

# The Center for Student Advising

## COLUMBIA COLLEGE | COLUMBIA ENGINEERING

### Taking a Voluntary Leave of Absence: FAQs

#### **How long can I be on leave?**

CC students can take a Voluntary Leave for as little as a single semester or a maximum of two years. SEAS students can only take a Voluntary Leave for exactly one year (two terms) and do not have a one term option.

#### **Why do students take a voluntary leave?**

For many reasons! To travel, to work, to take on a full-time internship, to figure out what to do with life, to look after a family member.

#### **Am I allowed to take a leave even if I don't know what I want to do?**

Yes. You can take a Voluntary Leave even if you don't know what you'll be doing during your time away.

#### **I am on academic probation. Can I still take a leave?**

If you are a CC student, yes. If you leave on academic probation, you'll return on academic probation. If you leave in good academic standing, you'll return in good standing. If you are a SEAS student, you may not take a VLOA unless you are in good academic standing.

#### **Are my parents notified that I have taken a leave?**

If you are a dependent student, then your parents are notified. We encourage you to discuss the option of taking a leave with your parents early on in your decision-making process so they are not surprised.

#### **Does the VLOA appear on my transcript?**

No.

#### **If I leave during a semester, is there a refund?**

There is. You can see the prorated schedule of tuition refunds here: <http://registrar.columbia.edu/content/refund-rate-withdrawals>. There is also the possibility of a refund for housing and dining: <http://housingservices.columbia.edu/content/proration-schedule>

#### **If I leave during a semester, what happens to my classes?**

If you take a leave before the CC Pass/D/Fail and SEAS drop date (the 10<sup>th</sup> week of the term), your current schedule of classes is erased from your record. If you leave after the 10<sup>th</sup> week of the term, you will likely receive the grade of W (withdrawal) for all of your classes.



**When do I have to move out of housing?**

Once you've made the final decision to take a leave, you normally have 48 hours to move out of your room.

**Can I take classes for credit while on voluntary leave?**

No, you cannot take classes for credit.

**Can I access my Columbia e-mail while on voluntary leave?**

Yes, you can access your Columbia email. We encourage it, in fact, as email is the primary way that we will communicate with you about readmission deadlines and other important information.

**Am I still covered by Columbia's health insurance while on voluntary leave?**

If you take a leave during a semester, you will continue to be covered under Columbia Student Medical Insurance for the remainder of that semester only. Students should contact the Health Insurance Office by calling 212-854-3286 or by emailing [hs-enrollment@columbia.edu](mailto:hs-enrollment@columbia.edu) to determine the type of coverage they will qualify for while on leave.

**Can I access Lionshare and other CCE resources while on leave?**

Yes.

**Do I have to reapply for admission?**

You will need to contact your advising dean and submit a statement of intent to return by the posted deadline.

**If I have been on leave during the spring, can I return and take classes during the summer term?**

Yes.

**When I return, will I still get financial aid?**

Students on financial aid are eligible for 8 semesters of aid from Columbia. You do not lose your eligibility for aid as a result of taking a leave and will go through the same process to apply for aid upon your return. However, if you take a leave after the 10<sup>th</sup> week of the term, you will lose one term of financial aid. Please consult the financial aid office for more info.

**When I return, will I still get housing?**

If you take a Voluntary Leave as a first-year student, you are still guaranteed housing. Otherwise, you are not guaranteed housing when you return.

**Can I walk with my class at graduation?**

You can still walk with your original class if you are within one semester of graduating. Talk to your advising dean about this.

