

Medical Leave and Return Process Summary

Dean of Students Office – Michigan State University

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Overview

Spartans thrive when every member of our community can achieve their health and wellness goals alongside academic and co-curricular requirements. The Medical Leave and Return Process is an exceptional remedy to assist students experiencing medical issues who must take time away from academic enrollment and endeavors to support student success upon return to the academic environment at Michigan State University. A Medical Leave offers students time and space to prioritize their physical and mental health and wellness in an individualized timeframe while removed from university expectations.

The University Withdrawal Policy empowers the Medical Leave and Return Process, which applies to student requests for complete withdrawal from a term due to medical reasons for self that have had a catastrophic impact on the student’s ability to remain enrolled. The Medical Leave and Return Process applies to undergraduate, graduate, and graduate-professional students, with the exception of students in the College of Human Medicine, College of Osteopathic Medicine, and College of Law, who may seek leave information and options directly from their College’s student affairs/services office.

- Students must be currently enrolled in courses in order to request a Medical Leave from the current term (i.e. a student pursuing a Medical Leave for the current term must not drop their classes before their request for Medical Leave has been reviewed/processed).

- Students must have completed the requested term (with grades posted) in order to request a Medical Leave for a previously completed term.
- The Dean of Students Office only considers requests for Return from Medical Leave for students who have been approved for Medical Leave/Medical Withdrawal from either the Dean of Students Office or the Medical Withdrawal Committee (the previous university procedure).
- Decisions made by the Dean of Students Office in this process are final. However, if a student's request outcome is "not supported", they may resubmit a new request per process guidelines.
- All withdrawals from the University are subject to the [Refund Policy: Refund of Course Fees and Tuition](#). Appeals may be made to the [Office of the Registrar](#).
- A student may receive a Medical Leave (including Medical Leaves for previously completed terms) for a maximum of 2 terms during enrollment in an educational program.
 - Students who have already received two Medical Leaves in an educational program may petition the Dean of Students or designee for additional requests for Medical Leaves, who will confer with the University Physician or designee and University ADA Coordinator in making determinations to equitably consider additional requests.
- According to Federal and State law, and University guidelines and policies: any information shared in the Medical Leave and Return Process may be reported to one of the following offices: Counseling and Psychiatric Services, Office of the University Physician, MSU Police and/or the Office of Institutional Equity. All Dean of Students Office staff members are mandatory reporters.

Other Supportive Options

Office for Civil Rights

For support and accommodations or to seek a withdrawal from the University related to pregnancy or parenting, students may contact the [Office of Institutional Equity \(OIE\)](#), within the [Office for Civil Rights \(OCR\)](#). For support and accommodations or to seek a withdrawal from the University related to relationship violence or sexual misconduct (RVSM), students may contact the Campus Equity Navigator in the Office for Civil Rights. Contacting OIE or OCR may require the creation of a mandatory report for University Title IX requirements. The Campus Equity Navigator can discuss general options with a student who is unsure about disclosing details of a RVSM experience.

College or Neighborhood Student Success Collaborative

For all other non-medical withdrawal requests or individual course drop requests, students should contact the Assistant/Associate Dean or designee of their [College](#) or for exploratory preference students, the [Neighborhood Student Success Collaborative \(NSSC\)](#).

Office of the University Ombudsperson

The [Office of the University Ombudsperson](#) is available to all students as a confidential resource to discuss academic and nonacademic concerns and to interpret and explain university policies and procedures.

Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities

The [Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities \(RCPD\)](#) is available to all students and employees of MSU who have a disability that substantially limits a major life activity. Students and employees can register with the RCPD and may be eligible to receive accommodations.

Structure and Guidelines

Students initiate requests for Medical Leave and Return from Medical Leave through the [Dean of Students Office](#), whose staff administers the Medical Leave and Return Process and provides referrals to informational and support resources.

Requests for Medical Leave

Before requesting a Medical Leave

- Undergraduate students are expected to have conferred with the Assistant/Associate Dean or designee of their College or NSSC (exploratory preference students) about the Medical Leave and Return Process and any individual academic, personal, and/or financial implications it may cause before making a request.
- Graduate students are expected to have conferred with their Department Advisor/Chair, Program Director, or designee about the Medical Leave and Return Process and any individual academic, personal, and/or financial implications it may cause before making a request.

