

MSBS Student Attendance and Leave of Absence Policy

Students are required to attend and participate in all class sessions, all didactic and lab sessions, and complete all exams, assessments, evaluations, and assignments as scheduled (together defined as “coursework”), as determined by Course Directors, and the Office of Student Affairs. Missed coursework has the potential to disrupt individual and team learning. However, occasionally an absence from coursework may be unavoidable. To the extent a student is required to quarantine or isolate under applicable public health guidance due to COVID-19, the university’s COVID-19 policy shall apply, and this policy will be administered in conformity with that policy.

CHSU MSBS program grants approved leaves of absence (LOA) to students for academic, employment, maternity, military, medical, research, educational enrichment and other approved professional or personal reasons. It is the responsibility of the student to review the LOA policy prior to requesting an LOA. Students should consult with their Advisor and the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs prior to any planned LOA to ensure that the procedural requirements for a LOA are correctly followed. It is ultimately the responsibility of the student to fully comprehend the potential financial and professional implication of an LOA.

Definitions

Excused Absence is an absence that is approved by the Office of Program Director in compliance with criteria set forth in this policy. Excused absences can be requested for lectures, examinations, lab sessions, and other curricular course requirements. Students may be allowed up to a maximum of ten (10) class (part or full) days total excused absences per semester, with a maximum of three (3) consecutive class days excused absence (for longer absences, see Leave of Absence section below).

Unexcused Absence is an absence not approved by the Office of Program Director or when a student does not request an excused absence. The maximum number of unexcused absences is five (5) (part or full) days per semester, limited to three (3) consecutive days. Unexcused absences include absences of any type that do not involve missing examinations, and lab days.

Leave of Absence when approved is an extended absence either excused or unexcused during the didactic curriculum lasting more than three (3) consecutive class days.

Excused Absence Policy

Students may apply for excused absence from lectures, examinations, and lab sessions in the event of extenuating circumstances up to ten (10) days per semester. Some examples are listed in the table below:

May Request

Medical (self or immediate family)
Military duty
Professional leave (e.g., attend conferences require at least 14-day advance notice)
Immigration & Naturalization
Jury duty (If summoned to Jury Duty, students are required to immediately report to the Office of Student Affairs)
Legal
Bereavement (up to five [5] days for parent, spouse/partner, or child); up to three [3] days for other relatives or friends.
Traffic Accident (supporting information required)

May Not Request

Car breakdown (please call for alternative transportation if urgent)
Work scheduling
Professional leave without required 14-day notification
Vacation
Family or personal events/ceremonies such as weddings, birthdays, showers etc.

The student must be able to provide documentation verifying the medical illness or emergency situation in order to be excused. Regarding weddings or similar significant events, students are encouraged to consult with the Office of Student Affairs and the academic calendar before planning such events.

Students are required to provide advance notice, if possible, and complete the following process to submit an excused absence:

1. A student must submit the excused absence request form to the Office of Program Director with documentation explaining the need for an absence.
2. Following receipt of the form, the Office of Program Director shall review the leave request.
3. Upon approving or denying the request, the Office of Program Director will communicate the decision to the student and course director(s) of the missed course(s).

Students are responsible for contacting their course director/ instructor for arranging review of missed materials or coursework. If the absence occurs during an assessment period (exam, quiz, any graded activity etc.) and is determined to be unexcused by the Office of Program Director, the student will receive a zero for the missed assessment.

Leave of Absence Policy

Under certain circumstances, students may request a Leave of Absence (LOA) for selected reasons including but not limited to, recovering from illness, military service, or personal circumstances, etc. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that a LOA request form is submitted in a timely manner. Non-attendance does not constitute notification of intent to apply for LOA status. It is the responsibility of the student to continue coursework (barring an emergency) until the LOA is approved.

Leave of Absence

Leave of Absence (LOA) is an extended absence either excused or unexcused during the didactic curriculum lasting more than three (3) consecutive class days. A LOA may be granted for a maximum of one year from the date the LOA is approved. An LOA may be granted for military, jury duty, maternity/paternity, or for other family reasons such as the following:

- Birth of a child, or to care or bond with a newly born child, including incapacity due to pregnancy or prenatal medical care.
- Placement of a child with the student and/or the student's registered domestic partner for adoption or foster care or to care or bond with the child.
- To care for a Qualified Family Member defined below, with a serious health condition.
- A qualifying exigency related to the covered active duty or call to covered active duty of a student's spouse, domestic partner, child or parent in the Armed Forces of the United States, as defined by law.

