

DOCTOR OF MEDICINE LONG LEAVE OF ABSENCE PROCESS and PROCEDURE



Melbourne
Medical School

OBJECTIVES

This document details how the Melbourne Medical School (MMS) in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences (MDHS) administers Long Leave of Absence (LLOA) requests for Doctor of Medicine students in accordance with Enrolment and Timetabling Policy (MPF 1294) and with reference to Course, Subjects, Awards and Programs Policy (MPF 1327).

Long Leave of Absence in the Doctor of Medicine

The MMS allows students enrolled in the MD a long leave of absence on a study period basis, which is one academic year. A leave of absence means that the MD course is put on hold for students to re-commence and complete in the same fee place type (Commonwealth Supported Place or Full Fee paying) after return from leave.

The MMS strongly support students to apply for a LLOA if they anticipate that they will have difficulties with engaging fully in their studies in a given study period. If it is at all possible, we strongly advise that a LLOA is considered proactively, addressing very likely future conditions and circumstances, to best prepare for positive outcomes in all aspects of their lives.

CONDITIONS

- Long leave of absence may be approved for a study period basis of one academic year
- All leave applications require approval and must be supported by a valid reason and where relevant, supporting documentation.
- Applications for leave must be made in advance, at least two months prior to the start of the semester of the proposed academic year of leave, except in unavoidable circumstances
- Students are not permitted to take a Leave of Absence during the first six months of the course. If students are within the first six months of the course, or unable to commence the course as planned, they are able to apply for deferral before the census date of Foundations of Clinical Practice. The process for doing this is to email mms-selection@unimelb.edu.au. Deferring commencement of the course is only granted under exceptional circumstances.
- Whilst on leave, students are still considered a current student and will need to complete re-enrolment in November and December for study in the following year. Failure to re-enrol in a timely manner will result in a late enrolment fee and potential cancellation of enrolment in the course
- Whilst on leave a student is required to check their student email account at least twice a week, as this is how the University and MMS will send communications.
- During a LLOA the student must not be enrolled at the University of Melbourne, or any other accredited institute, in any subjects, and must not undertake any work or study that would form part of the course or for which credit or exemptions could be claimed. The only exception to this condition is if the student is undertaking one of the MD intercalated pathways, Leave is not granted to allow students to undertake study at another institution.

- Students are not permitted to undertake a clinical elective placement while on a LLOA
- International students on a student visa are required to demonstrate compassionate and compelling circumstances in order for a LLOA to be granted. Where LLOA is granted for compassionate or compelling circumstances: The University will:
 - notify the Department of Home Affairs that the student's course of study has been temporarily suspended
 - The student's visa will remain valid and they will not be required to depart Australia
 - The University will provide the student with an updated Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) with a new end date to cover the period of approved leave. The student will receive this with your Leave of Absence outcome
 - The student may also need to apply for a new student visa.
- Additional leave beyond the standard one-year period, is called 'extra leave'. Extra leave is only approved in exceptional circumstances
- All periods of leave count towards the maximum time to complete the course. Students must plan their studies, including periods of leave, to ensure that they complete their course within the allowable timeframe. For the MD, the allowable timeframe is six years from enrolment.

ACCEPTABLE REASONS FOR LLOA

- Health condition
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Financial
- Professional development (adhering to the above conditions)
- Approval to undertake a MD intercalated pathway course (MD-MPH; MD-ENG; MD-PhD etc.)
- Compassionate/ Compelling grounds
- Sporting or performance commitments for elite athletes and elite performers
- Parental/ Primary carer responsibilities
- Service commitment for army reservists or volunteer emergency personnel

ACCEPTABLE TYPES OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

- Health practitioner report or letter of support from a medical practitioner
- Signed police reports or court orders
- Confirmation of cultural or religious observances (signed by a senior cleric or community leader on official letterhead)
- For bereavement, a statutory declaration stating your relationship with the deceased person
- For Parental/ Carers leave, evidence and support from a medical practitioner that the student is the primary carer
- A letter of support on official Australian Defence Force letterhead signed by an official authority on behalf of the Australian Defence Force
- A letter of support on official letterhead and signed by an official authority from Victoria State Emergency Service (SES), the Country Fire Authority (CFA), or a similar organisation

APPLICATION PROCESS – DOMESTIC STUDENTS

CONTROLLED DOCUMENT: Melbourne Medical School

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The application process for applying for a LLOA is as follows:

1. A domestic student requesting a LLOA and are currently enrolled in:
 - a. MD1 will complete a [LLOA application form](#) and submit it to the Department of Medical Education with supporting documentation for consideration
 - b. MD2 – MD4 will first need to seek endorsement from their clinical school Dean/Subdean or the MD Course Director, and have evidence of this. Once this is obtained, the student will complete a [LLOA application form](#)
2. The application form and supporting documentation will be forwarded to the MD Course director for their consideration and approval
3. Approval will normally be given if this is the first such period of leave, and the supporting documentation is accepted.
4. If this is a second period of leave, then the student will need to meet with the MD Course Director in the first instance. They will also need to provide documentary evidence that exceptional and unforeseen circumstances exist that provide compelling reasons for this request to be granted. Medical certificates completed by any health professional who is related to the student, will not be accepted. Refer to the list below for guidelines on acceptable circumstances.
5. The student will be advised in writing of the outcome of their application within 10 working days of their application being submitted.

APPLICATION PROCESS – INTERNATIONAL STUDENT VISA HOLDERS

The application process for applying for a LLOA is as follows:

1. An international student requesting a LLOA and are currently enrolled in:
 - a. MD1 will complete a [LLOA application form](#) and submit it to the Department of Medical Education with supporting documentation for consideration
 - b. MD2 – MD4 will first need to seek endorsement from their clinical school Dean/Subdean or the MD Course Director, and have evidence of this. Once this is obtained, the student will complete a [LLOA application form](#)
2. The application form and supporting documentation will be forwarded to the MD Course director for their consideration and approval
3. The application form, supporting documentation and approval from the MD Course Director will be submitted to the university enrolments team to consider whether the students circumstances are compelling or compassionate
4. If an international student requires additional leave beyond the standard one-year period or two semesters, this is called 'extra leave'. Extra leave is only approved in exceptional circumstances such as documented ongoing illness, and approval is required.
5. The student will be advised in writing of the outcome of their application within 10 working days of their application being submitted to the enrolments team

APPEAL PROCESS:

- Students may appeal against a decision made under the Melbourne Medical School LLOA policy in writing within ten working days of the outcome notification.
- Appeals should be addressed and submitted [via this link](#) to: Long Leave of Absence Appeals Committee, Melbourne Medical School
- The Appeals Committee comprises the Head of the Department of Medical Education (or

nominee) Academic Programs Manager of the Melbourne Medical School (or nominee), and one Clinical School Dean or Subdean

- An acknowledgement of receipt of the appeal will be sent to the student within three (3) working days of its receipt.
- The student will be notified in writing of the outcome of the appeal within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of the appeal.
- Appeals should comprise a one page cover letter outlining the reason for the appeal, with supporting documentation attached. Verbal appeals will not be considered.
- If a student does not believe that the appeal has been adequately considered, they may follow the formal grievance procedures outlined in the Melbourne Medical School Student Grievance Procedures located at: <https://students.unimelb.edu.au/student-life/policy-and-conduct/student-complaints-and-grievances>