

## **PAS Program Student Leave of Absence Policy**

1. A PAS student in good academic standing, may request a leave of absence (LOA). A LOA is a temporary stoppage of the program due to health or personal reasons.
  - a. Examples of causes include, but are not limited to, medical issues, caring for family members, non-optional military commitments, and maternity leave.
  - b. Students may also request a LOA at the beginning of the clinical year and each clinical rotation module. Students must be physically and emotionally capable and academically prepared when they start the clinical rotation year and each clinical rotation module.
2. If a PAS student wants to take a LOA, they must provide the reason for seeking a LOA and supporting documentation, if deemed necessary, in writing to the PAS Program Director.
3. If a student requests a LOA during the first four (4) semesters of the program, it is considered for one (1) year, or until the start of their first incomplete semester, based on the cohort program and course offerings. A LOA requiring an extended absence beyond one year is evaluated on a case-by-case basis. All courses to be counted for a Master of Physician Assistant Studies degree at Grand Valley State University must be completed within five years as defined in the PAS Program Student Policy for Time Limit for Degree Completion.
4. If a student requests a LOA during the clinical year, students should be aware that depending on rotation availability and scheduling limitations, there may be a delay after a student's return from LOA before a sufficient make-up rotation placement can be arranged. This may extend the time it takes a student to complete the program beyond the length of the LOA. The program makes its best efforts to provide the make-up rotation(s) within the semester following the established class graduation date in December but reserves the right to schedule the make-up rotation(s) later in the calendar year, if necessary, because of availability and scheduling limitations.
  - a. If a student requests a LOA in the middle of a semester during the clinical year, the student receives a Deferred ("X") grade until the course requirements are complete. An "X" grade must be removed within two calendar years from the date of assignment. If not, it is changed to No Credit ("NC"). A student cannot graduate with an "X" or "NC" grade on their record.
5. The PAS Program Director reviews the PAS student's written explanation for requesting a LOA, supporting materials, relevant circumstances, and program performance. After considering the results of this review, the PAS program director, in collaboration with the PAS Department Chair, recommend to the Associate Vice-Provost for the Graduate School whether a LOA should be granted and the terms and conditions for the return to the program.
  - a. Terms and conditions for a return to the program include, at a minimum, that the student must supply the program with a letter from a treating healthcare provider indicating the student's readiness to resume coursework or clinical rotations prior to returning from a LOA for personal health reasons. Additional conditions for program return may include a requirement to complete academic preparatory and/or assessment work prior to resuming the program if the LOA extends more than one (1) semester.

- b. LOA are normally granted for only one calendar year due to program rigor and the need to remain current in changing medical knowledge and guidelines. LOA requiring an extended absence beyond one year are evaluated on a case-by-case basis
6. The Associate Vice Provost for the Graduate School shall render a decision after reviewing the graduate student's written request and the recommendation of the PAS Program Director and Department Chair. The decision by the Associate Vice-Provost for the Graduate School shall be final.
7. If the student is granted an immediate LOA, it shall have the effect of a course withdrawal for all courses in which the student is enrolled. Tuition reimbursement follows [University policy](#).
8. The student shall follow the graduate program and catalog requirements in effect at the time of re-enrollment.
9. This policy complies with the Graduate Academic Policy on Leave of Absence in the [Graduate Education Policies and Procedures Manual](#).

### **Definitions**

**Good Academic Standing:** A student in good standing in the PAS program, is one who has maintained an overall graduate GPA of >3.0 and does not meet the criteria for academic review as outlined in the PAS Program Student Policy and Procedure for Academic Review and the GVSU Graduate School Academic Review Policy.