Policy Title: Medical Student Leave, Withdrawal and Readmission Policy

Policy Number: EC.10.01.170912

Applies to: This policy applies to Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine Medical Students

Date: 9/12/2017; Procedures updated: 1/5/18

1.0 Policy Statement:
It is the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine (ESFCOM) policy to grant medical leave of absence or voluntary leave of absence for no more than one consecutive calendar year.

2.0 Definitions:
Student initiated leaves of absence:
- Financial leave of absence: Allows a student time to resolve financial issues.
- Medical leave of absence: Allows a student time to address personal health needs including mental or physical illness, injury or disability.
- Pursuit of Academic and Scholarly Interest: Allows a student the opportunity to complete another degree or pursue scholarly interest.
- Personal: Allows a student time to address significant personal circumstances
- Career Reconsideration: Allows a student an opportunity to pursue a career outside of being a physician

Administrative Leave of Absence: ESFCOM’s removal of a student from any and all academic and clinical activities for a period of time.
SEPAC: ESFCOM Student Evaluation, Promotion and Awards Committee

3.0 Responsibilities:
Associate Dean for Student Affairs
Chair of the Student Evaluation, Promotion & Awards Committee (SEPAC)

4.0 Procedures:
Voluntary Leave of Absence
To obtain a leave, students must initiate a request with the ESFCOM Associate Dean of Student Affairs in writing or in person. The request should state clearly the basis of the leave, specifying beginning and end dates, and include contact information while on leave. Students will work with ESFCOM Office of Student Affairs to coordinate with other offices including financial aid, registrar, and other entities to provide a profile of consequences to understand the ramifications of the leave of absence. ESFCOM Office of Student Affairs works with students to identify additional supporting documentation for the leave to be included with the request when applicable. For example, a student who requests a medical leave may be required to provide appropriate evidence of the health issue.

The Dean or the Dean’s designee may grant a leave of absence for up to 1 year.
SEPAC must review and approve (a) any request for a leave of absence beyond a year’s duration, (b) a second leave of absence for the same reason, regardless of length, (c) any leave of absence which, when combined with all prior leave of absences (voluntary or other), would result in leave from ESFCOM that exceeds one year, and (d) any leave of absence that affects a student’s ability to graduate within the defined requirements for an MD.

SEPAC reviews the applicable leave of absence request and confirms that all policies and procedures have been followed. If ESFCOM receives a notice of withdrawal from a student while charges, investigations, or other evaluations are current, ESFCOM reserves the right to delay a decision on recording the withdrawal until final determination has been made. Following the stated policies, ESFCOM also reserves the right to dismiss a student found to have violated other academic or professionalism policies even if the student submitted a notice of withdrawal prior to its final determination. If a third-year or fourth-year medical student takes a leave during a clinical rotation, the number of weeks of instruction earned (if any) will be determined by the clerkship director.

When a leave of absence is approved, appropriate university withdrawal forms must be completed by the student. The registrar will notify appropriate university offices of the withdrawal and student’s academic status as appropriate.

**Administrative Leave**

Every student enrolled at ESFCOM is expected to participate and perform in a fit and safe manner, consistent with the academic and professional standards of the program. ESFCOM reserves the right to remove a student from any and all academic and clinical activities if a student’s behavior fails to meet those standards and that behavior raises significant concern about the safety of the student or others (e.g., patients, other students, faculty, and staff).

ESFCOM asks that all faculty, staff, and students report behavior that threatens the student’s own safety or the safety of others or raises concern about impairment or an inability to function in educational or clinical settings (e.g., drug and alcohol use and/or erratic behavior) to the AWARE Network at https://aware.wsu.edu. If a student poses an immediate threat to self or others, call 911. Otherwise the Aware Network Reporting Form should be used:

https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?WashingtonStateUniv&layout_id=1

The Associate Dean of Student Affairs in consultation with the ESFCOM Dean and executive leadership, reviews the incident reported in coordination with the WSU Health Sciences Spokane AWARE Team to determine appropriate immediate actions that may include removal of the student(s) from all academic and clinical settings. As appropriate, campus security is to be contacted as determined by the AWARE Team and/or Office of Student Affairs and the Dean. As soon as possible, the Associate Dean of Student Affairs or designee meets with the student(s) and other individuals that can provide relevant information. Upon the completion of the investigation, in consultation with the Dean and
in accordance with ESFCOM and University policies, appropriate actions are taken. Actions may include leave of absence, fitness for participation evaluation, or dismissal.

**Fitness for Participation**
If a student is removed from an academic or clinical setting based on a finding of threat to self or others that is determined to be significant, the College requires a “Fitness for Participation” evaluation before the student may resume classes or clinical rotations. The Associate Dean of Student Affairs notifies the student that the suspension from all student academic and clinical activities remains in effect until such time as a student is returned to the program following a “Fitness for Participation” evaluation. The student is informed that removal from the curriculum may result in a delay in the student’s progress toward graduation.

