

# COLUMBIA COLLEGE/ THE FU FOUNDATION SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING AND APPLIED SCIENCE

Center for Student Advising \* 403 Lerner Hall \* [csa@columbia.edu](mailto:csa@columbia.edu) \* (212) 854-6378

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## MEDICAL LEAVE AND READMISSION POLICIES & PROCEDURES

### GENERAL INFORMATION

A medical leave is granted to a student whose health interferes with successful full-time study. Students are urged to pay particular attention to the deadlines for requesting readmission. Students are required to check their Columbia email while on leave as this is the official means of communication used by the University. Advising deans in the Center for Student Advising (CSA) should be consulted with any questions.

A leave can be granted for a minimum of one term and a maximum of two years for CC students and a minimum of one year and a maximum of two years for SEAS students. Students may only return in the fall or spring term, not in the summer sessions. The length of the leave must fall within these parameters and be accompanied by an individualized assessment by a healthcare practitioner at the start and end of leave. As a general matter, the expectation is that a medical leave of absence will not extend beyond a two-year leave of absence. Unless a student is granted an exception in extenuating circumstances, a student is permanently withdrawn after they exceed this maximum time period and must reapply for admission through the school's regular admissions process.

A student must consult with his or her advising dean to initiate a leave and then provide medical documentation to support the request for a medical leave. Medical leaves must be accompanied by an individualized assessment of the student's particular healthcare needs.

While on leave, students must be actively engaged in a course of medical treatment that leads to recovery. **In order to be readmitted, a student must apply by November 1 for spring term readmission and by June 1 for fall term readmission** by submitting a letter to their advising dean addressed to the Medical Leave Readmission Committee describing the steps the student has taken to address the issue. In addition, the student's healthcare practitioner(s) must submit a letter indicating the treatment, prognosis, and that the student is medically cleared to return to full-time study. The healthcare practitioner must be the licensed practitioner who has treated the student for the condition which occasioned the leave.

The Medical Leave Readmission Committee, made up of representatives from Columbia University Health Services and both schools, will review the documentation and will either move the student forward to an interview by the relevant Columbia Health Services healthcare practitioner or request more documentation before being moved forward in the readmission process. A student can also be denied at this point in the process but will have the option of applying again by the next semester's deadline after having continued recommended treatment. If denials extend to the two-year maximum, the student may appeal the decision. Further information on the appeals process is available in the CSA from your advising dean.

### ACADEMIC STANDING

Except as explained below, students who leave in good academic standing will return in good academic standing; students who leave on academic action will return on academic action. If a medical leave begins on or before the CC pass/d/fail deadline stated in the Columbia College bulletin or the SEAS drop deadline stated in the student handbook, the semester will not appear on the record and will not count toward the eight-semester limit. If a leave begins after that deadline, courses will remain on the transcript, and the semester will count toward the eight total semesters granted every undergraduate in CC and SEAS. Ordinarily, students who are authorized to withdraw for medical reasons after the pass/d/fail deadline (CC) or drop deadline (SEAS) will receive a "W" for each of their courses for the term. These notations indicate an authorized withdrawal from the courses. In rare cases, when a student must leave for medical reasons beyond the relevant deadline, a student and advising dean can work together with the faculty to determine whether an "Incomplete" would be a more appropriate notation on the transcript. In order to be eligible for this, the student must

have completed all work for the course except the final paper, exam, or project, the course must not have required attendance, and the student must obtain the approval of the relevant deans in the Center for Student Advising and the faculty. Students should consult with their advising deans for more details.

As noted, in rare cases, students who initiate a leave beyond the deadline listed above may qualify for authorized Incompletes in their courses. Students who have been approved for authorized Incompletes in the last semester before their Medical Leave must complete the work of each course upon their return to campus during the deferred exam period. If the work is not completed during the deferred exam period of the semester in which the student returns, the grade will convert to the contingency grade or an F. Due dates of incomplete work should be determined in consultation with the CSA advising dean upon notification of readmission.

When students depart after the deadlines listed above, they must be aware that they will likely fall behind in points necessary to remain in good academic standing. To determine whether or not they will fall behind, students should remember that CC students should complete an average of 15.5 points per term to remain in good academic standing; SEAS students should complete an average of 16 points per term to remain in good academic standing. Students should consult with their advising deans to learn whether or not they will fall below the “low points threshold” established for CC and SEAS students and, if so, work with their advising deans and departments to create a reasonable academic plan to ensure completion of the degree in eight terms. Students are not permitted to earn credits toward the degree while on medical leave from the University, as the purpose of the leave is to regain full health in order to return and resume full-time study. In some cases, healthcare practitioners may recommend that students take courses at home institutions as part of the recovery process. Those points will not, however, count toward the Columbia degree.

## **FINANCIAL AID**

It is vital that students direct all financial aid questions to the Office of Financial Aid and Educational Financing at (212) 854-3711. A student who is away from college for more than a semester may be required to begin loan repayments. Therefore, it is important to schedule an exit interview with Financial Aid to discuss the options for a particular loan before leaving. A student who defaults on a loan will be unable to receive any further aid until appropriate payments are made. A student who owes money to Columbia will be put on financial hold and will thereby not be able to register for classes; it is the student's responsibility to be aware of any debts that could prevent registration.

## **CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT WHILE ON LEAVE**

Students are not permitted to audit classes, be involved in student groups or Columbia University affiliated activities, or otherwise spend time on campus during a leave. To reinforce this expectation, the student ID and swipe access are deactivated during the leave.

