstatement form must be processed before the registration hold is removed.

Important Notes

- **When to submit the request:** The student should initiate the LOA form as early as possible when dealing with a potential interruption of graduate study. The form must be received before

the last day of classes in the semester for which the LOA is requested. **A leave of absence shall not be granted retroactively after the end of the semester.**

- **Cancelling registrations before the drop deadline:** An approved LOA does NOT automatically cancel any current course registration/enrollment. If the student is enrolled for the term(s) included in the approved LOA, they can cancel their registration(s) by the drop deadline and no tuition will be charged.
- **Cancelling registrations after the drop deadline:** If a student asks for an approved LOA after the drop deadline, they must withdraw from any registered courses; otherwise, grades will be posted for those courses. The student will need to file a tuition appeal to petition for elimination of tuition charges. Failure to do so will result in tuition charges for which the student is responsible. See the Registrar's website for relevant deadlines:
<https://www.unco.edu/registrar/registration/add-drop-withdrawal.aspx>
- **Financial support:** If a student receives financial aid and/or scholarships from the University, they should contact the office from which support was given (department, graduate assistantship, Financial Aid, faculty member, ORSP managing grant funding, etc.) to determine if a LOA affects the status of the funding.
- **External financial support (from private funding sources):** If a student receives funding from a source outside the University, they should contact the source to determine if a LOA affects the status of the funding.
- **International student:** The student must contact CIE to determine if the LOA affects their visa or immigration status.
- **Dual program student:** If a student is enrolled in a dual program, they must request a LOA from each program, and prior to their return, must request reinstatement from each program/department/school.
- **Reinstatement after LOA:** If a student obtains an approved LOA, they are eligible for reinstatement provided that they:
 - discuss reinstatement and progress in their degree program with their, academic and/or research advisor, or department chair/school director;
 - apply for reinstatement by completing the Reinstatement Application Form;
 - apply for reinstatement to the same major and degree; and
 - do not request to be reinstated in the same semester covered by the approved LOA.
- **Missed reinstatement deadline:** If a student does not apply for reinstatement by their LOA end date, then:
 - the student will be notified by the Graduate School that their LOA has ended;
 - the student will be charged the Continuous Registration fee each semester for up to three semesters (including summer) of non-enrollment;
 - the student's term clock will restart; and

- after three (3) semesters of non-enrollment, the student's program becomes inactive and the student must reapply for admission to the degree program.
 - **LOA limitations:** A student may apply for the LOA twice during the same degree program. The total time of all approved LOAs may not exceed two academic years.
 - **Notification:** The student, and all who signed the LOA Request Form, are notified of the final decision by email.
 - **Registration hold:** A registration hold is placed on the student's account for the approved LOA period. The student may not register for courses until they have applied, and been approved for, reinstatement.
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