

# CHARLESTON SCHOOL OF LAW

## Leaves of Absence: Information and Request Form

Students must read, initial each page, and complete the request form before a request for a Leave of Absence can be processed

### A. Leave of Absence Overview

A leave of absence (LOA) is a temporary interruption in a student's education at the Law School. If approved for a leave, a student on LOA continues to be considered a student at the School of Law but is not enrolled in courses during the semester(s) in which the student is on leave. A LOA requires prior written approval from the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, who will also advise on any academic consequences of a leave, such as the availability of courses during the semester the student expects to return to the law school.

Students may request an LOA for no more than two semesters. Typically, only students in good academic standing may request permission to take a leave of absence.

Note: Students should also be aware that any leave from the institution may have financial aid impact and should consult with the Director of Financial Aid. Students are advised that the failure to return from an LOA may have effects on the student's loan repayment terms, including the expiration of the student's grace period. For more information about Federal Student Aid and the Return of Title IV Aid Calculation, students should read the section on **Return of Title IV Funds** in the **Financial Aid Information** section of the Catalog.

For refund purposes, if applicable, students should consult the **Refund and Cancellation Policy** located in the Financial Information section of the Catalog.

#### 1. Process and Procedures for Leaves of Absence

The below process and procedures govern leaves of absence:

- a. All requests for LOAs must be submitted in writing to the Associate Dean and include the reason for the student's request. Students should use the *designated form* located either in the Office of the Registrar or on the webpage.<sup>1</sup> The form must be signed and dated by the student and specify the semester for which the student wishes to take a leave. The form must also include the date the student anticipates returning to the law school.
  - i. Students may submit the form either to the Office of the Registrar or to Academic Affairs. If the form is submitted to the Office of the Registrar, the form will be given to the Associate Dean without delay.<sup>2</sup>
  - ii. If the LOA form is submitted to another department or office at the School of Law, that department or office must forward the form to Academic Affairs immediately so that the processing may begin.
- b. Students must apply prior to the first day of class for an LOA unless unforeseen circumstances prevent the student from doing so.

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<sup>1</sup> If extraordinary circumstances prevent a student from completing the required form, an email from the student's Law School email account requesting an LOA can be considered as long as all necessary information noted above is included in the email.

<sup>2</sup> Please note the date on the form and the date the form is received by Academic Affairs or the Office of the Registrar may be different dates. In addition, if the leave is approved, the student's last date of attendance may be different from the date of approval, the date on the form or the date the form is received.

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- i. An LOA will not be granted after the first day of class. Please see below for information about withdrawing from all courses in a semester or session.
  - c. The reason for the LOA must generally be non-academic in nature and must be one that leads to a reasonable expectation that the student will return from the LOA within the allowed time frame.
    - i. The Law School reserves the right to request additional information to ensure that the LOA is in the best interests of the student's academic success.
  - d. The LOA, together with any additional leaves of absence, must not exceed a total of 180 days in any 12-month period including days in which the Law School is not in session.
  - e. Once all the documentation has been received, the Associate Dean will review and then will notify the student in writing (including but not limited to email notification and/or mailed letter) the status of the leave request.
  - f. A copy of the final determination for the requested leave will be maintained in the student's academic file. If the LOA is granted, the student's transcript will reflect that he or she was on leave for the particular semester, and will include a notation regarding the reason for the leave. For example, the transcript for a student who has requested and been granted a leave of absence for medical reasons will have the notation "Leave of Absence – Medical" for the particular semester.
  - g. If the leave is denied, the student is expected to return to the law school to take courses. Failure to do so will result in the student being administratively withdrawn as of the student's last actual date of attendance.
  - h. An approved leave allows a student to return in the same academic status held before taking the leave.<sup>3</sup> A student who fails to return to school at the end of the approved leave shall be considered to have terminated his or her studies as of the student's last actual date of attendance. Terminated students are required to reapply through the Office of Admission should they wish to return to the Law School.
  - i. A student on leave may not enroll as a visiting student at another law school. If a student wishes to take courses at another law school, the student must follow the procedures outlined in the **Request to Be a Visiting Student** section of the Catalog. A student who enrolls at another institution without permission will be considered to have terminated his or her studies at the law school as of the student's last actual date of attendance. Terminated students have to reapply through the Office of Admission.
2. Readmission following an Approved Leave of Absence

Any student in good standing who discontinues her or his attendance for no more than two regular semesters may resume law studies upon approval of the Associate Dean. Any student in good standing who discontinues her or his attendance for more than two regular semesters shall be deemed to have terminated her or his studies from school and must apply to return to the Law School through the Office of Admission.

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<sup>3</sup> If an honor code or code of conduct investigation or proceeding is pending during the student's approved leave, the Dean, the Associate Dean of Students, or the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs may place a memo in the student's academic file outlining the charges and the status of the proceedings. Proceedings may be held in abeyance pending the student's return from leave or may continue even during the student's leave.

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**Leave of Absence Request Form**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I am requesting a Leave of Absence for the \_\_\_\_\_ semester \_\_\_\_\_ year.**

**Reason for Leave of Absence:** \_\_\_\_\_

**When do you anticipate returning to the Charleston School of Law?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please initial the below statements indicating that you have read and understand them:**

- I have read and understand the *Leaves of Absence Overview*, the *Process and Procedures*, and *Readmission Following an Approved Leave*.
- I understand that any questions about financial aid must be addressed by the Office of Financial Aid.
- I understand that any library materials (replacement cost of item plus \$20.00 processing fee) must be returned before my leave and, any financial obligations must be settled with the Charleston School of Law **before** academic transcripts can be released or before I am allowed to return to the law school.
- I understand that I will not have locker or mailbox access during any leave of absence and that I must remove any locker and mailbox contents within 10 calendar days of approval of my request. If any locker or mailbox contents remain after these 10 days, they will be considered abandoned property and will be disposed of by the law school.

**Student's Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Office Use Only:**

Notification Received by (Academic Dean) \_\_\_\_\_ Last date of Attendance: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of approval/denial: \_\_\_\_\_ Student notified: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notification provided on \_\_\_\_\_ (date):**

Financial Aid \_\_\_\_\_ Admissions \_\_\_\_\_ IT \_\_\_\_\_ Student Affairs \_\_\_\_\_

Business Manager \_\_\_\_\_ Accounting \_\_\_\_\_ Library: \_\_\_\_\_