



Haverford College

Medical Leave Policy

With the permission of their dean, a student may voluntarily take a medical leave of absence. In certain circumstances, the College may place a student on a medical leave involuntarily. Some of the criteria for a medical leave relate specifically to whether the student or the College initiated the leave, but a medical leave also has certain other general conditions regardless of who initiates it.

Student-Initiated Medical Leave

A student may request a voluntary medical leave if they believe that physical and/or psychological health concerns are significantly interfering with their ability to succeed at Haverford and/or that the demands of college life are not consistent with recovery or safety. A student who, in consultation with either the Director of the Health Services or Director of Counseling and Psychological Services, determines that they need to request a voluntary medical leave should contact their dean to discuss the terms of the leave.

If the voluntary medical leave is granted by the student's dean, the student will be considered in good standing. Readmission will be contingent upon the demonstrable resolution of the condition that necessitated the leave and satisfactory completion of the procedures for return described below.

College-Initiated Medical Leave

In unusual circumstances, the student's dean, upon careful consideration of the welfare of the individual student and the college community, and in consultation with the Director of Health Services and/or the Director of Counseling and Psychological Services, may determine that a student needs to be placed on involuntary medical leave. Such leaves are considered when a student's health results in behavior that is:

- so severe as to render the student unable to perform adequately as a student; and/or
- so disruptive as to interfere significantly with other students' ability to perform adequately as students; and/or
- a threat to the safety of the community.

The dean's determination will be based on an individualized and functional assessment of the student's ability to participate in the College's programs and will consider whether reasonable modifications of policies, practices, or procedures will sufficiently mitigate the risk to the student and/or community. In addition, a student who is not attending class or making satisfactory academic progress may be placed on a mandatory College-initiated medical leave at the dean's discretion.

General Conditions

Parental Notification

The College reserves the right to notify a parent or guardian in relation to a medical leave and/or its concerns about a student if circumstances warrant and if it is believed to be in the best interest of the student and the College to do so.

Academic Implications

If a student takes an approved medical leave, their transcript will simply specify only the date of withdrawal without further explanation; it will not indicate that a student is on leave specifically for medical reasons. If the withdrawal occurs after the start of a semester but prior to the eighth week, any courses in progress will be removed entirely from the student's transcript; after the eighth week, courses in progress will appear on the transcript as withdrawals with the notation of "W."

A student who goes on medical leave during a semester will not be permitted to complete any of the courses in which they are then enrolled or, therefore, earn final grades for such courses; a student going on medical leave during the semester will also not be granted "Incompletes" on any courses they are taking at the time of departure.

A copy of the student's medical leave approval letter will be placed in the student's file in the Dean's Office for internal reference purposes only.

Enrollment Status

While on medical leave, the student is not considered an enrolled or "active" student at Haverford College. The medical leave status will continue until the student is permitted to return by way of the procedures described below. In order to be covered, many medical insurance policies require a student to maintain fulltime active student status. The student should therefore check with their insurance provider about maintaining coverage while on leave; the College cannot advise students on such matters.

Presence on Campus

While a student is on medical leave, whether voluntary or involuntary, they will not be permitted to visit campus without prior written permission from their dean.

Financial Implications

A student on medical leave should direct all questions regarding financial aid eligibility to the Office of Financial Aid.

Tuition and fee refunds for medical leaves taken during the course of a semester are made in accordance with the College's Refunds Policy. For more information, consult the Business Office.

Tuition insurance is available, but it must be purchased prior to the start of the semester. Questions about this matter should be directed to the Business Office.

Taking Courses at Other Institutions

The College generally encourages students not to take courses for transfer credit at other colleges or universities while on medical leave. In some cases, the Dean's Office may allow a limited course load (one or two courses pre-approved by the College) with the support, in writing, of the student's health care provider. All requests for approval must be made in writing to the student's dean prior to enrolling in such courses; if approval is granted, the student will also need to obtain the permission of the appropriate Haverford College departmental chair(s) to take these courses for transfer credit and to file the requisite "Application for Study Away Credit" (for courses taken during the academic year at another institution) or "Application for Summer School Credit" form available on the Registrar's website and do so before beginning such courses.

International Academic Programs, Exchanges, College Funded Programs

A student on medical leave is not permitted to participate in any Haverford College sponsored and/or funded program either in the US or abroad.

Returning from a Medical Leave

A student who takes a medical leave will normally be required to spend at least one academic year away before a request for permission to return will be considered. If a student goes on a medical leave after the mid-point of the fall semester in any given academic year, under no circumstances will they be permitted to return the next semester.

A student applying to the College for permission to return after being placed on medical leave is required to provide appropriate evidence that they have taken steps to regain the ability to function autonomously, both academically and socially, is in good health, and/or is in a position so as not to interfere with the safety, order, and/or security of the community. Such evidence will include an evaluation from the student's personal health care providers, who must be licensed, have no personal or familial relationship to the student, and have expertise directly pertinent to matters of concern.

The College may ask for medical records regarding treatment during any hospitalization and/or records that pertain directly to the ongoing status, monitoring, and/or treatment of a student's physical/medical condition. The College will not, however, seek a report from any professional providing psychotherapy to the student. The essential privacy of that relationship is recognized by the College and that confidentiality will be honored.

In addition, the student will generally be required to show evidence of successful social, occupational, and/or academic functioning during the time away from the College. An especially important element of a student's demonstration of readiness to return to full academic status is their ability via letter to describe, understand, and reflect on the factors that led to the medical leave and the factors that have changed so that reinstatement as a student is now a sensible and appropriate path.

Documentation will be reviewed by appropriate College personnel, as determined by the student's dean, and in most cases the student will also need to be evaluated in person by the appropriate health care professional at the College.

The Dean of the College will make the final decision about readmission.

Short-Term Health-Related Absences and Hospitalizations

A student who is hospitalized or otherwise absent for health-related reasons during the semester but does not go on medical leave may still be subject to the procedures described immediately above before they may return to campus to resume their studies. In these situations, the student's dean may also advise the student regarding their best options for completing the remaining academic work in the semester.

In some cases, a member of the Dean's staff may require a student who has been hospitalized to report to a specified meeting place before the student may return to their dormitory or classes. The purpose of such a meeting is to give the appropriate College professionals, as determined by the dean, the opportunity to assess the student's readiness to resume college life and to discuss follow-up care.

Last revised March 1, 2017