

**Policy Revision Approval Date: May 8, 2015****Policy Revision Effective Date: July 1, 2015****Procedure Approval Date: August 11, 2016****Procedure Effective Date: September 1, 2016****POLICY STATEMENT**

Capella University FlexPath learners may request a planned leave of absence from their academic program when medical conditions prevent their active registration and engagement in their course(s).

Under extreme circumstances, a leave of absence from an academic program may be granted for other reasons. Learners with loan obligations are advised to contact their lender(s) to discuss their circumstances and loan repayment status during their leave of absence.

**RATIONALE**

The purpose of this policy is to describe the parameters, based on sound principles and legal and regulatory requirements, for a planned leave of absence for learners.

**DEFINITIONS****National Emergency**

A national emergency is a federally designated event.

**PROCEDURES****I. Credit-Based (GuidedPath) Medical Leave of Absence**

Learners in credit-based (GuidedPath) programs are not eligible for a medical leave of absence.

**II. FlexPath Medical Leave of Absence****A. Access to Services**

During a leave of absence, learners have access to Academic Advising services.

However, learners will not have access to other academic services, including academic or mentoring support and the Capella University Library.

**B. Academic Standing and Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress Status**

Learners on academic probation per university policy *3.01.04 Academic Standing* or financial aid probation per university policy *3.01.05 Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress* at the time a leave of absence was granted will remain at the same status upon returning from the leave of absence.

**C. Criteria**

1. Learners may request a planned FlexPath medical leave of absence for circumstances protected under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).
  2. A FlexPath medical leave of absence status cannot be granted retroactively.
- D. Requesting a FlexPath Medical Leave of Absence
1. To request a FlexPath medical leave of absence, learners must complete and submit the [FlexPath Leave of Absence Request Form](#) located on Campus. Learners must indicate the beginning date of the leave of absence and the anticipated date of return. Learners must also submit documentation from a medical provider certifying the need for the medical leave of absence. The request will not be considered until documentation is submitted.
  2. Learners may not request a FlexPath medical leave of absence for more than a total of 180 calendar days in any 12-month period.
- E. FlexPath Medical Leave of Absence Approval
1. Upon receipt of the request, the Learner Services and Operations department will review the request, issue a decision, and notify the learner via email.
  2. Learners granted a FlexPath medical leave of absence will be dropped from any courses in which they were registered during the leave of absence, and Capella will report their leave status to the National Student Clearinghouse.
  3. Billing dates will be adjusted for an approved FlexPath leave of absence.
- F. Returning from a FlexPath Medical Leave of Absence
1. Learners may resume courses upon return from a FlexPath medical leave of absence.
  2. Catalog  
Upon returning from a leave of absence, learners will remain under the same catalog that was in effect at the time the leave of absence was granted.
  3. Last Day of Attendance  
If learners do not resume registration at the end of an approved leave of absence, the learner's withdrawal date is the date the student began the leave of absence.
  4. Failure to Return from a Leave of Absence  
It is the learner's responsibility to contact his or her financial aid lender when taking a leave of absence, as it may affect their federal loan grace period. Learners who fail to return from a leave of absence will be reported to their financial aid lender.

### III. FlexPath Leave of Absence Due to Other Circumstances

Capella FlexPath learners requesting a leave of absence from their academic program for any circumstances other than medical conditions, active military service, active military service of a spouse, or national emergency should follow the procedures outlined for requesting a FlexPath medical leave of absence.

### IV. National Emergency Accommodations for All Learners

- A. The U.S. Department of Education directs schools to provide educational and financial accommodations to learners affected by national emergencies, both at the time of the event and upon reintegration. Capella University is committed to providing appropriate educational and financial accommodations to learners impacted by a national emergency.
- B. Learners impacted by national emergencies are encouraged to contact Capella University as soon as possible. Learners may be given the option of withdrawing from their courses, resulting in a grade of Withdrawn ("W") for each course, or requesting an Incomplete ("I")

grade for any courses in which they were registered. Learners who request an “I” grade must get approval from their course instructor and be able to complete the required assignments independently, outside of the courseroom.

### **POLICY OWNERS**

Academic Owner: Chief Academic Officer

Operations Owner: Learner Services and Operations

### **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

University policy 2.02.02 Course Registration

University policy 2.02.12 Military Leave

University policy 3.01.04 Academic Standing

University policy 3.01.05 Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress

University policy 3.04.05 Attendance at Residencies

University policy 3.04.07 Grading

University policy 3.04.08 Incomplete Grades

University policy 4.03.01 Tuition and Fees

University policy 4.03.02 Tuition and Fee Refunds

### **REVISION HISTORY**

Original Policy Approval Date: April 1, 2006

Revision Dates: 6-1-07; 8-1-08; 5-20-11; 7-24-13; 5-8-15; 8-11-16

Administrative edits as result of ongoing review: 12-20-07; 10-1-08; 5-27-09; 11-17-09; 2-16-10; 4-20-10; 10-26-10; 10-25-11; 11-11-11; 4-17-12; 8-6-12; 10-23-13; 12-14-16