**Policy for American Students Participating in Direct Loan Program of the
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

This document is provided to students of the Medical School for International Health who are participating in the Direct Loan Program of the United States Department of Education.

The law specifies how the Medical School for International Health at Ben-Gurion University (hereinafter, "the School") must determine the amount of Title IV Program Assistance (Direct Loans) that students earn if they withdraw from School. See section on Withdrawals for specific information regarding Leaves of Absence (LOA) and the withdrawal process.

The Office of Financial Aid is responsible for calculating R2T4 and Ben-Gurion University's Accounts Department is responsible for actually returning the funds. The Office of Financial Aid uses worksheets based on those provided by the Department of Education to calculate the R2T4 funds. All funds are returned as soon as possible but no later than 45 days after the date of the School’s determination that the student withdrew. If a student has questions about his/her Title IV program funds, he/she can call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4-FEDAID (1-800­433-3243). TTY users may call 1-800-730-8913. Information is also available on *Student Aid on the Web* at [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov).

**Withdrawal**

A student is considered to have withdrawn from a payment period of enrollment if the student does not complete all the days in the payment period or period of enrollment that the student was scheduled to complete. When a student withdraws during a payment period or period of enrollment in which the student began attendance, the amount of Title IV program assistance that has been earned up to that point is determined by a specific formula. The date of withdrawal is generally the date the student notified the School Director or faculty member of his/her intent to withdraw. In the case where a student notifies the School Director or faculty member that he/she intends to withdraw, the student is informed by the Financial Aid Office of the need to complete the Official Withdrawal Form (Change of Academic Status), The Financial Aid Office documents the date of the student's notification and shares that information with the University Registrar. Should such student fail to file the Change of Academic Status (Withdrawal) Form or there is a lag between the notification and the filing of the form, the earlier date of notification will be used in calculating the amount of earned/unearned Title IV program funds.

In the case where a student ceases attendance without providing official notification of his/her withdrawal, the date of withdrawal will be calculated as the mid-point of the payment period unless it was determined by the School that the notification was not provided because of illness, accident, personal loss or other such circumstances beyond the student's control. In such a case, the School will determine the date of withdrawal based on the circumstances. In all cases, the School must determine the withdrawal date for a student who withdraws without providing notification to the School no later than 30 days after the end of the earlier of the payment period, the academic year in which the student withdrew, or the educational program from which the student withdrew.

In the event a student receives all failing grades for a semester, the School Director will consult the faculty members and/or attendance sheet to determine if the “F” grades represent a lack of attendance (unofficial withdrawal). In the event it is determined that the grades were the result of lack of attendance, the School Director will attempt to determine the last day of attendance and use that date in R2T4 calculations. In the unlikely event that the exact date cannot be determined, the University will use the mid-point of the payment period as the date of withdrawal. Students who do not attend even one class during the payment period are ineligible for Title IV funds and all loan proceeds will be returned.

**Assistance Earned**

The amount of assistance earned is determined on a pro rata basis. The payment period is the semester for which the loan was certified. The percentage of the payment period completed is calculated by dividing the total number of calendar days in the payment period into the number of calendar days completed in that period as of the student’s withdrawal date. For example, if the student completes 30% of the payment period or period of enrollment, the student has earned 30% of the assistance they were originally scheduled to receive. Once the student has completed more than 60% of the payment period or period of enrollment, all the assistance that the student was scheduled to receive for that payment period is considered to have been earned. If the total amount of assistance that the student earned is less than the amount of assistance that was disbursed, the difference between these amounts must be returned to the Title IV programs and no additional disbursements may be made to the student for the payment period. If the student did not receive all of the funds that were earned, he/she may be due a post-withdrawal disbursement. If the post-withdrawal disbursement includes Direct Loan funds, the student may choose to decline some or all of the loan funds so that additional debt is not incurred. The Office of Financial Aid uses the R2T4 worksheets as provided by the US Department of Education to determine how much of the loan may be retained and how much must be returned.

**Title IV Fund Management**

Ben-Gurion University may use all or a portion of the post-withdrawal disbursement to credit the student’s account, if the student provides confirmation that he or she still wishes to have the loan funds disbursed. If the student does not give permission for the post-withdrawal disbursement of loan funds to be credited to the student’s account, he/she will be required to pay outstanding debts to the University by other means. The School must disburse directly to the student any amount of post-withdrawal disbursement of loan funds that is not credited to the student’s account, if the student confirms that he or she wishes the School to make such a direct disbursement.

If the student receives (or the school receives on behalf of the student) excess Title IV program funds that must be returned, the School must return a portion of the excess equal to the lesser of:

1. The institutional charges multiplied by the unearned percentage of the funds, or
2. The entire amount of excess funds.

Title IV funds will be returned in the following order:

1. Unsubsidized Federal Direct loans
2. Federal Direct Grad PLUS loans received on behalf of the student

After the School has returned the unearned funds for which it is responsible, the student must return amounts of assistance for which the student is responsible, in the order specified above. The amount of assistance that the student is responsible for returning is calculated by subtracting the amount of unearned aid that the School returned from the total amount of unearned assistance to be returned. The student must return or repay the amount required in accordance with the terms of the loan.

The requirements for Title IV program funds when students withdraw are separate from any refund policy of the School. Therefore, the student may still owe funds to the School to cover unpaid institutional charges. If the return of Title IV program funds to the Department of Education results in a debit on the student’s account for institutional charges, the student is responsible for those institutional charges. Students receive a copy of the refund Policy from the Financial Aid Office.

