



USF – College of Medicine
GRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION POLICY & PROCEDURE

Title: Leave of Absence Policy	GME-215
Page: 1 of 5	

Scope: Applies to all University of South Florida Morsani College of Medicine (“USF MCOM”) residents and fellows (“Residents”) in Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (“ACGME”) accredited and non-accredited/non-standard programs as appointed through the House Officer Contract issued by the USF MCOM Graduate Medical Education Office (“GME Office”).

Background: The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for leaves of absence (“LOA”) in accordance with the federal law, state law, and institutional policies. This policy is also consistent with ACGME Institutional Requirements IV.H.1. Each USF MCOM GME program may supplement this policy with written procedures regarding application and use of LOA.

Policy: LOA generally and broadly refers to Residents requests to take leave from work to manage any of a variety of personal and family needs: personal or family illness, pregnancy, military service, etc.

Residents MUST follow the procedure/guidelines of their training program in requesting and scheduling LOA. Failure to follow departmental and program policies may result in the request being rejected. Each Resident must submit a leave request in writing to their Program Director. Program Directors, or their designees, have the final authority to approve LOA requests. The total time allowed away from a GME program in any given year or for the duration of the GME program will be determined by the requirements of the applicable specialty board and will be tracked by each program. **Board requirements override USF MCOM GME permitted LOA with the exception of federally protected time.**

LOA in excess of board allowance will cause training period to be extended. Extension of training is at the discretion of the Program Director and subject to availability of funding and space in the program. Residents are encouraged to refer to the specialty board for specific details. Programs should refer to GME policy 218 for extension due to remediation.

All leave is to be used during the year it is accrued and may not be carried over from one appointment year to the next. No payment for unused leave days will be made upon a Resident voluntarily or involuntarily leaving the program during the contract period.

Leave Categories and Allocations:

Annual Leave: All Residents will receive up to twenty (20) weekdays of annual leave. Annual leave is pro-rated for Residents beginning or ending off-cycle.

Annual leave must be used for any time away from the program not covered by other leave benefits below, including board exams, Step 3, interviews, etc.

Conference Leave: A Program Director may authorize paid leave for a Resident in good standing to present at local, regional, or national educational meetings. Such paid leave is limited up to five (5) days each year, is not considered part of the Resident's annual leave, and may not be carried forward to subsequent years. Conference leave must be preapproved at least eight (8) weeks in advance with additional approval from the VA DEO if the absence involves a VA rotation.

Sick Leave: Residents will each be allocated up to ten (10) days of sick leave at the beginning of each appointment year. Sick leave is to be used in increments of no less than a full day for any health impairment that disables an employee from full and proper performance of duties when the Resident is scheduled to work (including illness caused or contributed by pregnancy when certified by a licensed physician). Residents may be required after three (3) full or partial days of absence for medical reasons (consecutive or non-consecutive days) in any 30-calendar day period, to provide a medical certification from the Resident's physician before any additional absence for medical reasons will be approved. A Resident who is discovered to have obtained sick leave pay under false pretenses is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination per GME Policy 218.

A Resident suffering from a medical situation necessitating use of sick leave without prior approval must notify the Program Director as soon as possible.

Health related appointments may be used in half-day increments as needed.

Sick Leave Pool: Sick Leave pool is available for extended illness of the Resident and may be used by Residents who are required to discontinue work because of medical needs. Such use may be allowed only after exhaustion of sick leave and annual leave, up to a maximum of forty-five (45) days per individual over the course of the program. Pre-approval must be obtained by the Program Director and the DIO. The use of the Sick Leave Pool is not available for maternity leave. Residents sent for mandated fitness for duty assessment are only required to exhaust their sick leave balance and 10 days of medical leave prior to utilizing Sick Leave Pool.

Continuation of salary is at the discretion of the Chair of the Department for Residents on extended LOA (exceeding the total of leave available). Benefits, however, will not continue for more than six (6) months.

