

II. ACADEMIC POLICIES

S. Withdrawal from the College

3. Medical Leave: Revised Feb 19, 2007

S. WITHDRAWAL FROM THE COLLEGE

3. Medical Leave

Medical Leave is available for students who, due to documented serious physical or psychological illness, need to leave the College during the semester without completing their coursework or to withdraw from the College for no longer than two consecutive semesters. Students on medical leave are not regarded as having permanently withdrawn from the College and need not apply for readmission through the Admissions Office. However, students must be approved for fitness to return to campus through the process described in the policy.

A student may request a more limited **medically excused** status if he or she is medically unable to complete the final forty percent of a semester but intends to return to the College at the beginning of the following semester. Request is initiated in the same manner as described below. A student approved for medically excused status need not request permission to return to the College for the following semester unless conditions for returning had been stipulated by the College at the time of departure.

a. Initiation of Request for Medical Leave

A student requesting medical leave must make the request in writing to the Director of Counseling and Health Services. The request may be for either one or two semesters. The Director will notify the Registrar of the request and will direct the student to provide appropriate documentation from a physician, therapist or other qualified caregiver.

b. Determination of Request

A decision approving or disapproving the medical leave request will be made by the Director of Counseling and Health Services. If there is a pending academic or disciplinary proceeding that could result in a suspension from the College, medical leave requests will not be considered until the proceeding has concluded. A student under suspension from the College is ineligible for medical leave.

As part of receiving medical leave for mental health reasons, if indicated, the student may be asked to sign a behavioral agreement regarding ongoing treatment during the time he or she is on medical leave. Failure to comply with this treatment would result in a termination of the medical leave and mandatory withdrawal from school.

When a student has been approved for medical leave, the Director will provide a copy of the decision to the Registrar, the Academic Dean and Dean of Students. The Registrar will notify appropriate offices on campus of the student's status and send a copy of the decision to the student for his or her records.

Copies of the decision will be maintained in the student's academic and student life files. Original documentation from the student's medical records will be maintained by the Director of Counseling and Health Services.

- c. Deadline for application for Medical Leave Status
A request for medical leave for the current semester must be made prior to the last week of class in the fall or spring semester, or prior to the last day of class in January term.
- d. Effective Date of Medical Leave Status
A student whose request for medical leave is approved during the first sixty percent of the semester will be deemed to have medical leave status as of the date on which his or her request was made to the Director of Counseling and Health Services. The student will remain on medical leave status for the balance of that semester and may request an extension for the next semester by filing a request as described below.

A student whose request for medical leave is approved during the final forty percent of the semester will be deemed to be a **medically excused** continuing student for the balance of that semester, but will have medical leave status as of the first day of the following semester. The student may request an extension for one additional semester by filing a request as described below.

- e. Extension of Medical Leave Status
A student on medical leave status may request a one semester extension by providing new documentation to the Director of Counseling and Health Services by August 1 for the fall semester or December 1 for the spring semester. A decision approving or disapproving the request will be made by the Director of Counseling and Health Services. The Director will provide a copy of the decision to the Registrar, the Academic Dean and Dean of Students.

Medical leave status may continue no longer than two consecutive semesters. After this time, a student who does not return to the College will be deemed officially withdrawn.

- f. Grades and Completion of Academic Work
A student whose request for medical leave is approved during the first sixty percent of the semester will be given a grade of "W" (Withdrawal) in each course for which he/she is registered. No "I" (Incomplete) grades will be given. No credit will be earned for any course and a prorated refund of charges will be made as described below.

A student whose request for medical leave is approved during the final forty percent of the semester may be deemed **medically excused** and may be given a grade of "I" for one or more courses with the approval of the faculty member(s). When a grade of "I" is not deemed feasible, a grade of "W" will be given. No refund of charges will be made for courses in which a grade of "I" is given. To receive academic credit for a course, incomplete work must be completed by the final day of the semester following that during which medical leave was approved. It is the responsibility of the student to contact individual instructors to arrange for the timely completion of course work. If the student does not complete work in a course within this time, the grade of "I" for that course will be changed to a "W."

- g. Required Medical Leave Under Extreme Circumstances
Under extreme circumstances, a student experiencing emotional or psychological illness to the extent that he or she is deemed to be a danger to himself or herself or others may be required to withdraw from the College and will be given medical leave status.
- h. Determination of Fitness for Return to Campus
A student requesting to return from medical leave will be asked to sign a release allowing the Director of Counseling and Health Services to communicate with the

physician, therapist, or other caregiver, as well as with other persons at Messiah ; College involved in determining the student's fitness to return.

The student must provide documentation from his or her physician, therapist, or other caregiver concerning current medical status by August 1 to be considered for approval to return for the fall semester, or by December 1 to be considered for approval to return for the spring semester. The student also may be required to have an interview with the Director of Counseling and Health Services and/or the Director of Disability Services. The College reserves the right to require the student, in order to return to and remain in classes, to be in ongoing, off-campus treatment as well as other necessary stipulations. All information will be reviewed and a decision regarding fitness to return will be made by the Director of Counseling and Health Services. The granting of medical leave by the College does not guarantee that the student will be allowed to return. If approved, the Director of Counseling and Health Services will notify the Registrar who will then notify the student and appropriate offices on campus if approval is given.

i. Registration and Housing for Returning Students

A student on medical leave will retain all accrued seniority for housing and registration purposes and may register conditionally for courses if he or she intends to return for the following semester. Any money paid to the College as deposits against tuition or charges anticipated for the following semester will be refunded in full if the student is not approved to return. Documentation for determination of fitness to return must be received by the deadlines listed above and approval to return granted in order for registration to be considered final. Seniority for housing preferences cannot be guaranteed for students who do not meet these requirements.

j. Financial Aid Implications

It is the responsibility of the student to contact the Financial Aid Office individually to discuss the implications of medical leave for his or her financial aid.

k. Refunds of Tuition and Fees

Refunds for students who are granted medical leave during the first five weeks of a semester are determined as follows:

Students who take medical leave during the first five weeks of the semester may be eligible for some refund. See the Business Office website for specific information: http://www.messiah.edu/offices/business/student_accounts/#refund

No refunds will be given for students who are granted medical leave during the final ten weeks of the semester.