If a student has questions about his/her Title IV program funds, he/she can call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4-FEDAID (1-800­433-3243). TTY users may call 1-800-730-8913. Information is also available on *Student Aid on the Web* at [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov).

**Leaves of Absence (LOA) and Withdrawals**

**Definitions:**

Approved Leaves of Absence (LOA)

An LOA is a temporary interruption in a student's program of study that is approved by the School. LOA refers to the specific time period during a program when a student is not in attendance and after which the student is reasonably expected to return to complete the program. A student is required to follow the School’s policy to request in writing an approved leave of absence. Students returning from a LOA are not required to re-apply for admission but must re-register for their courses.

Unapproved Leaves of Absence

A school may grant a student an LOA that does not meet the conditions of an approved LOA for Title IV purposes (for example, for academic reasons). However, any LOA that does not meet all of the conditions for an approved LOA is considered a withdrawal for Title IV purposes.

Official Withdrawal

A “withdrawal” refers to a student’s intent to completely terminate studies at an institution with no expectation of return. Students who subsequently decide to return to their studies, must re-apply for admission through the University’s Office of Admissions.

Unofficial Withdrawal

An unofficial withdrawal is one where the School has not received official notice from the student that he/she has ceased or will cease attending the school.

**Note:**

Students who withdraw from courses or the School receive an "F" grade on their transcript which is used in calculating the quantitative aspect of the Satisfactory Academic Progress standards and may affect the student’s future eligibility for Financial Aid.

**LOA and Withdrawal Request Forms**

The form required by the Medical School for International Health to request an LOA or a Withdrawal is available in the Offices of the School Director and/or Central Administration Offices.

**Approved LOA’s**

An LOA must meet certain conditions to be counted as a temporary interruption in a student’s education instead of being counted as a withdrawal

requiring a school to calculate whether funds must be returned to the Title IV programs. If an LOA does not meet the conditions, the student is considered to have ceased attendance and to have withdrawn from the School, and the School is required to calculate whether funds must be returned to the Title IV programs.

For an LOA to qualify as an approved LOA –

1. All requests for LOA’s must be submitted in writing to the School's Director and include the reason for the student’s request. The form must be signed and dated by the student and specify the date the student wants the LOA to begin and end.
2. Students must apply in advance for an LOA unless unforeseen circumstances prevent him/her from doing so.
3. The situation described for the reason for the LOA must be generally non­academic 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.
4. 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 School is not is session.

All requests for LOA’s will be reviewed by the Program Director, the Administrative Director, the Academic Director and the Director of Financial Aid. The student will be notified in writing by the Program Director of the School's decision.

During the LOA, the School will not assess the student any additional institutional charges, the student's financial need will not increase, and therefore, the student will not be eligible for any additional disbursements of Federal Student Aid.

If the student is a Direct Loan recipient, the School will explain to the student, prior to granting the LOA, the effect that his/her failure to return from an LOA may have on his/her loan repayment terms, including the expiration of the grace period on all Federal loans received.

A student granted an LOA that meets the criteria stated above is not considered to have withdrawn, and no calculation of funds to be returned to the Title IV programs is required. Upon the student’s return from the leave, he or she continues to earn the Federal Student Aid previously awarded for the period.

**Completion of Coursework Upon Return**

In as much as approved leaves of absence are viewed as temporary interruptions in a student’s attendance, a student returning from an LOA must do so at a time when he or she can complete his/her academic obligations in full in order to complete the payment period and be eligible to receive a second or subsequent disbursement.

**Students Returning Earlier than Anticipated**

The School may permit a student to return to class before the expiration of the student’s LOA to review material previously covered. However, until the student has resumed the academic program at the point where he/she began the LOA, the student is considered to be on approved LOA. Days the student spends in class before the course reaches the point at which the student began his/her LOA is counted in the 180 days maximum for an approved leave of absence. A student repeating coursework while on LOA must reach the point at which he/she interrupted training within the 180 days of the start of the LOA.

**Student Who Fails to Return from LOA’s**

If a student does not return to the School at or before the expiration of an approved LOA, the School will treat the student as a withdrawal and the student’s withdrawal date is the date the School determines the student began the LOA. If a student takes an unapproved LOA, the student’s withdrawal date is the date the student began the unapproved LOA.

**Explanation of Consequences of Withdrawal to Loan Recipients**

A student who is granted an approved LOA is considered to remain in an in-school status for Title IV loan repayment purposes. If a student on an approved LOA fails to return, the School will report the student’s change in enrollment status as of the withdrawal date. One possible consequence of not returning from an LOA is that a student’s grace period for a Title IV program loan might be exhausted. Therefore, in order for a LOA to be an approved LOA, prior to granting a leave of absence, the School will inform a student who is a Title IV loan recipient of the possible consequences a withdrawal may have on his/her student’s loan repayment terms, including the exhaustion of the grace period.

**Unapproved LOA’s**

The School may grant a student an LOA that does not meet the conditions to be an approved LOA for Title IV purposes (for example, for academic reasons). However, any LOA that does not meet all of the conditions for an approved LOA is considered a withdrawal for Title IV purposes. The student’s withdrawal date is the date the student begins the LOA. An unapproved LOA may be treated as an official withdrawal since the School would have previously granted an LOA. Therefore, the school would know immediately that the student had ceased attendance for Title IV purposes, and must use the specified withdrawal date in the calculation of potential return of Title IV funds.

**Further Information**

For further information about anything contained in this document, please contact the Office of Financial Aid at telephone number +972-8-6479864.