

# COM Attendance and Leave of Absence Policy

*This policy has been revised effective Spring 2024 and is located in the addendum section of this catalog.*

## Attendance Requirements

### **OMS-I & OMS-II**

Attendance is required for all students. Enrolled students are expected to attend all didactic, laboratory, clinical sessions as well as other scheduled curricular activity. Attendance will be monitored through various means depending on the activity.

Students must complete all exams, assessments, evaluations, and assignments as scheduled (together defined as "coursework"). Failure to maintain an adequate attendance during the first two years of the curriculum may result in corrective action through the Student Performance Committee (SPC). It is recognized there may be isolated instances when an individual must be absent; however, the student who misses the didactic and clinical materials is not excused from learning the missed subject material.

### **OMS-III & OMS-IV**

Daily attendance by third- and fourth-year students is required for all requisite clinical duties of the particular rotation with any time away from the rotation approved through the process outlined in the clinical clerkship manual. Students on rotation are expected to be on time for all assigned activities associated with that particular rotation. Violations of the attendance requirement policy may result in disciplinary action through the SPC Committee, including, but not limited to, removal from any leadership positions with a student club, organization of student government office.

If the student needs to miss time from a clerkship, the student is required to document that request for both the Office of Student Affairs and the Office of Clinical Education. The form must include details of the make-up of time missed for the absence request to be approved.

During the OMS-III and OMS-IV years, missed core clerkships may need to be made up during future elective clerkship time, or by extending that year of enrollment. This may result in either 1) a student needing a longer duration of time to complete their OMS-III requirements, and therefore having less opportunity for elective clerkship rotations in their OMS-IV year, or 2) extension of their OMS-IV year beyond the typical graduation date for their class.

### **Virtual Attendance:**

This option may only be available in specific and rare circumstances, when a student is prohibited from being at an assigned clinical site due to quarantine or other public health directive.

## Excused Absences

It is recognized there may be isolated instances when a student must be absent, however, a student who misses a didactic session, laboratory or clinical activity is not excused from learning the subject materials or activities of that particular session. The student may be required to make-up the missed educational session(s) during off- hours. Make-up laboratories are conducted only in extreme situations and at the discretion of the Course Director and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

For an absence to be considered excused for pre-planned medical reasons, notice must be received by CHSU-COM prior to the missed class or activity, and a note must be submitted from the treating healthcare provider upon the student's return to class if medical condition/illness is three days or greater. Students in third- and fourth- year rotations must abide by the additional requirements contained in the CHSU-COM Clinical Clerkship Manual.

Students may receive excused absences to attend CHSU-COM-related activities or national meetings of student clubs and organizations. No absences will be excused without approval from the Course Director or Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Any request for an excused absence must be submitted, in writing, to the Office of Student Affairs at least 10 business days prior to the anticipated absence.

Excused Absences are those that may be expected or unexpected and that meet the criteria for an excused absence as outlined below.

- Medical necessity: illness of the student or member of the immediate family. In order for an absence of three days or greater to be considered excused for medical reasons, a note must be submitted from the treating healthcare provider upon the student's return to class. Minor illnesses/conditions less than three days, such as upper respiratory infections, gastroenteritis, minor accidents, may not need to be documented by a physician's note; however, notification of absence is still required.
- Death in family: death of immediate family member, significant other, or close relative. Documentation may be required. Length of absence to be determined when the request is received.
- Special circumstances/other: circumstances outside of the above situations (vehicle accidents, medical emergencies, etc.) Appropriate proof or documentation will be required.
- Student may request an excused absence for religious holidays not included in the list of the University holidays.

While excused absences are not approved for any examinations, tests and/or quizzes CHSU recognize there may be times where a student is not able to attend. In the event of any absence from an examination or quiz, it is the responsibility of the student to seek approval from both the Office of Student Affairs and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. It is essential each student make every effort not to miss any examination or quiz. Requests for make-up examinations or quizzes must be made in a timely manner. An unexcused absence from an examination or quiz may result in a grade of zero (0) for that assessment.

For an absence to be considered excused, student must complete the "[Excused Absence Request Form](#)" online. The office of student affairs will determine if the excused absence is approved or denied, and the student will be notified accordingly.

It is the student responsibility to contact the Course Directors to arrange a makeup for missed course work, missed laboratories or an examination/quiz where applicable.

If the student will miss an exam, it is the student's responsibility to notify the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Director of Academic Affairs and the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs via phone and email when it is first noted that an absence will be necessary. On return to CHSU-COM the student must complete the "Excused Absence Request Form"

Requests for preplanned absences by MS-1 and MS-2 students may be granted. Students must obtain and submit an "Excused Absence Student Request Form." This form must be filled out and signed by the student, then approved by the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs. Students should do this in person and have it completed at least ten days prior to the anticipated absence.

