

VOLUNTARY LEAVE AND READMISSION POLICIES & PROCEDURES

GENERAL INFORMATION

A voluntary leave from the University is granted to students who wish to take time away from their studies for a variety of reasons, including employment opportunities, personal or family circumstances, the desire to travel, or simply to gain perspective on their academic and career priorities. After a temporary withdrawal from the University, students often return better prepared to make the most of academic opportunities at Columbia. In our experience, students who hold full-time jobs or undertake organized projects enjoy more success upon return than students who spend their leave in less structured undertakings. 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 Berick Center for Student Advising (CSA) should be consulted with any questions.

For **CC students**, a leave can be granted for a minimum of one term and a maximum of two years. As a general matter, the expectation is that a voluntary leave of absence will not extend beyond a two-year leave of absence (whether cumulatively or consecutively).

For **SEAS students**, voluntary leaves are granted for a period of one academic year only; voluntary leaves will ordinarily not be granted for one semester, or for more than one year. In exceptional cases, an undergraduate student may apply for readmission following a one-term voluntary leave of absence (please refer to this document's Readmission Deadlines and Procedures section).

Unless a student is granted an exception in extenuating circumstances, a student is permanently withdrawn after they exceed the maximum time period and must reapply for admission through the school's regular admissions process.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 submit a petition to the Committee on Academic Standing to request a voluntary leave. While on leave, it is expected that students will remove themselves from the Columbia community and will not spend time on campus. Please note that you will not receive credit for any courses taken during a voluntary leave, and that you will not be guaranteed housing when you return.

ACADEMIC STANDING

Students are only permitted to take a voluntary leave if they are in good academic standing. If a voluntary leave begins on or before the CC pass/d/fail deadline or the SEAS drop deadline, the semester will not appear on the academic 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.

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 voluntary leave from the University.

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.

HOUSING

Housing and Dining will send detailed check-out information to you as soon as they receive an advising dean's notice of your withdrawal. This email will include the date and time you are required to vacate the residence halls. You must complete the cancellation step through the [Housing Portal](#). To officially check out, you must visit the Hartley Hospitality Desk to officially cancel your room and return any room key(s). Residents of the Brownstones are required to follow the same check-out procedures. Even if you withdraw prior to the start of a term, there may be a cancellation fee – you can learn more by visiting the Housing website here: <https://housing.columbia.edu/content/cancellation>

Please note: **If you take a voluntary leave, you will not be guaranteed housing for the remainder of your time at Columbia and you will not be able to participate in Room Selection.**

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.

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).

WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

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

- Meet with your advising dean as soon as possible to discuss the leave.
- Complete and submit a Petition to Take a Voluntary Leave of Absence. Petitions may be submitted to your advising dean or to the Berick Center for Student Advising in 403 Lerner Hall.
- If you are a resident of **Columbia Housing**, including the Brownstones and Fraternity/Sorority Housing and are requesting a **Voluntary Leave during the semester**, take the following steps:
 - Make plans to leave university housing within 48 hours of your withdrawal date. 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.
 - Log in to the [Housing Portal](#) to officially cancel your Housing Application. Visit the Hartley Hospitality Desk to properly check out of your room and return any keys.
 - Request mail forwarding with [Columbia Mail](#) and update your address in 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 have signed a housing contract to live in Columbia Housing, including Fraternity/Sorority Housing and are requesting a Voluntary Leave before the start of the next semester, you must follow procedures to cancel your housing application through the [Housing Portal](#).
- If you receive Financial Aid, notify the Office of Financial Aid and Educational Financing at (212) 854-3711.
- 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.
- If you are an **international student**, please note that you must leave the United States within 15 days of your withdrawal date. Contact the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) to discuss your plans at isso@columbia.edu or (212) 854-3587. Visit the ISSO website for more information: http://www.columbia.edu/cu/isso/visa/F-1/F-1_LOA.html.
- Columbia University will send you an official notification that your withdrawal has been processed and informing you whether or not you will be receiving a refund. This notification is in addition to the courtesy email you will receive from the Berick Center for Student Advising informing you that your request for withdrawal has been approved. Once you have received the official notification from Columbia University, you can contact Student Financial Services at (212) 854-4400 to inquire about the status of your refund.

READMISSION DEADLINES AND PROCEDURES

You must complete the following readmission procedure by **June 1 for a fall term**, or **November 1 for a spring term**. All financial obligations to the University must be cleared before readmission. No student will be readmitted who has not met the following requirement:

Submit a letter to your advising dean requesting readmission. The letter should review the circumstances that led to the leave, describe in detail any activities pursued while out of school, and explain why you now feel able to resume studies successfully.

In exceptional cases, a SEAS student may apply for readmission following a one-term voluntary leave of absence. In addition to the letter outlined above, the student will need to provide to the Committee on Academic Standing a well-developed academic plan that has been approved by the departmental adviser and the CSA as part of the readmission process. This plan must demonstrate that his or her return to Columbia Engineering following a one-semester leave of absence will allow the student to properly follow the sequence of courses as required for the major and to meet all other graduation requirements by their 8th semester.

SEARCHING FOR OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING

You may submit a housing application at the beginning of May through the Housing Portal to be placed on the waitlist for on-campus Housing. For off-campus housing, contact the Off-Campus Housing Assistance Office (OCHA). You can access their listings and resources by logging in with your UNI and password.

QUESTIONS

If you have any questions regarding your voluntary leave or readmission please contact your advising dean in the Berick 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.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF POLICIES

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

Print Name: _____

UNI: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Committee on Academic Standing

Petition to Take a Voluntary Leave of Absence

(Please Type or Print Clearly)

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

UNI: _____

Class Standing: _____

Cell Phone: _____

(First-year, sophomore, junior, senior)

School: _____

Columbia College (CC)

Columbia Engineering (SEAS)

Permanent Address: _____

Date requesting withdrawal: _____

Expected return: _____

CSA

Adviser: _____

Please indicate type and date of
adviser contact regarding petition: _____

(email, appointment, walk-in, phone)

Do you currently live on Campus? Yes No Residence Hall: _____

Are you a varsity athlete? Yes No Team: _____

Do you receive financial aid? Yes No Are you an International Student? Yes No

STATEMENT TO THE COMMITTEE

Please attach a brief statement to the Committee on Academic Standing along with a copy of your Degree Audit Report (DAR). Your statement should include the timing and expected duration of your voluntary leave and address how you plan to spend your time away. If you are requesting a leave during the semester but after the pass/fail deadline, please include a plan to complete your degree requirements within 8 semesters.

INTERNAL USE ONLY:

Date	Initials	Decision Notes:
Received:	_____	
Grid:	_____	
Reviewed:	_____	
Approved		
Denied		
Partial Approval		
1x exception		
Pending		

Committee on Academic Standing

Adviser Summary Form

(TO BE FILLED OUT BY CSA ADVISER)

Student Name: _____

UNI: _____

School: _____

Semesters Completed: _____

Total Points Earned: _____

Cumulative GPA: _____

Is the student on academic action?

Yes No

If yes, please specify: _____

Does the student have prior petitions?

Yes No

If yes, please specify request, term, and outcome:

STUDENT CONTACT

NOTES/DATES OF CONTACT

Appointment/Walk-in _____

Email/Phone _____

QUESTIONS

Is the student requesting the leave during the semester and after the Pass/D/Fail deadline?

Yes

No

Will the student be able to finish requirements within 8 semesters?

Yes

No

IS THERE ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION YOU WISH TO PROVIDE?

Adviser Name

Signature

Date