Medical/Parental/Caregiver: All Residents will receive medical/parental/caregiver leave per qualifying event up to max of ten (10) days per year, with the exception of first-time leave. For **first time** medical/parental/caregiver leave, Residents will be given at minimum six (6) weeks of cumulative leave with one (1) week of Annual leave reserved for use

outside of the six weeks (utilizing available annual, sick, and medical/parental/caregiver leave balances). The Leave of Absence form must be completed and submitted for approval to both the Program Director and DIO for Medical/Parental/Caregiver leave requests.

Residents can use medical/parental/caregiver leave to cover absences related to parental leave (birth, adoption, placement for adoption, or fostering), a personal illness/injury, or immediate family member's illness/injury. For purposes of this policy, immediate family includes spouse, domestic partner, grandparents, parents, stepparents, brothers, sisters, children, and grandchildren of both the Resident and the spouse.

Eligibility for medical leave will require a medical certification from the Resident's physician and will be approved under the same conditions provided under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Prolonged leave due to serious illness, injury, or pregnancy is to be used in conjunction with FMLA. Parental leave can be taken after delivery or adoption of a child and within 90 days of the event. Eligibility for caregiver leave will require a medical certification from the Resident's family member's physician and will be approved under the same conditions provided under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

When possible, Residents should seek advanced approval from the Program Director to ensure optimal planning time for schedules and discuss impact on board edibility. Residents can elect to take annual leave and sick leave collectively with medical/parental/caregiver leave.

Military: USF GME follows The USF Systems leave policies/procedures tied to military leave qualification and procedures. Reference USF Attendance and Leave Guide for more information.

Bereavement Leave: In the event of death in the immediate family, the Resident may be granted up to three (3) days of Bereavement Leave to attend the funeral and assist in estate settlement. A miscarriage is included in this definition of death in the immediate family. The Leave of Absence form must be completed and submitted for approval to both the Program Director and DIO for Bereavement leave requests.

Domestic Violence Leave: Residents may be provided one (1) day per contract year if the Resident or a family or household member is a victim of domestic violence. Except in cases of imminent danger to the health or safety of the Resident or to the health or safety of a family or household member, Residents seeking Domestic Violence leave must provide the program advanced notice of the leave. Domestic Violence leave does not require written approval or documentation.

Unexcused Absence: If a Resident does not show up for assigned hours, including night call, without notifying the chief resident or Program Director,

the absence will be considered unexcused and subject to progressive discipline up to and including dismissal. Unexcused time will be taken as leave from the Resident's leave entitlement. Per the USF Attendance and Leave Guide, a Resident who fails to report to work for three (3) consecutive days without notification is considered to have abandoned their position.

Holiday Policy: GME Residents follow the holiday schedule of the program and training site where the Resident rotates at the time.

Procedure

Responsible Party

Action

Resident

Agrees to abide by the LOA procedures set forth in this policy, in the Housestaff Handbook, in the House Officer Contract, and by the programs as applicable.

Know and follows program's approval and notification procedures and board eligibility requirements.

Submits the appropriate LOA Form requesting leave to the Program Director. A LOA for medical reasons may require documentation from a physician stating that the resident has a serious medical condition that will impact training and the estimated amount of time away from the training program.

Program Director

Develops procedures for LOA approval and documents when and how annual leave can be taken in ACGME block schedule, as applicable.

Advises Resident and GME Office of approval or disapproval.

Maintains accurate records of the amount of all LOA Residents have used and reports use of leave accurately in New Innovation.

Knows and ensures Residents are meeting board eligibility requirements

Follows disciplinary process for Residents who have unexcused leaves or misuse of sick leave.

Title: Leave of Absence Policy	GME-215
Page: 5 of 5	

Office of GME

Obtains DIO signature and returns completed LOA form to Resident and Program Administrator if the request is not for annual or sick leave.

APPROVED:



Senior Associate Dean, Graduate Medical Education/DIO

Date of Origin	Effective	Revision/GMEC Approval:	Originally Policy #
01/1999	07/2022	07/2003; 06/2005; 08/2008; 01/2011; 05/2011; 07/2013; 3/2014; 02/2022	N/A