

Medical Leave of Absence Policy

Request for a Voluntary Medical Leave of Absence

- *Premise:* Geneseo is committed to student physical and mental health. Therefore, health and counseling services are available, as included in the Student Health and Counseling fee, to all enrolled students (including graduate and part-time students). However, the College recognizes that there are times when medical issues (including mental health issues), unexpected loss, and other similar extenuating circumstances may arise and prevent a student from functioning safely and successfully. In such instances, students are encouraged to prioritize their health and safety and take steps towards recovery. Medical leaves of absence are available to fulfill such a need.
- *Basis:* A medical leave of absence is defined as a voluntary and temporary interruption of one's studies for at least the remainder of one semester based on a physical or mental health problem or problems that render the fulfillment of a student's academic responsibilities no longer possible. In cases where a student has been engaged in ongoing treatment for this health issue prior to a leave, documentation may be requested. Students who meet these criteria may request a voluntary medical leave of absence. These absences are granted based on the determination of the Dean of Students in consultation with the Dean of Academic Planning and Advising. In specific cases, students may be encouraged to take a medical leave of absence due to severe ramifications of their mental and physical health needs on the larger Geneseo community, such as disruption to the safety and welfare of other students, faculty, and staff as well as necessary treatment that is not within the scope of practice of our student health and counseling services.

As long as a student is pursuing at least 1 credit hour of coursework, they maintain their student status, and a leave is not authorized.

Students may take leaves of absence from their studies for up to two semesters and retain the right to enroll at the College at the end of the leaves without applying for readmission. Students are eligible to take leaves of absence from the College if they have grade point averages of at least 2.0 and if they have no outstanding obligations to the College. Applications for leaves of absence may be obtained and filed in the Enrollment Management Office, and accessed at: <https://www.geneseo.edu/enrollment-management> . Students may apply for a *medical leave of absence* if their GPA is below the requirements of a general leave of absence or the withdrawal deadline has passed. Applications for medical leave of absences are available (https://www.geneseo.edu/dean_students/steps-medical-leave-absence).

- Leaves are usually effective as of the beginning of the semester following the one when the application is filed. If students wish to take a leave during a semester in progress applications must be filed before the course withdrawal deadline (approximately two-thirds of the way through the semester). In most cases, leaving the College after the withdrawal deadline results in grades of "E" in all courses. More information about withdrawals can be found at <http://www.geneseo.edu/handbook/w>
- In extraordinary circumstances, such as significant personal, medical or psychological issues, a leave, with corresponding retroactive class withdrawals, may be considered after the withdrawal deadline. Students who are granted *medical leaves of absence* during a semester will receive grades of "W" for all of their courses, even in the start of their leave is past the withdrawal deadline
- In order to take medical leaves of absence, required documentation is necessary. See [Steps for a Medical Leave of Absence](#) to see what is required. Acceptable documentation must be completed by a licensed health care provider such as a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or licensed counselor and should be submitted to the Dean of Students or Executive Director of Health and Counseling on professional

letterhead. This documentation should include two signed Releases of Information (available through Student Health and Counseling, or at the [Steps](#) site) as well as:

- the reason the medical leave is recommended (including statement of impact on current functioning);
- relevant diagnoses;
- date of initial treatment;
- dates of subsequent treatment (if applicable); and
- plans for anticipated treatment while separated from the College.

This documentation will then be reviewed by the College's Student Health and Counseling staff who will then consult with the student's health care provider prior to making a recommendation to the Dean of Students. Ultimately, the documentation will be shared with the Dean of Students, as decisions granting leaves are the responsibility of the Dean of Students.

- *Implications:* Students who choose to take medical leaves of absence will be encouraged to prioritize their health and well-being over their academic pursuits. However, students should remain mindful that there are several implications of medical leaves. These include:
 - **Grades:** Leaves of absence are optimally filed before the course withdrawal deadline, although the College recognizes this is not always possible. In most cases students who take approved medical leaves during a semester or summer session are given "W" grades in the courses left incomplete during their withdrawal. Geneseo encourages students to speak with their advisors about major specific requirements and challenges that may arise. More information can be found through the Office of the Registrar. Generally, medical leave of absence applications will not be reviewed within approximately 2 weeks of academic dismissal decisions.
 - **Financial:** Students should contact the Student Accounts office to determine the financial implications of taking medical leaves of absence, including the College's refund deadlines and schedule. In addition, students receiving financial aid are strongly encouraged to speak with a staff member in the Office of Financial Aid before making a decision about requesting leaves of absence, especially as it might pertain to future federal and state aid eligibility, including New York State Excelsior Scholarship. The College will review the reason for a leave in their decision-making process regarding refunds. Furthermore, it is important to note that the definition of a leave may differ based on the federal definition of a leave of absence versus the colleges definition of a leave of absence. This has the potential to affect loan grace periods. Students are advised to contact their federal loan provider for more information. This information applies to a general leave of absence as well.
 - **International Students:** International students must contact the International Students and Scholar Services to determine the impact of their leaves on their visa status.
 - **On-Campus Activities:** Students granted leaves of absence are generally not permitted to reside in College housing, participate in campus activities, or be on campus for the duration of their leave. Exceptions to these prohibitions are subject to the written approval of the Dean of Students. Students who do not adhere to this policy jeopardize their eligibility to be reinstated as an active student in the College.
 - **Residency Requirement:** As Geneseo has a 2-year residency requirement, students who depart campus on a leave may be required to complete their residency obligation on return. Students should review their status with Residence Life, then submit a "Release from Housing/Residency Waiver," as appropriate.

- *Return process:* A return from a medical leave of absence requires approval from the Dean of Students following a re-entry assessment process. **Requests for returns from leaves must be received by the Friday of the first week in August or the Friday of the first week in January prior to the first day of classes in a new semester.** In reviewing requests for return from medical leaves, the College requires documented evidence that sufficient recovery has taken place. In order to be approved for return, the student must have complied with any recommendations given for treatment at the time of medical leave. There are several required conditions for return from a medical leave of absence:
 - The student must demonstrate a substantial amelioration of the health condition that precipitated the need for a medical leave.
 - The student has maintained stability and demonstrated improvement over the course of a sufficient period of time which would allow them to successfully return to the College.
 - The student must demonstrate the ability to function safely as part of the Geneseo community. This is to be determined by the student’s personal treatment provider in consultation with the Geneseo’s Student Health and Counseling staff (*see Return from Medical Leave Form*).
 - The student must be authorized to return by the Dean of Students in order to pursue reenrollment, which at times *may* require further evaluation by Geneseo’s Student Health and Counseling staff.
 - If you are a student with a disability and have questions about the process for requesting accommodations prior to your return to Geneseo, you may contact the Office of Accessibility Services via email at access@geneseo.edu , or call 585-245-5112.

- *Appeals:* Students may request an appeal of decisions made about medical leaves or return from medical leaves. Appeals will be considered by the Vice President for Student and Campus Life in consultation with the Provost.

I _____ (please print name), have read the above information and have asked for any needed clarification of information. I will submit all required documentation to the College. I accept these conditions and deadlines as part of my responsibility in taking a medical leave of absence from SUNY Geneseo. I agree to abide by these conditions and I voluntarily request that Geneseo’s Dean of Students issue me a recommendation for a medical leave of absence for the _____ semester(s).

_____ (student signature) _____ (date)

_____ (Geneseo ID #) _____ (D.O.B.)

Contact information for correspondence during leave:

Postal address: _____

Email address: _____

Phone number: _____

(Rev. May, 2023)