Requesting a Medical Leave

1. When a student is ready to request a Medical Leave, they will complete a request form online, located on the Dean of Students Office website.
2. Upon receipt of the request form, the Dean of Students Office will provide written instructions for completion of the request to the student via their MSU email, including a *Treatment Provider Report Form* that must be completed by the student's licensed treatment provider and submitted directly by the treatment provider to the Dean of Students Office.
 - a. The Dean of Students Office works diligently to balance securing the privacy of a student's health status with notifying need-to-know MSU staff who can support them in the process. As such, when the Dean of Students Office notifies a student that their request form for Medical Leave has been received and sends instructions for completing the request, they will also:

- i. Copy the student's College or NSSC student affairs/services leadership.
 - ii. Copy [Student-Athlete Support Services](#), if the student is a student-athlete.
 - iii. Copy the [Office for International Students and Scholars](#), if the student is an international student.
- b. If a student indicates that they have questions or would like more information regarding the Medical Leave and Return Process in their request form, the Dean of Students Office will seek to answer questions and provide referrals prior to the request moving forward.
- 3. Once the *Treatment Provider Report Form* associated with a student's online request form has been received, the request is considered complete and will be reviewed by the Dean of Students Office.
 - a. International students with F-1 and J-1 visas are required to have conferred with the Office for International Students and Scholars about individual immigration status implications of taking a Medical Leave before completed requests will be reviewed.

Medical Leave Review Process

1. Completed requests for Medical Leave will be reviewed as they are received and students may expect to learn the outcome of their request via their MSU email within five (5) business days, on which the student's College or NSSC student affairs/services leadership will be copied.
 - a. Completed requests for Medical Leave may be reviewed in consultation with the University Physician or designee.
 - b. Incomplete requests will not be reviewed.
 - i. Incomplete requests for Medical Leave for the current term will remain open until the last day of class in the term, after which the request will expire.
 - ii. Incomplete requests for Medical Leave for a previously completed term will remain open for 45 calendar days from the date the student request form was submitted, after which the request will expire.
 - iii. If a request expires, the student may resubmit their request per process guidelines.
2. Medical Leave requests that have been reviewed may result in three outcomes:
 - a. **Supported with readiness to return required:** the student's request for Medical Leave is supported and information does not support that the student is currently ready to reenroll.
 - i. When readiness to return is required, students must complete the Return from Medical Leave process and receive an outcome of "supported" in order to reenroll. Typically, at least one semester/term must elapse after the Medical Leave term before a student should request to return.
 - b. **Supported without readiness to return required:** the student's request for Medical Leave is supported and information supports that the student is currently ready to

reenroll. No additional action is required for the student to reenroll when they so choose.

- c. **Not Supported:** the student's request for Medical Leave is not supported. If a request is not supported, the Dean of Students Office will provide an explanation for the outcome and opportunity for the student to resubmit their request per process guidelines.
3. Factors utilized in the Medical Leave review process include:
 - a. The treatment provider's assessment of whether or not the student's medical condition affected their academic progress, functioning, and/or ability;
 - b. Specific impairments noted by the treatment provider and associated rationale;
 - c. The treatment provider's assessment of whether or not the student's medical condition had a catastrophic impact on the student's ability to remain enrolled and associated rationale;
 - d. The treatment provider's assessment of whether the student's medical condition is predictably time-limited and highly likely to resolve or be managed successfully on its own without additional treatment and associated rationale;
 - e. If the request for Medical Leave is for a previously completed term, the treatment provider's assessment of whether there exists a medical rationale for why the student did not pursue a Medical Leave during the requested term and associated rationale.
4. Requests for Medical Leave for the current term may be made until the last day of class within the term.
5. Requests for Medical Leave for a previously completed term may be made, however, must include a medical rationale for why the student did not pursue a Medical Leave before the last day of class for the requested term.
 - a. Requests for Medical Leave for previously completed terms may be granted for up to one calendar year (365 days) from the last day of class for the requested term.
 - b. If a student is currently enrolled and requests a Medical Leave for a previously completed term, and if the outcome is supported with readiness to return required, the student will be dropped from their current and future enrollment until their request for Return from Medical Leave is supported. Additionally, if the student is currently living on-campus, Residence Education and Housing Services will be notified in order to initiate the move out process.
6. When a student's request for Medical Leave is supported (with or without readiness to return required), the Dean of Students Office will immediately request a complete withdrawal for the requested term through the Office of the Registrar, resulting in "W" grades assigned for all courses, regardless of any original grade(s) assigned.
 - a. If a student's request is supported with readiness to return required, the Dean of Students Office will place a hold or service indicator on the student's account to prevent future enrollment.

- b. If a student's request is supported with readiness to return required and the student has planned future enrollment, the Dean of Students Office will request that the student's future enrollment be removed.
- c. If a student's request is supported without readiness to return required and the student has planned future enrollment, future courses will remain in place and no holds or service indicators will be placed by the Dean of Students Office.
- d. If the student is currently living on-campus and the Medical Leave is for the current term, Residence Education and Housing Services will be notified in order to initiate the move out process.

Requests for Return from Medical Leave

Requesting a Return from Medical Leave

1. When a student is ready to request to Return from Medical Leave, they will complete a request form online, located on the Dean of Students Office website.
2. Upon receipt of the request form, the Dean of Students Office will provide written instructions for completion of the request to the student via their MSU email, including an *Assessment and Recommendation to Return from Medical Leave* (form) that must be completed by the student's licensed treatment provider and submitted directly by the treatment provider to the Dean of Students Office.
3. Once the *Assessment and Recommendation for Return from Medical Leave* (form) associated with a student's request form has been received, the request is considered complete and a review of available information will occur after the next scheduled Return from Medical Leave review deadline.

Return from Medical Leave Review Process

1. Completed requests for Return from Medical Leave are reviewed three (3) times per year, prior to the start of each term. Students may expect to learn the outcome of their request via their MSU email within ten (10) business days of the review deadline by which their completed request was received, on which the student's College or NSSC student affairs/services leadership will be copied. Additionally, the Office for International Students and Scholars will be copied on Return from Medical Leave outcomes for international students.
 - a. Review deadlines for requests for Return from Medical Leave (based on the term the student intends to reenroll):
 - i. March 1 (Summer term intended start)
 - ii. July 1 (Fall term intended start)
 - iii. November 1 (Spring term intended start)
 - b. Completed requests for Return from Medical Leave are due at 11:59 p.m. (Eastern Time) on the review deadlines.

- c. A student may submit a completed request for Return from Medical Leave for an earlier review than the deadline that corresponds with their desired reenrollment term (e.g. a student who intends to return in the Fall term may ensure their complete request for Return from Medical Leave is received by the Dean of Students Office before March 1 to prompt an earlier review.)
 - d. Completed requests for Return from Medical Leave may be reviewed in consultation with the University Physician or designee.
 - e. Incomplete requests will not be reviewed.
 - i. Incomplete requests for Return from Medical Leave will remain open for one calendar year (365 days), after which the request will expire.
 - ii. If a request expires, the student may resubmit their request per process guidelines.
2. Return from Medical Leave requests that have been reviewed may result in two outcomes:
 - a. **Supported:** the student's request for Return from Medical Leave is supported because information supports that the student is currently ready to reenroll.
 - b. **Not Supported:** the student's request for Return from Medical Leave is not supported because information does not support that the student is currently ready to reenroll. If a request is not supported, the Dean of Students Office will provide an explanation for the outcome and opportunity for the student to resubmit their request for consideration at the next review per process guidelines.
 3. Factors utilized in the Return from Medical Leave review process include:
 - a. The treatment provider's report on observed changes in the student's functioning during time in treatment;
 - b. The treatment provider's assessment of whether or not the student is ready to resume academic enrollment and associated rationale;
 - c. The student's responses to reflection-based questions on the Return from Medical Leave online request form.
 4. When a Return from Medical Leave request is supported, the hold or service indicator on the student's account related to the Medical Leave will be removed by the Dean of Students Office and the student will receive an individualized recommendation of support resources.
 - a. It is expected that students returning from Medical Leave will meet with their primary academic unit (College/Department/Major) advisor to plan a successful return to studies.
 - b. If a student has been away from MSU for more than three (3) consecutive semesters, they must apply for [readmission](#) prior to reenrolling.

Definitions

Catastrophic impact: A substantial effect on the ability to safely or successfully meet expectations of academic enrollment in a university setting, due to a physical or mental health condition. Examples include but are not limited to the following:

- Anxiety disorder causing poor appetite, poor motivation, and significant interference with studies;
- Bipolar disorder causing impaired concentration, social withdrawal, and inability to care for self or attend to daily routines;
- Chronic and debilitating migraines reducing productivity and ability to concentrate, study, or attend class;
- Crohn's disease requiring surgery and inability to attend classes;
- Depression causing marked decrease in energy and concentration making it difficult to attend class;
- Eating disorder requiring future intensive outpatient treatments;
- Narcolepsy causing inability to sleep, focus, or concentrate and impacting attendance and studies;
- Substance abuse resulting in in-patient hospitalization and inability to complete the term;
- Uncontrolled systemic lupus causing debilitating pain and impacting sleep and concentration, making it difficult to attend classes and study.

Licensed Treatment Provider: An individual who possesses valid, active credentials from a licensing body to practice medicine or provide treatment to humans. Examples include but are not limited to the following: licensed nurse practitioner, licensed psychologist, licensed medical doctor, or licensed clinical social worker.

Medical Leave: A complete withdrawal from enrollment in a term as a result of a medical condition causing a catastrophic impact on a student's ability to remain enrolled.

Medical rationale: An explanation directly related to a student's medical condition that states why the student did not pursue a Medical Leave during the requested term. Examples include but are not limited to the following: an in-patient hospitalization, intensive out-patient treatment, a psychotic episode, social withdrawal, suicidal ideation, and inability to care for one's self.

Complaints

Students who believe they have been discriminated against based upon their disability or other protected category may file a claim with the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE): www.oie.msu.edu or (517) 353-3922. Students may also consult with the University Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Coordinator: www.civilrights.msu.edu or (517) 355-3960.