

Procedures for the Award of the Doctor of Philosophy Degree

The Johns Hopkins University

School of Medicine

REVISED and APPROVED by the MA/PhD committee on April 17, 2017

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Introduction

Award of the Ph. D. degree at Johns Hopkins University is administrated by the Doctor of Philosophy Board. **See Appendix A for Doctor of Philosophy Board Board by-laws.**

From the Doctor of Philosophy Board website:

There are three fundamental requirements for the Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins University: dissertation, residence, and oral examination. None of these requirements can be modified or changed without unanimous consent of the schools and the Provost.

- 1. Dissertation: All Ph.D. students must successfully complete a dissertation in accordance with relevant school and program guidelines prior to degree conferral.*
- 2. Residence: All Ph.D. students must have completed two consecutive semester of full-time study prior to degree conferral.*
- 3. Oral Examination: All Ph.D. students must successfully pass a required oral examination conducted by five faculty members. The oral examination must include the chair and at least one other member from outside the candidate's home department.*

It is university policy that all program and university requirements for the Ph.D. must be completed in 12 years or less from start of the doctoral program. The Doctor of Philosophy Board reviews all candidates for the Ph.D. prior to conferral to ensure that the fundamental requirements for the Ph.D. have been met within the timeframe delineated.

The School of Medicine abides by these university-wide requirements as described in Sections 1 and 2. In addition, the SOM requires students to complete training in Responsible Conduct of Research (Section 3) and to complete the requirements set by each graduate program (Section 4).

1. Registration and Student Status

To be classified as a graduate student in the School of Medicine, the student must be admitted to a graduate program and be registered on a full-time basis ~~and be on campus~~. Status as a Special Student is awarded only to graduate-level students who are not candidates for a Johns Hopkins advanced degree; time as a Special Student may not exceed 1 year. Once students begin their graduate course of study toward a degree, they must complete a minimum of two consecutive semesters of registration (fall/spring or spring/fall) as a full-time graduate student to fulfill the residency requirement. In order to be registered full-time, a student must engage in a full-time program of courses, seminars and/or research as approved by the graduate program.

The School of Medicine does not define full-time in terms of credits, courses, or any other such unit.

The program certifies each student's status at the beginning of every academic year. The program may determine the allowable time to complete degree requirements but in no case may that time exceed 12 years. Any approved leave of absence would not count toward the 12 years.

Registration

Students must register each semester from matriculation through graduation. A student's departure from the School of Medicine without an approved leave of absence will be deemed a permanent withdrawal from the student's program. If on leave, students are expected to provide the Registrar's Office and their program with an updated current address, and are expected to respond to all communications and mailings within the deadlines specified. Students who withdraw from their programs must be formally readmitted, at the discretion of the Chair of the program, before they may return to the School of Medicine. If readmitted, they need not pay a second application fee but must pay all outstanding fees. Failure to register by the published deadlines of the School of Medicine may be interpreted as a withdrawal from the program.

Change in Registration Status

Students may request a Leave of Absence. Students must obtain the signature of their program Chair, and the signature of the Director of International Student and Scholar Services if he or she is an international student before submitting their application for the change in status.

Leave of Absence (LOA) –

Program Directors must approve all requests for leaves of absence. Graduate students may request up to twenty-four months of leave of absence, when medical conditions, compulsory military service, or personal or family hardship prevents them from continuing their graduate studies. Financial difficulty alone does not warrant a leave. Leave of absence can also be authorized for internships. ***For LOA regulations see Appendix B for School of Medicine LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND VACATION POLICY.***

2. Doctor of Philosophy Board Oral Examination

Purpose

The Doctor of Philosophy Board Oral Examination for candidates for the Ph.D. degree has three major objectives:

1. To assess a candidate's proficiency in the discipline.

2. To give a student the benefit of a critical examination of his or her work by scholars outside the department or program.
3. To provide a means for extra-departmental monitoring of the academic quality of departments and programs sponsoring candidates.

Types of Doctor of Philosophy Board Oral Examinations

There are two types of Doctor of Philosophy Board Oral Examinations: preliminary exams and final exams. Departments or programs decide whether their students will use a preliminary or a final examination to fulfill their Doctor of Philosophy Board requirement. Preliminary exams are given to students at an early stage in the progress toward the Ph.D.; final exams are given to those who have completed the doctoral dissertation.

Preliminary Examinations

The purpose of a preliminary examination is to test the depth and breadth of the student's knowledge and reasoning abilities. The scope of such an examination cannot and should not be sharply defined. The Doctor of Philosophy Board Oral Examination Committee can determine the limits of the exam by reviewing the candidate's formal coursework along with the requirements of the candidate's school, group, department, or program requirements (e.g., whether specific minor, as well as major, subjects are to be included). The preliminary exam may cover the student's proposed dissertation topic; in that case, examiners should have information about the dissertation proposal well ahead of the examination.

Final Examinations

A final examination should concentrate on the student's doctoral dissertation and its implications. It is reasonable for the Doctor of Philosophy Board Oral Examination Committee to explore the candidate's breadth of knowledge in areas ruled germane to the thesis by the chair of the committee. The dissertation and the readers' report must be available to the committee at least two weeks before a final exam.

Scheduling the Doctor of Philosophy Board Oral Examination (DBO)

The program director sponsoring a candidate for the Ph.D. degree is responsible for scheduling the exam and submitting the form entitled *Oral Examination for the Ph.D. Degree for School of Medicine Programs* to the School of Medicine Registrar's Office. This form must be completed, signed by the program director, and submitted to the Registrar's Office for approval three weeks before the proposed examination date. Exams may be conducted at anytime throughout the year.

Oral Examination Committee Eligibility

To be eligible to serve on a Doctor of Philosophy Board Oral Examination Committee, a faculty member must hold:

- A faculty appointment as a Professor, Associate Professor, or Assistant Professor in a University department/program. Such appointments may be regular or visiting , full-time or part-time.
- Exceptions. The Associate Dean for Graduate Biomedical Education must approve anyone not meeting these criteria. To be considered for approval, the chair of the program petitioning for authorization of an examiner outside of the University must submit:
 - The full curriculum vita of the outside examiner, including recent peer-reviewed publications and evidence of scholarly work
 - A one-page summary of the research of the Ph.D. student
 - A one-page letter explaining how the expertise of the examiner meshes with the student's research and why the department must go outside of the University to have this expertise represented on the committee.

The above request and documentation should be submitted to the Associate Dean for Graduate Biomedical Education for approval a minimum of four weeks before the scheduled Doctoral Board Oral Examination. Written approval from the Associate Dean for Graduate Biomedical Education and all documentation should then be submitted to the Registrar's Office, along with the exam committee form for final approval.

At the discretion of the program, faculty members who leave the University may continue to mentor their former students for a period of five years with the approval of the chair of the department/program and serve on the oral exam committee.

Composition of the Oral Examination Committee

Members of the DBO examination committee are selected by the candidate's graduate program director and approved by the Registrar. The chair of the committee is selected by the Registrar, based on rank and seniority at rank. Only JHU full-time tenure track faculty, holding the rank of Professor, Associate Professor, or Emeritus Professor, from outside the candidate's department are eligible to serve as Chair of the DBO committee.

Although consultation between the student and his or her faculty advisors regarding possible exam committee members is appropriate, selection of committee members is the responsibility of the graduate program director.

Inside and Outside Examiners

DBO exam committees will consist of 5 faculty examiners. Two examination committee members must be inside the department or program sponsoring the candidate, and two committee members must be from outside the department or program sponsoring the candidate. The fifth examination committee member will serve either as inside or outside the department, as determined by the department or program. The primary departmental appointment of a faculty member will generally determine whether he or she is considered inside or outside the department, except that advisors are considered inside examiners even if their appointment is outside of the department sponsoring the candidate. When the program has large numbers of faculty from many departments,

the program chair may request that certain core faculty be considered as inside examiners. These requests must be approved by the Doctor of Philosophy Board, and the names of such identified faculty and the criteria for their selection must be made available to the Associate Dean/Registrar on an ongoing basis. If the final examination is considered as the Doctor of Philosophy Board Oral Examination, the two primary readers/advisors will generally serve as the two inside members of the committee.

Notification of Committee Members

After the Registrar approves the examination request, the original request form will be sent to the program administrator, who will forward the form and examination instructions to the Committee Chair. The Registrar will maintain one copy. After this point, no substitution of examiners other than those named as alternates can be made without the approval of the Registrar. The program director or program administrator of the program sponsoring the candidate is responsible for notifying the student and examiners of the time and place of the examination. For a final examination, examiners should have copies of the candidate's dissertation and the readers' letter at least two weeks before the examination.

