

Deceleration (Leave of Absence) Policy A3.14d

Deceleration is the loss of a PA student from their entering cohort, who remains matriculated in the PA Program with a change in their graduating class. Only students who take a Leave of Absence are eligible for deceleration. **Under no other circumstances will a student be allowed to decelerate.** The Rowan-Virtua SOM PA Program curriculum is designed to be delivered and completed sequentially on a full-time basis. **The PA Program does not allow part-time status.**

Decelerated students must abide by any updated curriculum or policies as outlined their new graduating class, regardless of previous curriculum, policies or procedures.

Leave of Absence

1. A leave of absence (LOA) is a pre-approved leave from the institution that suspends a student's course of study for a definite period of time. An LOA from the PA Program may be granted at the institution's discretion under extraordinary medical or life circumstances for up to a total of 52 weeks during a student's enrollment as a student at SOM. An LOA is generally reserved for acute and/or time limited events or transitions that could significantly impact the student's ability to engage in academic responsibilities. Typical circumstances warranting an LOA include:
 - Serious health condition or illness of the student or an immediate family member;
 - Death of a family member;
 - Military obligation;
 - Childbirth or adoption.
2. **Requesting a Leave of Absence**

A student must submit a written request for an LOA on Starfish. The request must describe the circumstances underlying the request and the period of leave sought. All medical records must be submitted to the Director of Student Health. Students should not include medical records or diagnoses or other protected health information as part of their initial written request.

The Director of Student Affairs will meet with the student to discuss the circumstances underlying the requested LOA and intended LOA period. It is within the discretion of the Director of Student Affairs to grant a student's request for an LOA if both of the following conditions are met: the requesting student is (1) is in good academic standing, and (2) has demonstrated circumstances warranting an LOA. The Director of Student Affairs may consult with the Director of Student Health or other administrators as needed, and/or may request additional information or documentation from the student prior to making a determination.

Leaves of Absence cannot be requested if a student is expected to fail one or more courses (i.e. calculations of completed work demonstrate it numerically impossible for

the student to pass the course) or to avoid dismissal for academic or disciplinary reasons. Students who are on Academic Probation, or who have failed one or more courses at the time of the requested LOA, will be required to have their record reviewed by the SPC to understand the implications of a LOA within 30 days of the request. Students who have appeared before the SPC prior to the request, but within 30 days may be considered to have fulfilled this requirement. This is to ensure academic progress is reviewed and considered prior to LOA determination by the Director of Student Affairs.

It is strongly recommended that the student meet in advance with the Registrar's office, to understand impact on student records and transcripts, and Financial Aid to understand the financial impact of taking an LOA, including the potential need to repay student loans.

Within 7 business days of the LOA request, the Director of Student Affairs will notify the student by email as to whether the LOA has been approved. If the LOA is approved, the letter will detail the start and end dates, the reason for the LOA, as well as any requirements of return. The letter also details information on ID card, educational program, email, facilities and campus access during LOA. After this letter is received, the SOM Registrar changes the student registration status and provides notification to the student. This is the final notice that the LOA has been activated.

3. Additional Information on Military Leave from Academic Programs

Rowan-Virtua SOM has established a policy regarding academic credit and tuition and fee refunds for students called to partial or full mobilization for state or federal active duty as a member of the National Guard or a Reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States.

Students who suspend their enrollment in an academic program in response to a call to active military are provided options in consultation with the Student Affairs Dean or equivalent of the school.

It is the practice of Rowan-Virtua SOM Academic Affairs to provide maximum flexibility allowed to military students to allow them to engage in military rotations and military obligations, as needed and within reason.

4. Return from Leave of Absence*

1. By thirty (30) days prior to returning from an LOA, the student must complete the Return from LOA Survey in the Starfish system, to confirm the intended date of return and begin the registration process.
2. Students returning from a medical LOA must also make an appointment with the Director of Student Health, School of Osteopathic Medicine, for evaluation of readiness to re-enter the program. As part of this evaluation for clearance to return, the student must submit documentation from a treating healthcare provider confirming that the student is cleared to return to the medical education environment, which is collected and reviewed by the Director of Student Health.

3. The Director of Student Health will present a report and recommendation to the Director of Student Affairs for review and approval prior to the return date.
4. A student's failure to provide confirmation of intent to return 30 days prior to the intended return date will result in delays in processing the return and will not guarantee return by the intended date. This may lead to delays in student curriculum, change of class year, academic progress, and graduation from SOM. The Director of Student Affairs will utilize Rowan email and the Starfish Access Network as the official modality of communication around LOA details and returns. If a student fails to submit the confirmation of intent to return, the Director of Student Affairs will make every effort to contact the student using email, phone, emergency contacts and wellness checks. Lack of contact and confirmation of return may result in administrative withdrawal from SOM.

