



ACADEMIC LEAVE, WITHDRAWAL AND RESUMPTION OF STUDIES

Policy Number:
AP-CD 04

Policy group:
Academic Misconduct and
Discipline

Effective:
01/11/2024

Page 1 of 6

PURPOSE

Each academic program at UGHE is designed to be completed within a defined period of time. Students, however, may occasionally request to leave the program and continue their studies at a later time.

This policy details the process related to students requesting academic leave and withdrawal from the program and how they may re-enter the program.

DEFINITIONS

Academic leave: time that a student has elected to take off from their studies or temporarily suspend their studies, where the students' current place in the program is held with the intention that the student will return and continue the program.

Deferment: postponing entry into a program by one or two academic years.

Maximum duration of study: the maximum amount of time a student can take to complete the program and graduate.

Resumption of studies: rejoining or restarting the academic program in which the student is enrolled after a period of academic leave.

Withdrawal: also known as a drop-out, where the student leaves the program with no intention of returning.

SCOPE

This policy applies to students enrolled in any degree-offering programs at UGHE.

PROCEDURE

1. Deferment

A newly admitted student who has a legitimate reason that they cannot register and enter the program in which they have been accepted to may be allowed to defer their admission



ACADEMIC LEAVE, WITHDRAWAL AND RESUMPTION OF STUDIES

Policy Number:
AP-CD 04

Policy group:
Academic Misconduct and
Discipline

Effective:
01/11/2024

Page 2 of 6

for a maximum of two academic years. They would then enter as a member of the later cohort of students.

To apply for a deferment, the student must apply in writing to the Office of the Registrar. This letter should contain the reason the student is requesting a deferment.

Any request for deferment is subject to review and approval by the Office of the Registrar and the relevant program Academic Council. It is not guaranteed that the student will be granted deferment.

2. Maximum duration of studies

The maximum duration of study for graduate level training programs is double the program's length. For example, for a one-year program, the maximum duration of study a student can have is two years. However, special considerations may be considered by the corresponding program Academic Council.

For the MBBS/MGHD program with 6.5 years of training duration, the maximum duration of study would be 9 years (including the MGHD component).

3. Academic leave or suspension of studies

Students may elect to take academic leave from their studies at any time, for any reason, including medical, personal or for work or additional studies. Academic leave procedures vary by academic program, due to the nature and length of different programs at UGHE.

- Students on all degree-granting programs who wish to take academic leave or temporarily suspend their studies should make a written request to the Office of the Registrar to suspend their studies for a specified period, producing evidence of circumstances that make it impossible for them to continue with their studies, but which do not preclude them from coming back.
 - Such requests will be considered on the provision of medical evidence, in cases of serious or debilitating illness, or handicap which may require time to overcome, or requests for maternity leave, or the death or illness of a close relative or dependent.



ACADEMIC LEAVE, WITHDRAWAL AND RESUMPTION OF STUDIES

Policy Number:
AP-CD 04

Policy group:
Academic Misconduct and
Discipline

Effective:
01/11/2024

Page 3 of 6

- o Other reasons may also be given, and the decision will be taken by the relevant program Academic Council on the strength of the evidence that a period of suspension is needed and the likelihood of the student being able to return to his or her studies after the leave.
- In the case of a suspension that starts after the beginning of an academic year, any passing grades already earned during that year will be retained on the student's record and the student will not be required to redo these assignments or examinations. They will rejoin the program at an appropriate point to be agreed with the Office of the Registrar and relevant program Academic Council.
- Normally only one such period of suspension shall be granted. The length of suspension is dependent on the length and level of the academic program (see specific details below).
 - o The exceptions are requests for maternity leave, debilitating illness/handicap where medical evidence suggests that the student will be able to return to study within a further year, and events or conditions occurring so close to the end of an academic year that the circumstances that made the request necessary will clearly still be in force in the next year.
- Repeated suspension shall not be granted for chronic, on-going medical conditions. Instead, the relevant program Academic Council Chair shall consult with the student, UGHE's Educational Development and Quality Centre and Campus Operation teams to see what reasonable academic accommodations UGHE can offer to enable the student to continue their studies.
- No student may suspend studies for more than **one year**, nor may there be more than one period of suspension during any degree program. Instead, students should re-apply for admission, under whatever admission rules are in force at the time.
- Failure to rejoin the program at the specified time, agreed upon by the relevant program Academic Council and Office of the Registrar will be considered as dropping out of the program.

Master's degree programs

Students undertaking the full-time Master's degree programs can take academic leave for up to **one year** with the permission of the relevant program Academic Council. It is up to the discretion of the Academic Council whether the student will need to retake any courses or parts of courses, and this is dependent on the courses or deliverables missed by the student when on leave.



ACADEMIC LEAVE, WITHDRAWAL AND RESUMPTION OF STUDIES

Policy Number:
AP-CD 04

Policy group:
Academic Misconduct and
Discipline

Effective:
01/11/2024

Page 4 of 6

Failure to rejoin the program after the end of the approved leave period is considered as withdrawal (dropping out) of the program.

Should a student require a longer academic leave, this will be at the discretion of the relevant program Academic Council and may result in a student leaving the program and rejoining a later cohort.

Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) / MGH D dual degree

A student in good academic standing who has a legitimate reason that they cannot complete a given year of instruction in the MBBS/MGHD program may be allowed to take a leave of absence for a period of **one complete academic year**. They would then re-enter the program in a later year, starting with any modules they did not complete.

Resumption of studies after academic leave

- Students are expected to re-join the program upon the end of the academic leave.
- Upon return to the program, all passed courses previously awarded will be registered. However, the student needs to re-take all unfinished courses or deliverables again. A timeline to complete the remaining courses will be developed with the relevant course faculty.
- Financial obligations will apply at the discretion of the Scholarship Committee.
- Failure to rejoin the program after the end of the approved leave period is considered as withdrawal (dropping out) of the program.

4. Withdrawal

Withdrawal, also known as dropping out, applies if:

- A student officially informs the program Academic Council and Office of the Registrar about the withdrawal from the program
- A student leaves the program without requesting permission from the Office of the Registrar and corresponding Academic Council
- The student does not return upon the end of the approved academic leave period
- The student does not complete the program within the maximum duration of study of the program

Students who have withdrawn from their academic program will not be awarded the degree.



ACADEMIC LEAVE, WITHDRAWAL AND RESUMPTION OF STUDIES

Policy Number: AP-CD 04	Policy group: Academic Misconduct and Discipline	Effective: 01/11/2024	Page 5 of 6
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UGHE can provide a grade report to verify the credits a student has earned in the program prior to the withdrawal. See associated policy Grade Reporting, Recording and Posting Policy for the procedures by which a student can request an electronic grade report.

Students who have withdrawn from an academic program must re-apply to the program through the admissions process in force at the time if they would like to rejoin.

If students have withdrawn from an academic program, the credits and grades previously earned will not be valid if they reapply and are accepted onto the program again. Students must retake the entire program and cannot transfer credits from previous attempts at the program.

Students who are expelled from an academic program and who wish to rejoin must re-apply to the program through the admissions process in force at the time. Any credits and grades previously earned will not be valid if they reapply and are accepted onto the program again. Students must retake the entire program and cannot transfer credits from previous attempts at the program. Please see associated policies 'Grading and Graduation Requirements' for each academic program for detailed information on failure of academic programs.

RESPONSIBILITY

All UGHE students are responsible to understand and follow the procedure to request deferment, academic leave, or rejoining the program.

The Office of the Registrar is responsible for enacting this policy.

REVISION/REPLACING

This policy shall be subject to review in **five** years (01/11/2029).

EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

This policy shall come into effect on the date of its approval by the Academic Commission of the University of Global Health Equity.



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	Policy Number: AP-CD 04	Policy group: Academic Misconduct and Discipline	Effective: 01/11/2024	Page 6 of 6
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Approved by:

Date: 07/11/2024

Abebe Bekele



Professor Abebe Bekele, MD, FCS, FACS, MAMSE

Professor of Surgery

Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs and Research

Dean, School of Medicine and Health Sciences

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