Length of the Exam

The examination should be long enough for the committee to learn as much as it needs to judge the student's qualifications as a Ph.D. candidate. Ordinarily, examinations should be under two hours, but committees are free to set their own time limits.

Oral Examination Procedures

The chair of the examination committee will begin the meeting by identifying those present and, if necessary, distinguishing between voting and non-voting attendees if present. Before the candidate enters, the advisor or departmental representative serving as a member of the examination committee will advise the examiners and answer their questions concerning:

1. The candidate's formal course record.
2. School, department, or committee requirements (e.g., whether specific minor as well as major subjects are required).
3. Special prerogatives that should determine the character of the examination.

At the conclusion of the examination, after a vote has been taken, the chair of the examination committee should record the results of the examination and have each committee member sign the form. The chair should also sign the form and fill in the date. The completed form must be given to the candidate's program administrator directly following the examination. In no case should the form be given directly to the student. The program administrator is responsible for sending the original form to the Registrar's Office within one week of the exam date.

- **If the candidate receives an unconditional pass** (e.g., a majority of favorable votes), the examination committee is discharged.

- **If the candidate receives a conditional pass**, the exact terms of the condition are to be reported on the examination form – i.e., what course(s), if any, need be taken; in what time frame the conditions(s) should be met; and any other pertinent information that will point out clearly to both the student and faculty how to satisfy the condition(s). As soon as all conditions have been met, the chair of the examination committee must report the removal of the condition in writing to the student's program administrator, who will notify the program director and forward the original correspondence to the Registrar. The committee is then discharged.
- **If the candidate fails**, the examination committee, through the chair, should recommend a course of further action:
 - No further examination.
 - Re-examine the candidate by the same committee at a later date. The candidate must receive a Pass or Conditional Pass on the second attempt. A second failure will result in dismissal.
 - Re-examine the candidate by a different committee at a later date. Reasons should be given for the change in the committee membership. The newly formed committee must have representation from the previous committee. The candidate must receive a Pass or Conditional Pass on the second attempt. A second failure will lead to dismissal.

The committee may recommend whatever action in its judgment seems desirable, taking into consideration the background of the student, previous performance, potential, and reaction to oral questioning.

Duties of the Chair of the Doctor of Philosophy Board Oral Examination Committee

The duties of the chair of the examination committee are to:

- Preside at the examination.
- Instruct the committee as to the scope, character, and conduct of the examination before questioning begins.
- Allot time to inside and outside examiners.
- Report the results of the examination to the program administrator immediately after the examination, using the original examination form. The program administrator must send the signed original to the Registrar's office within one week of the exam date.
- In the case of a conditional pass or failure, to monitor the further action recommended.

Reports and Records of Oral Examinations

Immediately after the examination, the chair of the examination committee should tell the candidate in person whether he or she passed or failed the examination, or received a conditional pass.

The advisor/departmental representative serving on the examination committee should report the results of the student's examination to the program director.

Should a student fail or receive a conditional pass, the Registrar will formally notify the program director in writing.

The Registrar's Office enters results of each examination into the student's official record.

3. Responsible Conduct of Research

All graduate students must receive training in the Responsible Conduct of Research.

The SOM policy is based on NIH guidelines (<http://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/notice-files/not-od-10-019.html>).

Students must receive training that includes a significant small-group component, allowing issues to be openly discussed with fellow students and faculty discussion leaders. A training program should provide at least eight hours of class time – with at least three hours of face-to-face discussion – and address at least the following topics: (a) the scientist as a responsible member of society, (b) research misconduct, (c) data acquisition and management, (d) authorship and publication practices, (e) mentor and trainee responsibilities, (f) use of animals in research, (g) conflicts of interest, (h) collaborative research and (i) human subjects if applicable. It is the responsibility of each program to design a curriculum that satisfies these requirements. Contact the Associate Dean for Graduate Biomedical Education for any questions.

4. Program-specific Graduation Requirements.

In addition to the school-wide requirements described above, each graduate program can set program-specific requirements for the award of the Ph. D. These requirements must be described in the program's Student Handbook.

1. Program-specific graduation requirements are defined as requirements set by each graduate program (in addition to the SOM requirements) needed to apply for graduation clearance (e.g. courses, participation in journal clubs etc....). In the case of course requirements, the minimum grade needed for the course to be counted must be specified.
2. Students will be given a copy of their graduation requirements during orientation. (Students who matriculated before orientation (e.g. students who arrive in the

summer) will be held to graduation requirements in place at the time of their first orientation).

3. Outside of exceptions outlined in sections 4 and 5, course requirements for a student cannot be changed after completion of the DBO (if taking a Preliminary Examination) or after the student's first thesis committee meeting (if they are taking a Final Examination). Graduation requirements will be kept on file for each student by the graduate program.
4. Changes to the format of existing classes or requirements are allowed, but such changes cannot be made retroactive: students who already completed the class or requirement under the old format shall not be required to retake the class or requirement under the new format.
5. New graduation requirements can be added for existing students if explicitly requested by agencies that fund the graduate program (e.g. training grants; applies to all graduate students in the program) or that fund a specific graduate student or group of students (only applies to the funded students). Such changes will be implemented with the following considerations:
 - a. The graduate program will seek *direct student input* to determine timeline of implementation for the new requirements and scope of changes applied to existing students.
 - b. Students who have completed all course requirements prior to requested changes will be exempt from taking additional courses, unless specifically requested by the funding agency. Programs will request exemptions from funding agencies for those students. However if those exemptions are not granted, those students will comply with new requirements as set by the funding agency.
6. Completion of graduation requirements must be certified by the Graduate Program director in the "Completion of Degree Requirements worksheet" submitted to the registrar's office.

List of Documents Required by the Registrar for Graduation

Documents provided by Program:

- Completion of degree requirements worksheet signed by student and program director
- Student's CV
- Copies of Doctoral Oral Board Exam (all attempts)
- Abstract of Thesis
- Names of Advisor and Reader
- Readers Letter
- Certificate of Completion
- Email confirming delivery of thesis to the Eisenhower Library

- Graduation Clearance Form
- Completed Survey of Earned Doctorates
- Proof of completion of Research Ethics requirement if not previously supplied to Registrar

Documents provided by the Registrar's office:

Updated Transcript

Deadlines for documentation:

- Deadline date for submission of materials for December conferral:
2nd Friday in October
- Deadline date for submission for materials for May conferral:
last Friday in March

APPENDIX A

Doctor of Philosophy Board By-Laws, approved September 16, 2015

The Doctor of Philosophy Board is a standing committee of the Johns Hopkins University that reports to the Provost, and is responsible to the graduate faculty of schools granting the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) degree. It is composed of faculty from all schools granting the Ph.D. degree.

1) Duties and Responsibilities of the Doctor of Philosophy Board

- a) The Doctor of Philosophy Board shall recommend to the President conferral of the Doctor of Philosophy degree on candidates approved by their respective schools, subject to completion of all University-wide requirements.
- b) The Doctor of Philosophy Board shall coordinate and set University-wide policies with respect to the Doctor of Philosophy degree.
- c) The Doctor of Philosophy Board shall offer final approval to new Ph.D. programs and to substantive changes in the existing Ph.D. programs, ensuring that University-wide Ph.D. degree requirements have been met. (Such programs and changes must first be approved by the schools.) It will also approve new Ph.D. programs in schools not currently granting the Ph.D.
- d) The Doctor of Philosophy Board shall advise the Provost about University-wide issues pertaining to the Ph.D. degree, such as library repositories and interactions with accreditation boards. It will provide information about these activities to the divisional graduate boards and coordinate policy with the divisional graduate boards.
- e) The Doctor of Philosophy Board shall provide approval and oversight functions for interdivisional Ph.D. programs across the University.
- f) The Doctor of Philosophy Board shall report to the Provost and to the Ph.D.-granting schools on the status of the Johns Hopkins University Ph.D. programs. It will track changing academic philosophies and emerging technologies that affect Ph.D. studies.
- g) The Doctor of Philosophy Board shall assure that administrative practices permit the effective reporting of data and outcomes necessary to monitor the health of Ph.D. programs, as well as data required by external agencies.
- h) The Doctor of Philosophy Board shall not have jurisdiction over professional doctorates or any academic doctorates other than the Doctor of Philosophy. The Doctor of Science, Doctor of Medicine, Doctor of Public Health, etc. will continue under the purview of their respective schools.
- i) There are three fundamental requirements for the Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins University (dissertation, residency, oral examination). They cannot be changed without the unanimous consent of the Board, the Provost and the schools granting the Ph.D. In particular,

I. No change in the fundamental dissertation requirement can be made without the unanimous consent of the schools and the Provost.

II. No change in the required two consecutive semesters of full-time study as a Ph.D. student can be made without the unanimous consent of the schools and the Provost.

III. No change in the required oral examination of five faculty examiners (with the chair and at least one other member from outside of the candidate's home department) can be made without the unanimous consent of the schools and the Provost.

2) Membership of the Johns Hopkins University Doctor of Philosophy Board

a) The Doctor of Philosophy Board shall be composed of distinguished faculty with sufficient breadth of disciplinary expertise to represent the broad spectrum of Ph.D. programs across the University. Eleven members will be chosen as follows:

i) Three (3) faculty members from the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences(KSAS): one each in Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences;

ii) One (1) faculty member from the Whiting School of Engineering (WSE);

iii) One (1) faculty member from the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS);

iv) One (1) faculty member from the School of Medicine (SOM);

v) Two (2) faculty members from the Bloomberg School of Public Health (BSPH);

vi) One (1) faculty member from the School of Nursing (SON);

vii) One (1) faculty member from the School of Education (SOE);

viii) One (1) voting chair from KSAS or WSE.

(1) Faculty shall be appointed for three-year terms (renewable), staggered to provide continuity. The Chair will be appointed for a two-year term (renewable).

(2) To be eligible for appointment, a faculty member must hold a regular, full-time appointment as a tenured or tenure-track professor or associate professor (or an equivalent position in schools that do not offer tenure). The Chair must be a tenured full professor, and cannot be a present administrative officer of the University.

(3) Members shall be appointed by the Provost, upon advice from the schools. The schools will nominate their members according to their own procedures. For the Homewood schools, the recommendations shall come through a process determined by the Homewood Academic Council.

(4) The Chair shall be appointed by the Provost, subject to the advice and consent of the Homewood Academic Council.

Additional members shall be added when other schools offer Ph.D. programs. All changes to the composition of the Board require the unanimous consent of the Board, the Ph.D. granting schools and the Provost.

3) Student Representatives to the Johns Hopkins University Doctor of Philosophy Board

- a) Three non-voting doctoral students shall represent the interests of Ph.D. students across

the University to the Doctor of Philosophy Board. Their affiliations shall be as follows:

- i) One representative to rotate between the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences (KSAS)

and the Whiting School of Engineering (WSE);

- ii) One representative to rotate between the School of Medicine (SOM) and the Bloomberg School of Public Health (BSPH);

- iii) One representative to rotate among the School of Nursing (SON), Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), and the School of Education (SOE).

- b) Student representatives shall be appointed by the Provost for a one year term, upon

advice from student representative bodies and school leadership.

- c) Student representatives shall agree upon and submit one agenda item for discussion at

each Doctor of Philosophy Board meeting.

4) Subcommittees and Reporting

- a) The Doctor of Philosophy Board shall be empowered to establish subcommittees as it deems necessary. Other faculty members may serve on these subcommittees by appointment of the Chair.

- b) The Doctor of Philosophy Board shall send agendas of its meetings in advance to the Provost and the graduate deans, and to the graduate boards and academic councils of the relevant schools, any of whom may request that items be added.

- c) The Doctor of Philosophy Board shall submit its minutes to the Provost and graduate deans, and to the graduate boards and academic councils of the relevant schools, any of whom may request further discussion of important issues.
 - d) The divisional graduate boards shall send minutes of their meetings to the Doctor of Philosophy Board, and in particular notify it of changes to school-specific requirements for the Ph.D., and seek its approval when they might affect compliance with the fundamental requirements of §1.
- 5) Mechanisms for Examining Ph.D. Programs, Certifying Ph.D. Candidates and Creating University-Wide Policies
- a) Each school granting the Ph.D. degree must have a mechanism to examine new Ph.D. programs or revisions to existing Ph.D. programs. After such examination, the results shall be submitted to the Doctor of Philosophy Board for final approval by majority vote of the Board. Approval of the first Ph.D. program in a school that has not previously offered the Ph.D. shall require a two-thirds vote of the Board
 - b) Each school must have a mechanism to certify that each Ph.D. candidate has fulfilled all requirements for the degree. The Doctor of Philosophy Board shall review the dossiers of candidates for the Ph.D. degree to ensure that all University requirements have been met. The committee performing this task shall, at a minimum, include one member from each Ph.D.-granting school. Final approval will be by majority vote of the Board.
 - c) All University-wide policies, except those affecting the fundamental requirements, shall require a two-thirds vote of the Board. Changes to the fundamental requirements will require the unanimous consent of the Board, the Ph.D. granting schools and the Provost

6) Exceptions

Exceptions to University-wide requirements for individual students may be granted upon approval by a minimum of two-thirds of the Doctor of Philosophy Board. The fundamental requirements cannot be waived for any student, without the unanimous consent of the Board. All requests for exceptions must first be approved by the appropriate divisional board.

7) Revisions to By-Laws

Changes to the by-laws affecting the fundamental requirements and the voting and membership structure shall require the unanimous consent of the Board, the Ph.D. granting schools and the Provost. Other changes to the by-laws shall require a two-thirds vote of the Doctor of Philosophy Board.

8) Support

The Doctor of Philosophy Board will be supported by an administrator in the Office of the Provost and, when necessary, by additional help from the offices of the graduate deans.

Appendix B:

**POLICY FOR GRADUATE STUDENT LEAVE AND
VOLUNTARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE AT THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

The following policy applies to all graduate students enrolled in Ph. D. programs at the School of Medicine, WITH THE EXCEPTION of students who are funded by grants/fellowships that have their own leave policy. In those cases, the students will follow the policy of the granting/fellowship agency.

Vacation (paid leave): 15 days (3 weeks) paid leave per year of enrollment (in addition to 10 official days sanctioned by the University and listed below).

New Year's Day
Martin Luther King
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day
Day after Thanksgiving
Day before Christmas
Christmas
Day before New Years

Spring break and Winter break weeks can be taken as paid leave but will count against total days allotted for paid leave. Paid leave is distinct from sick leave (covered below) and sick leave should not be deducted from paid leave. Unused days of paid leave may not be carried over into the following 12-month period and are not payable upon departure.

Notes:

- Graduate students must provide reasonable advance notice of intention to use paid leave and must receive consent from the faculty supervisor.
- Teaching assistants may not use paid leave to diminish or delay any instructional duties.
- Time spent traveling to and attending academic conferences approved by the faculty supervisor is not considered paid leave.
- For this policy, a year refers to September 1 - August 31st.

Sick Leave: 15 days (3 weeks) paid leave per year. Unused days may not be carried over into the following 12-month period and are not payable upon departure. Sick leave may not be subtracted from any paid leave earned through the policy above. At its discretion, the department or advisor may require the student to submit verification of the need for sick leave from their healthcare provider to the University Health Service Center for review. Any documents containing a student's medical information must be kept separate from his/her academic file.

Extended absences (more than two weeks) must be reported by student and/or advisor to program administrator as quickly as possible. If the illness requires an extended absence, the student may apply for a leave of absence, as described below.

Parental Leave: Parental paid leave of 20 days per year (4 work weeks) can be used for the adoption or birth of a child. Parental leave does not carry over from year to year. Sick leave can be applied to pregnancy/childbirth. Sick leave and parental leave can be combined for a 7-week total per event (birth or adoption). Under special circumstances, and in consultation with the faculty advisor, this period may be extended by the program director.

Voluntary Leave of Absence (LoA): A student may request a voluntary leave of absence for reasons including the following and must provide the proper documentation for their given situation, as indicated below:

- medical condition, including mental health conditions: a letter from the treating physician
- military service: a letter or verification from the Armed Forces
- personal or family hardship: a letter from the student applying for leave
- internship (typically 2-3 months): a letter from the entity/organization at which the student will be interning

Notes:

- Leave may not exceed 2 years cumulative.
- A student does not receive a stipend from the University during leave. During an internship, the stipend, if any, is paid by one of the internship sponsors.
- The period of the leave is not included in "time to degree."
- Degree progress may not be made by students while on a leave of absence – including completion or submission of the dissertation. Requests for exceptions to this rule must be submitted by the graduate program to the Associate Dean for Graduate Biomedical Education.