## **PROCEDURES**

To take a medical leave of absence, complete the following checklist:

- ☐ Meet with your advising dean as soon as possible to discuss the leave.
- ☐ Make a formal request to your advising dean in writing (electronic or hard copy).
- ☐ Submit supporting documentation from a licensed healthcare practitioner, in consultation with University Health Services. Documentation is required before a leave can be granted.
- ☐ Notify the Office of Financial Aid and Educational Financing, if relevant, at (212) 854-3711.
- ☐ Work with your advising dean to determine the date of your withdrawal and enter it here: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Make plans to leave university housing within 48 hours of that date if you are a resident of Columbia Housing, including Fraternity/Sorority Housing. The Housing and Dining Office will send detailed check-out information to you as soon as they receive your advising dean's notice of your withdrawal. This email will include the date and time you are required to move out of the residence halls.
- ☐ Complete the cancellation step through the [Housing Portal](#).
- ☐ Visit the Hartley Hospitality Desk to return any room key(s). Residents of the Brownstones are required to follow the same check-out procedures.
- ☐ Update your address. Request mail forwarding with [Columbia Mail](#) and update your address on SSOL. You are no longer eligible to receive mail or packages in the Student Mail Center. Please notify the U.S. Postal Service of a change of address. Official change of address can be filed online or at any USPS branch office.

- ☐ If you are covered by a Columbia health insurance plan, contact the insurance office at (212) 854-7210 to complete the process to ensure full coverage. If you have waived Columbia insurance, you must contact your own insurance provider for details on coverage.

The Center for Student Advising will send you and your parent(s) or guardian(s) an official letter to your permanent address that your withdrawal has been processed. This notification is in addition to the courtesy email you will receive from the Center for Student Advising informing you that your request for withdrawal has been approved.

If you have not received any refund due after one month, you should contact Student Financial Services at (212) 854-4400 to inquire about the status of your refund.

## READMISSION

Following is the procedure for requesting to return from medical leave. You must complete all parts of the following readmission procedures by **June 1 if you are eligible to return for the fall term** or **November 1 if you are eligible to return for the spring term**. Please note that students on a medical leave may not be readmitted to attend a Columbia summer session. Also note that all financial obligations to the University must be cleared before readmission.

In order to begin readmission, you must have a conversation with your advising dean and must do the following two things:

1. Submit a letter to your advising dean in the Center for Student Advising requesting readmission by the above deadline, by email or fax. The letter should review the circumstances that led to the leave, describe in detail any activities pursued while away, explain why you now feel able to resume studies successfully, and outline a plan for continued support. You should also indicate whether or not you plan to apply for housing.
2. Submit a letter from each of the mental health and medical professionals with whom you have been working, including social workers, psychotherapists, psychiatrists, or nutritionists, and medical providers such as nurses, nurse practitioners, or medical doctors, by the above deadline to your advising dean, by email or fax. Each letter should include diagnoses, length of treatment, number of sessions, any medication(s) prescribed, course of treatment, progress made, and an evaluation of your readiness to return to full-time study at Columbia. Additionally, students should request documentation from the following, if attended: intensive outpatient programs (IOP), partial hospitalization programs, residential programs, substance abuse treatment centers, inpatient treatment centers, and/or hospitalizations. The letter(s) must also address the continued care plan recommended for your return so that you can be connected to the appropriate services upon return.
  - If you have received treatment due to a condition that also required medical monitoring over the course of your leave, you will also be expected to submit more specific medical data (blood work, vitals, etc.) to a team of Columbia Health providers as part of the readmission process. If this is necessary, you will be informed of this in an email outlining next steps.

The Medical Leave Readmission Committee meets in June and November to consider readmission requests for the fall and spring, respectively. Committee review is not guaranteed when documentation is submitted late. After the committee has met, you will receive communication from the Center for Student Advising concerning your request. At this point, you will either be moved to the next step in the readmission process, which includes scheduling an appointment with Columbia Health Services in person, or be denied, or be asked to furnish additional information.

After you have met with Columbia Health Services in person, you may be officially readmitted or denied readmission. You will receive a letter and an email from the Center for Student Advising letting you know the official decision.

Once officially readmitted, students who are guaranteed housing upon readmission may submit your housing application by following the instructions in the readmission letter. Students on leave cannot participate in housing lotteries until they are readmitted.

Once officially readmitted, you will receive a registration time so that you can sign up for courses for the coming term. Normally, students will be able to register in late August for the fall and in mid-January for the spring term. In any case, the student will be given registration times as soon as possible after their official readmission.

Students are urged to meet with their advising dean during the first two weeks of the semester when they return and with a Residential Life staff member, if applicable, to ensure a smooth transition to the campus community.

### **PARENTAL NOTIFICATION**

Ordinarily, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified when a student's status changes at the university, e.g. when a student goes on leave and when a student is readmitted from leave.

### **SUPPORT UPON RETURN TO CAMPUS**

- In addition to the Center for Student Advising, the University provides several support resources:
  - Health Services – Clinician-on-Call – (212) 854-9797
  - Counseling and Psychological Services – (212) 854-2878
  - Disability Services – (212) 854-2388 (Voice/TTY)
  - Office of the University Chaplain – (212) 854-6242
- Off-Campus Mental Health Resources
  - The Access Center at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital (212) 523-6491
  - Metropolitan Center for Mental Health (212) 864-7000
  - Jewish Board of Family and Children's Services (212) 582-9100
  - Institute for Contemporary Psychotherapy (212) 595-3444

### **QUESTIONS**

If you have any questions regarding your medical leave or readmission, please contact your advising dean in the Center for Student Advising (CSA). If you do not know who your advising dean is, you can check your SSOL or write to [csa@columbia.edu](mailto:csa@columbia.edu).

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF POLICIES**

Please sign below that you have read and understood all of the above policies and procedures.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

UNI: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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