Fitness for Participation evaluations are carried out by health care providers agreed upon by the Associate Dean for Student Affairs in consultation with the student. The student is responsible for any costs associated with the initial evaluation and any costs associated with required follow-up evaluations or treatment.

Students who decline to secure a required Fitness for Participation evaluation are subject to dismissal from the ESFCOM as well as dismissal from the University.

A Fitness for Participation evaluation must be submitted to the Office of Student Affairs who forwards the results to SEPAC and the Dean as appropriate. SEPAC is responsible for determining whether what, if any, conditions the student must meet to return to the curriculum (i.e., remediation).

**Credit for Term**
If students are partially through a term when they take a leave of absence or are placed on administrative leave, they are asked to repeat that term unless an appeal to SEPAC is granted. Students wishing to appeal to SEPAC do so by meeting with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs and preparing an appeal. SEPAC evaluates the appeal to determine if credit can be given for that term or if other arrangements to complete that term can be arranged within university and ESFCOM policies.

**Fifth year option**
ESFCOM provides a fifth year tuition plan for students who are required to take a fifth year of medical school due to a leave of absence or administrative leave. Eligible students pay a tuition cost that is 10 percent of full tuition, plus full mandatory fees. Prorated amounts are calculated based on the number of terms that a student is taking within the fifth year (e.g., prorated 10 percent tuition cost of 1 term). If a student passes a term, the student does not have to repeat it.

**Return to the ESFCOM**
All students on leave must submit a letter of intent to return, specifying the effective date of return, to the Office of Student Affairs at least one month in advance of the return date. If SEPAC includes additional requirements for returning to the curriculum, the letter of
intent must indicate how the student has met these requirements and including appropriate documentation if needed (e.g., physical and mental assessment by a health care provider). In collaboration with the Office of Student Affairs, students should consult with the registrar, financial aid office, and other relevant offices to select a date of return and be aware of the potential ramifications. Documentation should accompany the request, if applicable.

Students who withdraw from the curriculum because of a leave of absence have their status converted to enrolled student when appropriate documentation is received and approved by the Associate Dean of Student Affairs that the student is ready to return. Students returning from leave have their academic records reviewed to determine their education plan which includes determining their status: 1) promotion to the next year; 2) eligibility to retake examination(s); 3) what courses they must (re)take; and/or 4) dismissal for failure to progress. Any curricular changes in the content or assessment methodology may necessitate modifications in the student’s educational plan. In view of this review, a student’s anticipated graduate date may be modified.

Students who do not return to the ESFCOM at the conclusion of the approved leave of absence will be withdrawn administratively. The action is reported to SEPAC for review and approval. Students who have been withdrawn administratively from the ESFCOM and wish to be readmitted should refer to the Readmission from Voluntary Withdrawal section.

**Voluntary Withdrawal**
A student in good standing may choose to voluntarily withdraw from ESFCOM with the intent not to return as an enrolled student.

To Voluntary withdraw, students must initiate a request with the Associate Dean of Student Affairs in writing or in person. Students work with ESFCOM Student Affairs to coordinate with other offices including financial aid, registrar, and other entities to fully understand the ramifications of the withdrawal.

**Readmission from Voluntary Withdrawal**
Former students who withdrew in good academic standing from ESFCOM may petition for readmission within 12 months from the effective date of the withdrawal (e.g., student decides medical school is not their career path and withdraws, but a year later feels they are ready to pursue medicine). All petitions for readmissions must be in writing with all correspondence directed to SEPAC through the Office of Student Affairs. The petitioner may ask to appear in person before SEPAC. All written materials are distributed to SEPAC membership prior to the meeting at which the petition is reviewed. SEPAC decides to readmit or not based on the merits of the student's rationale for readmission and the student's likelihood of success. If SEPAC rejects the petition, further petitions from the former student are not accepted.

If SEPAC readmits the student, it refers the readmitted student to the appropriate campus committees for the development and implementation of an appropriate curriculum plan,
including the point of re-entry into the curriculum. Any plan generated by campus committees is subject to approval by SEPAC. Students who withdraw in good academic standing to pursue another advanced degree may petition for an extension beyond the one-year deadline for readmission.

Former students who do not petition for readmission within 12 months following withdrawal must re-apply to the first-year class through the admissions process and meet all requirements for that class. Unless granted an exception to this time limit, former students seeking readmission must apply to ESFCOM through the admissions process.

5.0 Related Policies
  ESFCOM Tuition Refund Policy
  ESFCOM Technical Standards Policy

6.0 Key Search Words
  Leave of absence, voluntary leave, failure to return

7.0 Revision History

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Responsible Office: Office of Student Affairs

Policy Contact: Associate Dean for Student Affairs

Supersedes: Approved version dated 5/6/2016