- A student cannot be enrolled in a degree granting program at another institution during a LoA.
- A student who has received federal financial aid, including undergraduate loans, may be subject to additional restrictions and should check with the Financial Aid Office before starting a LoA. The SOM Registrar must report students on LoA to the National Student Clearinghouse as withdrawn from student status. This will impact student loan payments.
- LoA impacts an international student's status. International students should contact the Office of International Services at least thirty (30) days before starting a LoA.
- Continuation of health insurance is required during LoA. For more information including SOM policy on medical insurance, dental insurance, University Health Service, insurance premium payments, waiving benefits, eligibility to defer loans, termination of an LoA and COBRA, communications, and student account activity, refer to *the Masters and PhD Candidates on Leave of Absence* memo from the Registrar's office and the *WAIVER of SCHOOL of MEDICINE BENEFITS for STUDENTS on LOA* form.

Initiating a LoA:

A student requesting a LoA from an academic program should first contact his/her faculty advisor. A letter of intent is then submitted by the student to the director of the program followed by a meeting with the director. Following this meeting, if the request for LOA is approved by the director, the director completes a *Student Change of Status* form signed by the director and by the student. The signed form is immediately submitted to the Registrar's office by the director, with a copy to the Associate Dean for Graduate Biomedical Education.

To be approved for a leave of absence, graduate students must provide the proper documentation for their given situation, as indicated below:

Medical Condition: a letter from a physician (this may be a letter from a doctor at the University Health Services or the University Mental Health Services), the Student Assistance Program, or the Office of Student Disability Services. This letter should be maintained in the strictest confidence by the program only and shall not be shared with other offices.

Military Duty: a letter or verification from the Armed Forces.

Personal or Family Hardship: a letter from the applicant describing the hardship.

Internship: Agreement between mentor and student. A letter from the entity/organization at which the student will be interning

During the leave period, a student may not be enrolled at another university. School of Medicine policy requires that health insurance be continued during the period of leave. Prior to requesting the LOA, it is also recommended that the student contact the Health Insurance Coordinator in the Registrar's Office for information on how the LOA will affect their health insurance coverage and premium responsibility. When on an approved LOA there is no tuition charge; the period of leave is regarded as an interruption of the degree program.

A student on LOA may not make use of any School of Medicine services except University Health Services, University Mental Health Services and the Student Assistance Program, provided insurance and health fees are being maintained. For students on medical leave of absence, School of Medicine policy allows the program/department to pay Health and Dental Insurance premiums and University Health Service fees for a period of up to one year if requested by the student. A student on a leave of absence who wishes to continue working at the School of Medicine must be hired through the Human Resources division of the department employing them. No exceptions can be made.

When a Program Director has granted a leave of absence, a Time Status Change form must be completed and submitted to both the Associate Dean for Graduate Biomedical Education and the Registrar, who will modify the student's enrollment record.

Returning from Leave of Absence

When returning from leave of absence, a graduate student must submit documentation (from one of the sources below) to their Program Director that explains what progress has taken place during the student's absence that would enable him/her to be successful upon return.

Medical Condition: A Fitness to Return evaluation must be conducted by the Student Assistance Program or by the treating healthcare provider and/or UHS prior to resumption of studies.

Military Duty: a letter or verification from the Armed Forces.

Personal or Family Hardship: a personal letter.

Additional letters of support (e.g. from an advisor, department chair, etc.) are welcome.

It is the responsibility of the Program Director to notify the Associate Dean/Registrar that the student is returning to full time status. The Director will submit a Student Change of Status form to notify the Registrar that the student's LoA has ended.

Unless a longer period of leave has been approved as provided below, if a student does not register for coursework after the second year of leave, the LoA

automatically ends without further notice to the student and the student is no longer enrolled. Reapplication is required.

In unusual circumstances, a program director may request from the Associate Dean for Graduate Biomedical Education a student LoA extension beyond two years. A letter documenting that this extension request has been granted must be submitted to the Registrar prior to the end of the initial leave period.

Any exceptions to these guidelines must be approved by the Associate Dean for Graduate Biomedical Education and reported to the Registrar.