***PLEASE NOTE:** Clinical-year students taking any LOA from clerkships may not be able to return to their original placement upon their return; if the original site cannot accommodate them, the student will be placed where there is availability.

Deceleration (Leave of Absence) General Notes

1. Deceleration secondary to a university-approved temporary separation (leave of absence) request. Depending on the terms of the request, a student may be able to take a leave of absence. If the LOA is approved, the soonest that a student may return to coursework is at the beginning of the semester of when the LOA was taken, with the next immediately following cohort. It is required that the student who takes a LOA complete a re-entry examination covering all coursework in the curriculum that precedes the point in time of when a student took a leave of absence.
 - a. **Of note, a leave of absence may have major financial implications. Please discuss all financial considerations with a representative from the financial aid office.**
2. Immediately prior to the official re-entry into the curriculum and to be eligible to restart the curriculum from where the student took the leave of absence, the student must successfully complete a comprehensive curriculum examination which demonstrates competency in all preceding coursework of the entire curriculum up to the point in time of when the LOA occurred. For example, if a student takes a LOA in the Spring 1 semester, the student would need to complete a re-entry examination of the entire Fall 1 semester to rejoin the next cohort at the beginning of Spring 1. If required, the student will be provided one attempt to remediate an initial failure of the comprehensive semester examination to demonstrate competency.
3. Coursework and graded assessments incomplete from the semester that a LOA was taken does not carry over to the next year. Students will be required to restart the semester whenever a LOA occurred, from the beginning.

Interim Suspension

An interim suspension is an emergency administrative response to actions caused by a student which poses risk of harm, or which threatens the integrity of the educational environment. A temporary suspension is activated by the institution to provide a specific period of time for a

student to be removed from the educational environment while a review is conducted prior to the possible initiation of a disciplinary process.

A student may be temporarily suspended from continuing participation in coursework, being present on the campus, or participating in University-related activities for an interim period pending a disciplinary hearing. An interim suspension is effective immediately without prior notice whenever there is evidence that the continued presence of the student in the educational environment may pose a substantial threat to others or to the stability and/or continuance of SOM or University functions. A student may be temporarily suspended from participating in clinical education activities upon evidence that the continued presence of the student in the clinical setting poses a risk to patient safety or healthcare functioning, or if the clinical education site removes the student from its clinical education program.

It is the responsibility of the Director of Student Affairs, or their designee to request and implement an interim suspension. The Director of Student Affairs or their designee will consult with other university leadership and administrators in deciding whether to impose an interim suspension. The Director of Student Affairs, or their designee will notify the student by email of the notice of interim suspension and detail its requirements, which may include but are not limited to:

1. Exclusion from attending or participating in academic classes or programs,
2. Prohibition from being present on university premises,
3. Prohibition from being present in or around clinical settings,
4. Prohibition from attending or participating in school activities, clubs, or events,
5. Prohibition from sending emails to university-supported email listservs or participation in virtual settings,
6. Prohibition from representing oneself as a current student of Rowan-Virtua SOM on any public media or social media platform.

A student may move directly from an interim suspension into a disciplinary procedure, during which the timelines and requirements of the disciplinary procedure apply. If the student does not move directly from an interim suspension into a disciplinary procedure, the interim suspension will be lifted and the Director of Student Affairs, or their designee will notify the student of the removal of the interim suspension.

Modifications to the interim suspension will be explicitly communicated by the Director of Student Affairs or their designee. Any communication with the student during the period of interim suspension must be managed or approved by the Director of Student Affairs, or their designee.

If a student wishes to return to the educational and/or clinical setting prior to a disciplinary hearing, the student is required to make an appointment to meet with the Director of Student Affairs, or their designee within five (5) business days from the effective date of the interim suspension. The purpose of the meeting is to determine: (1) the reliability of the information concerning the student's conduct; and (2) whether the conduct and surrounding circumstances reasonably indicate that the continued presence of the student on the educational and/or clinical

setting likely poses a substantial threat to others or to the stability and/or continuance of normal University functions.

During the interim suspension, the student remains a registered student but university ID badge access may be removed. The student will be excused from academic requirements but may continue to study for classes or continue with academic progress in the medical school curriculum. The Dean of the School of Osteopathic Medicine, or their designee will notify the student's faculty and the student will be excused from academic requirements.

Any coursework or academic requirements missed during the interim suspension must be completed once the interim suspension is lifted in order to receive academic credit. An interim suspension does not replace or begin a formal disciplinary process. An interim suspension itself is not reported on a student's transcript nor is it considered a disciplinary sanction. Following a interim suspension, disciplinary processes proceed in accordance with the Rowan-Virtua SOM Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Disciplinary Procedures which uphold the Rowan-Virtua SOM Code of Conduct.