

## **Medical Leave of Absence Policy**

The College recognizes that there are times when medical and mental health issues 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. A medical leave of absence (MLOA) is defined as a voluntary and temporary interruption of one's studies based on a documented physical or mental health problem. A medical leave of absence is granted based on the recommendation of the Student Health and Counseling department to the Dean of Students who will give final approval for the MLOA.

### Leaves of Absence

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://connect.geneseo.edu/register/leave\\_of\\_absence](https://connect.geneseo.edu/register/leave_of_absence). Students who have a documented health issue 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.

### Requesting a Medical Leave

Students with medical or mental health challenges impeding their living-learning experiences, who wish to take a leave of absence should complete a [MLOA FORM](#) with the Dean of Students that is then forwarded to Student Health and Counseling for their review and recommendation.

Prior to the approval of a MLOA, students requesting to take a leave for health reasons will need to consult with Student Health and Counseling for a discussion that will help identify a set of recommendations for treatment and support while they are away. Any medical documentation on the condition necessitating the leave will be requested by Student Health and Counseling, kept in the student's confidential medical record, and treated as Protected Health Information (PHI). Once the consultation is complete, Student Health and Counseling will forward its recommendation for MLOA to the Dean of Students who will make the final decision regarding the leave.

Students who leave school during the semester for health reasons are expected to receive appropriate treatment while they are away. If a student leaves mid-semester, they cannot return until at least the start of the next semester. While there is no specific timeline that students must meet prior to returning, it is expected that students allow for sufficient time to address the difficulties that led to their departure.

Upon approval, the effective date of a MLOA is the date the leave was requested. If the leave is requested after the semester ends, the effective date is the day after the last day of classes, with rare exceptions considered on a case-by-case basis of extenuating circumstances. If a student is pursuing at least 1 credit hour of coursework, they maintain their student status, and a leave is not authorized.

### Returning from Medical Leave

The Office of Enrollment will be in contact with students via email during each semester when they are on leave of absence to inquire about plans for the following semester. Students are encouraged to keep the college informed of their plan to return. To ensure that adequate time exists to compile and review all the necessary materials, requests for return from **medical leave** should be submitted no later than **December 1 for the spring term and August 1 for the fall term**.

Students on a leave of absence for medical reasons are required to consult with Student Health and Counseling to discuss their return. Every case is evaluated individually. A student must demonstrate a substantial amelioration of the health condition that precipitated the need for a medical leave as well as maintained stability and demonstrated improvement over a sufficient period which would allow them to successfully return to the College. This is determined by a report from a student's treatment provider, student reflection, and consultation with Student Health and Counseling. Upon requesting a return from MLOA, students will be guided on next steps by Student Health and Counseling.

### Considerations for MLOA

It is up to the student to check in with specific offices on campus to discuss any implications of a MLOA. The Clinical Case Manager at Student Health and Counseling can assist students with this, if needed. Students should be mindful of the following:

**Academics:** Students are encouraged to speak with an academic advisor about major specific requirements and any challenges that may arise with a leave of absence. 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. 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 deciding 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 College's 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 leave on their visa status.

**Student Housing and Campus Activities:** Students granted any type of leave 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. Any request for an exception should be discussed with the Dean of Students who would consult with the appropriate offices. Students assigned to a campus residence are subject to the terms and conditions of the SUNY Geneseo Housing License. Students who leave the campus before the end of a term may or may not be eligible to receive refunds for portions of their housing charges, per SUNY and Geneseo Policy. As SUNY 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.

**Meal Plans:** Students who leave the campus before the end of a term may or may not be eligible to receive refunds of portions of their meal plan charges, per SUNY Geneseo, and Campus Auxiliary Services (CAS) Policy.

**Accessibility:** If you are a student with a disability and have questions about the process for requesting accommodations prior to your return to SUNY Geneseo, you may contact the Office of Accessibility Services via email at [access@geneseo.edu](mailto:access@geneseo.edu), or call 585-245-5112.

*The student must be authorized to return from medical leave by the Dean of Students in order to pursue re-enrollment, which will require further evaluation by SUNY Geneseo's Student Health and Counseling staff.*

*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 \_\_\_\_\_ (print student name), have read the above information and have asked for any needed clarification of information. 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 the Dean of Students issue me a recommendation for a medical leave of absence for the \_\_\_\_\_ semester.

(Student Signature) \_\_\_\_\_ (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

(Geneseo ID #) \_\_\_\_\_ (D.O.B.) \_\_\_\_\_

Contact information for correspondence during leave:

Postal address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_