

# Guidelines for Preparing a Request for a Research Year Leave of Absence

An academic leave of absence may be requested if you plan to take time off from medical school to work on a research project. If approved, you will maintain full-time enrollment status and your transcript will read "Independent Study of Medicine" for the academic year instead of "Leave of Absence". This application is due at least **eight to ten weeks** prior to the start date for which you are requesting the leave. Independent Study of Medicine leaves will be approved for up to one year.

Requesting such a leave is a major decision for a medical student, and requires significant preparation in order for the student to get the most from the leave. The guidelines below provide an outline of the required information necessary for the Advisory Committee for Student Research to evaluate the proposal.

The application should be written in the format of a small grant application. Please follow instructions, use Times Roman 12 fonts, or a Calibri 12 font, and observe page limits. The final application, with all parts, should be submitted as a single PDF file.

**1. Leave of Absence Application** – the first page of the application.

**2. Abstract and Specific Aims** of the proposal (500 word maximum): The abstract and specific aims section is a succinct and accurate summary of your proposed study and should include the problem to be addressed, a brief description of its clinical and/or scientific significance, your Hypothesis (required), and a list of the studies planned to test the hypothesis (the Specific Aims). One or two aims are appropriate for a 1-year study. Any proposal submitted without a stated hypothesis will be returned without review.

**3. Background** (1 page maximum): Describe the problem you propose to address, its clinical and/or scientific significance, provide a brief review of published information that supports your hypothesis and proposed studies, and identify knowledge gaps that your study will address.

**4. Research Design** (2-3 pages): Describe the studies you propose to conduct to test your hypothesis and address each specific aim. Detailed methods are not necessary, but sufficient information must be provided to clearly explain the approach that will be used. Include how the studies will be done and the data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted. Discuss expected results, and describe alternative approach(s) that might be required. Make clear what your role will be in the research (which of the studies will be done by you and which will be done by others in the laboratory or clinic). If a clinical study is proposed, a power calculation should be included to determine that sufficient patients will be available to achieve the goal of the study in the time available.

**5. References** (25 maximum): Provide the complete bibliography of the references in the Background section, including all authors, title, journal, volume, inclusive page numbers and publication date.

**6. Goals for Research Year** (500 words maximum): Describe the reason for requesting a research year leave of absence, what you personally hope to gain from it, and how you anticipate this research experience influencing your long-term career plans.

7. **Mentor's statement** (1-2 page maximum): Attach a statement written by the research mentor that addresses the following topics:

- A) Describe the relationship between the applicant's proposed research and the mentor's ongoing research program.
- B) The collaborative process between you and the student in the development and editing of this proposal.
- C) Briefly describe the resources available to the student for this project.
- D) Discuss your plans for mentoring the student to assure that the research year will support and enhance the career goals of the student.
- E) State whether the project has regulatory approval (ie: IRB) or where in the process the project is in obtaining approval or exemption.

8. Attach the **mentor's CV** or **NIH Biosketch**.