Students must be in good standing with a grade point average of 3.0 in order to be granted an excused absence for CHSU-COM-related activities.

No travel arrangements should be made prior to approval being granted.

## Unexcused Absences

Unexcused Absence is an absence from one (1) to three (3) consecutive days during which an examination, OSCE, or lab session occurs that is not approved by the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and Enrollment or, their designee.

If the absence is determined to be unexcused by the Office of Student Affairs, the student will receive a zero for the missed coursework and may be referred to the Students at Academic Risk Committee ("StARC") or to the Student Progress Committee for review.

### **Virtual Attendance:**

This option may only be available in specific and rare circumstances, when a student is prohibited from being on campus due to quarantine, or other public health directive.

## Leaves of Absence

A Leave of Absence is defined as a temporary interruption in a student's program of study for a period greater than seven consecutive days. A leave of absence requires pre-approval and the student must follow CHSU's leave application process. All Leave of Absences are granted by the Dean.

A leave of absence is a temporary separation from CHSU which may not last longer than 180 calendar days. Reasons for a leave include, but not limited to, academic, personal, medical and maternity. If a leave of absence exceeds 180 calendar days, it will become a withdrawal.

Students may request a Leave of Absence (LOA) for selected reasons including but not limited to, academic, medical, maternity, parental military service, or personal circumstances.

A leave of absence should be requested in writing, addressed to the Dean but delivered to the Asst/Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Enrollment, who then provides it to the Dean. The LOA request must also include an anticipated date of return. The Dean will make the final determination of the LOA request.

For financial aid purposes the date of the Deans approval will determine the date of the LOA.

At a minimum of no later than 30 days prior to the end of the leave period, the student doctor is required to submit written notification to the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and Enrollment of their intention to return. The student doctor will need to request and complete the readmission form. CHSU reserves the right to impose any additional conditions upon a student doctor seeking readmission after a leave of absence, and/or to refuse consideration based on the relevant time on Matriculation to graduation. The request and final decision on readmission will be made by the Dean.

Due to the nature of the clinical curriculum students seeking to take LOA during any rotation consult with the Office of Student Affairs and the Office of Clinical Education, prior to taking the leave.

A student seeking to take a LOA will first meet with the Asst/Associate Dean of Student Affairs. During this meeting students should discuss their ability to graduate within the requirements outlined in the COM Graduation Policy. The **LOA Request Form** is available on the CHSU website or from the University Registrar. If extenuating circumstances prevent a student from providing a prior written request, the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and Enrollment 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 will be processed as outlined in the Student Withdrawal Policy. As an LOA has a significant impact on student loans and scholarships, as well as the total cost of the student's attendance at the COM, students should contact the Financial Aid Office about the implications related to their LOA. Student should also refer to the CHSU Tuition Refund Policy regarding the student's potential eligibility for a tuition refund.

Students will receive a letter via email and mail 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 completed LOA form must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar before the leave of absence is granted. The date of leave of absence status is the date that the Registrar 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 granted to the student, she/he must re-apply for an additional new LOA following the same LOA process.

## Unapproved Leave of Absence

Any student on an Unapproved Leave of Absence is in violation of this policy and may result in consequences for the student, up to and including dismissal from the University.

## Returning from a Leave of Absence

Students approved for a leave of absence may return to the COM and to classes without reapplying to the College of Osteopathic Medicine if the return is within the approved time frame as recorded in the Leave of Absence Approval letter and any relevant University approved extensions of such leave. Prior to returning to the College of Osteopathic Medicine, 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 Student Affairs before returning to the College of Osteopathic Medicine. For LOA, students must submit their intent to return in writing to the University Registrar within thirty (30) calendar days of the anticipated return to the pre-clinical portion of the curriculum and thirty (30) calendar days for the clinical curriculum, for leaves that are longer than thirty (30) days in length. 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 College of Osteopathic Medicine following the approved timeframe for the LOA will be considered to be on an Unapproved Leave of Absence and may be dismissed from the College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Abuse of the absence or leave request process is unprofessional and violates the University's Student Conduct and Professionalism policy. Abuse of such process includes but is not limited to: (1) dishonesty regarding the need for or use of leave and (2) submission of fraudulent documentation supporting the need for leave. Abuse of this policy may result in an appearance before the Student Progress Committee and ultimately dismissal from the University.

It should be noted that after a student returns 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 Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine.