

# MEDICAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

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## Medical Leaves and Reentries

A student with a mental health and/or physical health condition may elect to apply for a Medical Leave of Absence from the University. The Medical Leave of Absence and Medical Reentry Policies describe the circumstances under which a student may request a Medical Leave of Absence and the student is responsible for both the documentation for the Medical Leave of Absence and the Medical Reentry process. The procedures the student must follow are outlined in the policy.

## Medical Leave of Absence and Medical Reentry Policies

### Overview of the Medical Leave and Reentry Process

#### Part 1: Medical Leave Process at a glance:

- Submit Intent to Withdraw for health/medical reasons via MyDU (<https://my.du.edu/>) portal
- Submit Treating Healthcare Provider Medical Leave of Absence Form ([https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofDenver&layout\\_id=59](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofDenver&layout_id=59)) to Student Outreach & Support (SOS)
- Applicable Student Affairs & Inclusive Excellence staff members reviews completed medical leave application
- SOS will notify the student regarding the decision via electronic letter
- If approved, SOS will place a hold on the student's account. The hold is removed when the student successfully completes the reentry process.

#### Part 2: Medical Reentry Process at a glance:

- Student submits Reentry from Medical Leave of Absence Form ([https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofDenver&layout\\_id=57](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofDenver&layout_id=57)).
- SOS will remove the hold on the student's account allowing them to register for courses
- Treating Healthcare Provider(s) submits Treating Healthcare Provider Medical Reentry Form ([https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofDenver&layout\\_id=58](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofDenver&layout_id=58)).
- Applicable Student Affairs & Inclusive Excellence staff members review completed medical leave reentry application
- SOS will notify the student regarding the decision via electronic letter.

A student with a mental health and/or physical health condition may apply for a voluntary Medical Leave of Absence from the University. The student initiates the process for a Medical Leave of Absence by completing the Withdrawal Form, which is available on MyDU, citing health/medical as the reason for withdrawal.

To qualify for a Medical Leave of Absence, the student must then submit adequate medical documentation (consistent with the requirements listed below) from the student's treating physician, licensed mental health provider, or other licensed healthcare provider specifying the mental health and/or physical health condition(s) that causes a degree of functional impairment that warrants a complete withdrawal from academic study for the applicable academic term. The medical documentation must reflect that the student had a consultation – either in-person or virtually via tele-health – with the treating physician, licensed mental health provider, or other licensed healthcare provider during the term for which the student is requesting a withdrawal for medical reasons. The student will be on a general leave until they submit adequate documentation and until the applicable Student Affairs & Inclusive Excellence staff members approve the documentation, at which time the student will be moved from a Updated August 2023 | 2 personal leave of absence to a Medical Leave of Absence. If the student does not submit adequate medical documentation by the last day of the term, the student's status will remain a general withdrawal.

**NOTE:** If the student does not complete the medical leave process by the last day of the term, and did not withdraw from courses by the published deadlines, SOS will refer the student to the Academic Exceptions Process.

1. Students experiencing mental health and/or physical health conditions should promptly seek care from their treating physician, licensed mental health provider, or other licensed healthcare provider and should promptly submit their Withdrawal Form initiating the Medical Leave of Absence and submit adequate medical documentation by last day of classes.
2. Prior to submitting the Withdrawal Form via MyDU, the student should (1) consult with a Student Outreach & Support (SOS) Student Support Advisor to understand their options for addressing the mental health and/or physical health condition, including referral to AccessibleDU: Student Disability Services for consideration of accommodations; the process for applying for a Medical Leave of Absence and returning from such a leave; and the possible implications related to University housing; (2) contact the Office of Financial Aid to determine the amount of financial aid to be returned; (3) contact the Office of the Bursar with questions regarding the tuition adjustments; and (4) contact other appropriate offices, such as International Student and Scholar Services, to determine the impact on visa status. The Student Support Advisor can assist the student in contacting these other offices as necessary.

Student Affairs & Inclusive Excellence staff, including the Health and Counseling Center staff, will determine whether the student has submitted adequate medical documentation from the student's treating physician, licensed mental health provider, or other licensed healthcare provider that meets the criteria listed below. The student and their treating healthcare provider should have a shared understanding of the information being submitted to the University on the student's behalf. If the student's treating healthcare provider does not address every item identified in the Treating Healthcare Provider Form, the University will likely not approve the student's request.

3. The documentation must be submitted as a PDF file on official letterhead with the provider's signature and the date the letter is written and must include the following, as outlined in the Treating Healthcare Provider Medical Leave of Absence Form ([https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofDenver&layout\\_id=59](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofDenver&layout_id=59)):
  - a. The treating physician, licensed mental health provider, or other licensed healthcare provider's professional qualifications and licensure;
  - b. Date the student first consulted the provider; Updated August 2023 | 3
  - c. Number and type (i.e., in person or virtual) of visits with the provider;
  - d. Diagnosis of the mental health and/or physical health condition;
  - e. Date(s) that the provider observed and/or identified the mental health and/or physical health condition(s) that caused a degree of the functional impairment that impacted the student and warrants withdrawal from all courses for the term;
  - f. Based on the provider's direct evaluation of the student, the provider's professional opinion of when the symptoms of the mental health and/or physical health condition first began;
  - g. Impact of the condition on the student's participation in academic activities (including attending classes and completing coursework);
  - h. Treatment recommendations and estimated length of treatment plan; and
  - i. Assessment of student's willingness and/or ability to carry out substantial self-care obligations.

#### **Exchange of Information with Treating Physician, Licensed Mental Health Provider, or other Licensed Healthcare Provider**

- Students must submit a completed Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) compliant consent form to their treating physician, licensed mental health provider or other licensed healthcare provider's office to authorize their healthcare provider to submit the required medical documentation to the University.
- In connection with the Medical Leave of Absence, the student may also be required to submit a Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) release permitting the University's Student Affairs & Inclusive Excellence staff to exchange information with the student's treating physician, licensed mental health provider or other licensed healthcare provider to address the student's ability to perform as a student for the period covered by the Medical Leave of Absence, the duration of the approved Medical Leave of Absence, and the Medical Reentry process.

#### **Medical Leave of Absence Eligibility Requirements and Conditions**

- Students may seek a Medical Leave of Absence only for their own personal mental health and/or physical health circumstances. Students may seek a leave of absence for other reasons as specified on the Withdrawal Form on the MyDU portal.
- Students participating in an international education program may not seek a Medical Leave of Absence for the term in which the student is participating in the international education program if the program includes enrollment at an institution other than DU. In such cases, students should consult the policies of the institution which they are enrolled. Updated August 2023 | 4
- The Medical Leave of Absence program is not intended to shield a student from unsatisfactory progress or any other academic irregularity unrelated to the student's mental health and/or physical health condition.
- Graduate students who receive an approved Medical Leave of Absence are eligible for relief for their time-to-degree requirements, provided that graduate students seeking a Juris Doctorate from the Sturm College of Law are subject to the time to degree requirements of the applicable accrediting body.
- If a student takes courses for credit at another institution while on a Medical Leave of Absence, the student must comply with the applicable policies for receiving transfer of credit toward a degree from the University. Undergraduate students should refer to the Office of the Registrar Undergraduate Transfer Policy. Graduate students should refer to the transfer of credit procedures in the Graduate Bulletin.
- A student may receive a Medical Leave of Absence (including any retroactive requests for a retroactive withdrawal for medical reasons) a total of **two (2) times** during enrollment in an educational program at the University. The Dean of Students/Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs & Inclusive Excellence, or their designee, in consultation with the Director of the AccessibleDU: Student Disability Services and the Assistant Vice Chancellor of the University's Health & Counseling Center or their respective designees, has the discretion to determine whether to grant an additional Medical Leave of Absence.
- If the Student Affairs & Inclusive Excellence staff approves the medical documentation for a Medical Leave of Absence, Student Affairs & Inclusive Excellence staff will forward the approval letter to the Office of the Bursar. A student cannot revoke a Medical Leave of Absence after the University has approved medical documentation.
- If the student is unable to engage to complete the process in any capacity, other University processes can be activated (e.g., Academic Exceptions) when the student is able to engage.
- If the student has submitted the Withdrawal Form and has already withdrawn from all classes, but submits the appropriate medical documentation after the last day of the term, the student must file for a Tuition Refund for Medical Reasons. If the student has not submitted the Withdrawal Form and is not yet withdrawn from all classes, but submits the appropriate medical documentation after the last day of the term, the student will be directed to submit a petition for a late drop for medical reasons through the Academic Exceptions Process to drop all courses for the requested term. The student must provide adequate medical documentation according to the requirements set forth in the Academic Exceptions Policy.

### Financial Considerations

- If Student Affairs & Inclusive Excellence staff approves the Medical Leave of Absence, Student Affairs & Inclusive Excellence will forward the approval letter to the Office of the Bursar for review of any tuition adjustments based on the Tuition and Fees Policy. All questions regarding tuition adjustments should be directed to the Office of the Bursar either via email at [bursar@du.edu](mailto:bursar@du.edu) or by phone at 303-871-4944.
- Students who receive financial aid should speak to the Office of Financial Aid via email at [finaid@du.edu](mailto:finaid@du.edu) or by phone at 303-871-4020.

### Reentry from a Medical Leave of Absence

The student must provide adequate medical documentation from the student's treating physician, licensed mental health provider, or other licensed healthcare provider that demonstrates the student is prepared to participate successfully academically and is willing and/or able to carry out substantial self-care obligations. To allow sufficient time for processing and registration, the student must complete the following steps for the reentry process at least 14 Business Days before the start of the term. Under this policy, Business Day refers to any weekday Monday through Friday in which the University is in operation, including days when the University is in operation, but classes are not in session. For example, University holidays are not Business Days.

1. Complete the Reentry from Medical Leave of Absence form ([https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofDenver&layout\\_id=57](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofDenver&layout_id=57)).
2. Submit medical documentation from the student's treating physician, licensed mental health provider, or other licensed healthcare provider addressing the following criteria, as specified in the Treating Healthcare Provider Medical Reentry Form ([https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofDenver&layout\\_id=58](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofDenver&layout_id=58)). The student and the provider should have a shared understanding of the information being submitted to the University on the student's behalf. If the treating healthcare provider does not address every item identified in the Treating Healthcare Provider Medical Reentry Form, then the University may not approve the student's request.

The documentation must be submitted as a PDF file on official letterhead with the providers signature and dated within a month of the first day of the academic term for which the student seeks reentry and must include the following, as outlined in the Treating Healthcare Provider Medical Leave of Absence Form:

- a. The treating physician, licensed mental health provider, or other licensed healthcare provider's professional qualification and licensure;
- b. Professional opinion regarding the student's ability to participate academically with a full-time course load and willingness and/or ability to carry out substantial self-care obligations at the University with or without continued treatment;
- c. A treatment summary with the following specificity:
  - Time span and type of treatment provided to the student while on the Medical Leave of Absence;
  - Whether the treatment was concluded (with or without the healthcare provider's approval) or is on-going;
  - Specific intensive treatment, if any, while on the Medical Leave of Absence
  - Demonstrated understanding of the diagnoses and functional impairment that resulted in a Medical Leave of Absence;
  - Description of how the treating physician, licensed mental health provider, or other licensed healthcare provider completing the form addressed these specific issues in the treatment of the student during the Medical Leave of Absence;
  - If treatment is ongoing: recommended treatment plan during student's return to study, any continuing care needs or concerns for the student, who will be providing the care needs; and
  - Any safety concerns for the student or for others in the University community

The Dean of Students/Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs & Inclusive Excellence or their designee, in consultation with the Director of AccessibleDU: Student Disability Services and the Assistant Vice Chancellor of the University's Health & Counseling Center or their respective designees, has the discretion to determine whether the student has submitted adequate medical documentation to support the reentry application.

The student must comply with all other applicable procedures for returning to the University.

If a student seeks to extend their Medical Leave of Absence beyond one (1) year, the student should contact their Academic or Program Advisor and the staff in Student Outreach & Support at [sos@du.edu](mailto:sos@du.edu).

Students are advised to continue to work with SOS and other support services at DU as the student return from a Medical Leave of Absence. Student Support Advisors will reach out to students returning from leave to offer to schedule a meeting to discuss on-going support.

### Options for Incomplete Applications and Applications/Documentation Submitted After the Last Day of the Term

**Late Drop for Medical Reasons:** Students who submit incomplete Medical Leave Applications or submit applications after the last day of the term will be referred to the Academic Exceptions Committee. The student must complete and file a petition through MyDU. More information can be found by reviewing Academic Exception Policy.

**(NOTE: Medical documentation must reflect that the students had a consultation – either in-person or virtually via tele-health – with the treating physician, licensed mental health provider, or other licensed healthcare provider during the term for which the student requests the retroactive withdrawal for medical reasons.)**

### Appeals of Adverse Decisions Regarding Medical Leave of Absence or Reentry from a Medical Leave of Absence

A student may appeal an adverse decision regarding a Medical Leave of Absence and/or Reentry from a Medical Leave of Absence to Dean of Students/Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs & Inclusive Excellence, or their designee, by completing and submitting the Appeal Form

([https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofDenver&layout\\_id=48](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofDenver&layout_id=48)) within five (5) Business Days of the date the decision was sent to the student. The grounds for appeal are limited to the following:

- The existence of procedural errors so substantial that such errors greatly impacted the decision; and/or
- New medical documentation that was not reasonably available at the time of the initial decision.

As stated in its Non-Discrimination Statement, the University of Denver prohibits discrimination based on protected characteristics, including discrimination against students with disabilities. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations to fully access the medical leave process should promptly contact Student Disability Services to submit a request for such accommodations.

Students who have concerns regarding discrimination or harassment in the application of these policies should contact the University's Office of Equal Opportunity & Title IX.

The Dean of Students/Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs & Inclusive Excellence or their designee will make a good faith effort to complete the appeal within ten (10) Business Days from the date on which the appeal is provided to the Dean of Students/Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs & Inclusive Excellence or their designee.