A "serious health condition" is an illness, injury, impairment or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility or continuing treatment by a health care provider for a condition that either prevents the student from participating in their coursework or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities. A "Qualified Family Member" includes child, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, spouse or domestic partner. Child includes a biological, adopted or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward or child of a person standing in loco parentis. Parent means a biological, adopted, step or foster parent, or any other individual who stood in loco parentis to the student when the student was a child. A Qualified Family Member does not include parents of student's spouse or parents of a student's registered domestic partner.

The University will follow applicable law for military leave.

Because courses in the MSBS curriculum are only offered one time per year, LOAs beyond ten (10) consecutive class days generally will require students to restart the following year at the beginning of the semester they left from.

A student seeking to apply for a LOA should first contact their faculty advisor, discuss with the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and also immediately contact the appropriate course directors and meet with the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs. An official LOA request form must be completed and is to include the last date of attendance, anticipated return date, and reason for the leave of absence. The LOA request must be signed by the highest-level administrator in the Office of Financial Aid and The Business Office prior to being submitted to the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs. The Assistant Dean of Student Affairs will review the academic standing of the student and forward the documents to Graduate Student Progression Committee to determine whether a LOA will be granted. Final approval of a LOA is provided by the Program Director.

If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from providing a prior written request, the Program Director may make exceptions to this process. Whenever practical, a student should submit their written request for a LOA at least thirty (30) calendar days in advance of the start of the upcoming semester or thirty (30) calendar days before the end of the current semester.

Non-attendance in classes does not constitute notification of intent to apply for a leave of absence.

Students who take a LOA that, at a minimum, extends through the end of the semester shall be considered withdrawn for the purposes of grading and tuition refund only, but not withdrawn from the University. The student's final grades and tuition refunds (if any) will be processed as outlined in the CHSU Student Withdrawal Policy and Tuition Refund Policy.

As an LOA has a significant impact on student loans and scholarships, the ability to obtain financial aid in the future and/or entering repayment earlier than expected, as well as possibly increasing the total cost of the student's attendance. Therefore, students should contact the Financial Aid Office about the implications related to their LOA well in advance.

Students will receive a letter via email to their CHSU email account (or, if inactive, their personal email account on file with the University) once a decision has been made regarding the LOA generally within five (5) calendar days of the decision. CHSU reserves the right to impose conditions upon the student's return that will be communicated either in the initial letter to the student approving the leave or in subsequent correspondence to the student. For example, students granted a LOA for health-related purposes may be required to have a health care professional certify in writing that they are approved to return to the University prior to the student's anticipated return date.

The Registrar's Office will send confirmation of completion of leave process to the student. The date of leave of absence status is the date that the Program Director's office receives the signed Leave of Absence form, except in case of extenuating circumstances.

Should a student wish to take a leave longer than the initial LOA granted to the student, she/he must re-apply for an additional new LOA following the same LOA process.

Returning from a Leave of Absence

Students approved for a leave of absence may return to classes without reapplying to the MSBS program if the return is within the approved time frame as recorded in the LOA approval letter and any relevant University approved extensions of such leave. Prior to returning to the MSBS program, students are required to comply with all conditions for the student's return as stated in correspondence to the student by the University. A student granted a LOA with conditions may be required to meet with the Office of Program Director before returning. For LOA, students must submit their intent to return in writing to the University Registrar within thirty (30) calendar days of the anticipated return. It is the student's ultimate responsibility to duly inform the administration of any delays to their return or needs for further extensions.

Students failing to return to the MSBS program following the approved timeframe for the LOA will be considered to be on an Unapproved Leave of Absence and may be dismissed from the program.

Disciplinary Action for Unexcused Absences, Unapproved Leaves of Absence, Abuse of Absence Policy

Any student on an Unapproved LOA or not applying for excused absence or LOA or LOA extension after exhausting the limit of unexcused absence days is in violation of this policy, and subject to disciplinary action under the University's codes conduct policies. Unexcused absences, taking an unapproved leave of absence, and abuse of the absence or leave request

process are all examples of unprofessional conduct and violates the University's Student Conduct and Professionalism policy and Code of Ethical Conduct. Abuse of such a process includes but is not limited to: (1) dishonesty regarding the need for or use of leave; submission of fraudulent documentation supporting the need for leave, or (2) any inaccurate or misrepresented reasons provided for the leave. Abuse and/or violation of this policy may result in consequences up to and including dismissal from the University.

It should be noted that after a student return from a leave of absence, completion of all the required elements for graduation is still necessary, in order to graduate and be granted the degree of Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences.