

## WITHDRAWAL AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICIES

Students may need to withdraw or take a leave of absence LOA from the University for any number of reasons. These Policies are set for the procedures for doing so. Questions regarding this information should be directed to the Registrar's Office (105 Miller Hall; 724-852-3237; [registrar@waynesburg.edu](mailto:registrar@waynesburg.edu)). Students may not withdraw or take a LOA to avoid disciplinary proceedings. Refunds of tuition and fees will be made to students who withdraw under these Policies according to the scale listed in the section of the University catalog entitled Financial Information.

Although the University cannot guarantee confidentiality for matters covered by these Policies, information submitted by students will be released only in accordance with applicable laws, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act FERPA, to those with a need to know.

### **I. Personal Leave of Absence (Withdrawal from the University) Policy**

A student may seek to take a Personal LOA for reasons other than to address medical/mental health concerns, including, e.g., to pursue professional experience, to evaluate educational goals, to respond to a family emergency, etc. A student who desires to take a Personal LOA during the semester should contact the Registrar's Office (105 Miller Hall; 724-852-3237; [registrar@waynesburg.edu](mailto:registrar@waynesburg.edu)). All requests are handled on a case-by-case basis once all appropriate documentation is received.

A Personal LOA will apply to cases in which a student must withdraw from his or her courses during any given semester and will not attempt to complete those courses. Students being granted a Personal LOA may or may not intend to return to the University.

Students who take a Personal LOA prior to the end of the tenth week of classes will have the letter W (withdrawal) recorded for each course on their permanent record. Students who take a Personal LOA subsequent to the end of the tenth week of classes will either receive a WP (withdrew while passing the course) or WF (withdrew failing) for the respective courses listed on their permanent record. The grade of WF is factored as an F in the calculation of the grade point average. However, in the event of an illness or other severe hardship beyond the student's control, the student should submit, no later than the last day of the regular term, a written petition for permission to withdrawal to the Provost. (Wherever a University administrator's title is referenced in this Policy, it is intended to include that individual's designee.) If permission is granted, a grade of W will be recorded.

Students are not permitted to take a Personal LOA during the week of semester examinations.

### **II. Medical/Mental Health Withdrawal and Leave of Absence Policy**

A student may request a Medical/Mental Health Withdrawal (referred to collectively as a "Medical Withdrawal") from the University or a Medical/Mental Health Leave of Absence (referred to collectively as a "Medical Leave of Absence" or MLOA). All such requests are made to the Registrar's Office by completing the appropriate forms. An application for a Medical Withdrawal or MLOA will not be reviewed until the form and any required documentation is submitted with all necessary signatures. All requests are handled on a case-by-case basis. In cases when a student is unable to sign required paperwork for a Medical Withdrawal, the student will be processed as a Personal LOA until the process can be completed. In cases when a student is unable to sign required paperwork for a MLOA, the student may be placed on administrative hold until the process can be completed.

A Medical Withdrawal will apply to cases in which a student must withdraw from his or her courses during any given semester and will not attempt to complete those courses. Students being granted a Medical Withdrawal may or may not intend to return to the University.

A MLOA will apply to cases in which a student cannot attend his or her classes for an extended period during any given semester but intends to return to the University to complete those courses. To be granted a MLOA, the student must intend to return to the University within a designated time period.

**A. Medical/Mental Health Withdrawal**

Medical Withdrawal will apply to cases in which a student must withdraw from his or her courses during any given semester and is unable to complete those courses. A grade of WM (Withdrew Medical) will be recorded. Students who wish to take a grade of Incomplete or IM (Incomplete Medical), with the intention of completing courses, should pursue an MLOA.

A student requesting a Medical Withdrawal must complete a Medical Withdrawal form, which requires written documentation from a physician or mental health professional. A completed Medical Withdrawal form indicating the basis for the withdrawal must be submitted to the Registrar's Office. All requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Registrar's Office in conjunction with Academic Affairs, in consultation with other campus professionals as appropriate.

Students should apply for a medical withdrawal as far in advance as is reasonably possible.

Specific conditions applicable to the Medical Withdrawal, including the conditions for future re-admittance, will be set at the time of the granting of the withdrawal. These conditions will specify the medical or mental health professional documentation that will be required for the student's return in a subsequent semester. Such documentation will also include a Returning Student Information form, which will be reviewed for evidence that sufficient improvement has occurred to allow the student to continue with progress toward degree completion.

Students who are granted a Medical/Mental Health Withdrawal will receive a grade of WM (Withdrew Medical). A grade of WM will not count as credit hours attempted in determining a student's program length and pace of completion (see the section of the University catalog entitled Financial Aid; Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy).

**B. Medical/Mental Health Leave of Absence (MLOA)**

An MLOA will apply to cases in which a student cannot attend his or her classes for an extended period during any given semester but intends to complete those courses at a later date.

A student requesting an MLOA must complete an MLOA form, which requires written documentation from a physician or mental health professional. The completed form must be submitted to the Registrar's Office. All requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Registrar's Office in conjunction with Academic Affairs, in consultation with other campus professionals as appropriate.

Specific conditions applicable to the MLOA, including the conditions for future re-admittance, will be set at the time of the granting of a MLOA. These conditions will specify the medical or mental health professional documentation that will be required for the student's return in a subsequent semester. Such documentation will also include a Reentry from MLOA, which will be reviewed for evidence that sufficient improvement has occurred to allow the student to continue with progress toward degree completion.

The student who has an approved MLOA is considered to remain in an in-school status.

Students considering a MLOA should first contact their academic advisor, or the Director of the Pathways Center, to discuss feasibility of semester completion. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure all work is completed by the approved deadline.

The following provisions apply to MLOAs:

1. The MLOA, or any additional MLOAs, may not exceed 180 days in any 12-month period;
2. The student must, in writing, stipulate a designated reentry date; if the student is a Title IV financial aid recipient, the student understands prior to the MLOA that failure to return by the approved

- designated reentry date will result in the MLOA changing to a Medical Withdrawal. This change will result in a Title IV Federal Refund Calculation, which may affect the student's financial aid, University billing account, loan repayment terms, and loan grace period;
3. The University must determine there is a reasonable expectation the student will return to the University by the designated reentry date;
  4. The University determines there is a reasonable expectation the student will be able to complete his/her coursework under the Medical Incomplete Grade Policy.

#### Medical Incomplete Grade Policy

Students receiving a MLOA will receive an IM (Incomplete Medical) grade for all credit-bearing courses for the semester the MLOA is approved. A grade of IM will not count as credit hours attempted in determining a student's program length and pace of completion (see the section of the University catalog entitled Financial Aid; Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy).

It is the responsibility of the student to address the completion of each course with individual instructors and encouraged, when possible, to do so prior to being granted the MLOA. Courses graded IM must be completed by the conclusion of the semester in which the student returns from the leave. If the coursework is not so made up within the approved timeframe, the grade will be changed to a WM (Withdrew Medical) automatically, unless an extension is submitted to the Registrar's Office by the respective faculty member(s).

### **III. Safety Intervention, Assessment and Involuntary Leave of Absence Policy**

Waynesburg University places the utmost importance on the safety, health and well-being of its students. The University has adopted this Safety Intervention, Assessment and Involuntary Leave of Absence (Involuntary LOA Policy) in furtherance of that priority.

#### **A. Scope**

This Policy establishes a process for the assessment and, when appropriate, involuntary leave of students who (i) pose a credible risk of substantial harm to a member or members of the University community; or (ii) substantially impede the educational, residential or other lawful activities of members of the University community, including the normal operations of the University itself.

Wherever a University administrator's title is referenced in this Policy, it is intended to include that individual's designee.

#### **B. Threat Assessment Committee**

The University's Threat Assessment Committee TAC provides coordinated, objective and thoughtful approaches to the prevention, identification and management of situations in which students pose or may reasonably be suspected to pose a threat to the safety, security and well-being of members of the campus community. The TAC also may assist in evaluating whether a student meets the criteria for safety intervention, assessment and/or Involuntary LOA, as set forth in section C below.

The TAC will typically include the Dean of Students, the Director of Student Health Services, the Director of the Counseling Center, the Director of the Department of Public Safety, and the Director of the Pathways Center. Others may be added to the TAC at the discretion of the Dean of Students, depending on the circumstances of a specific situation.

#### **C. Safety Intervention, Assessment and Involuntary Leave**

The identification of a student as meeting the criteria for safety intervention, assessment and/or Involuntary LOA does not constitute a sanction or other penalty, nor does it in and of itself suggest a violation of the Code of Conduct or other University policy. Depending on the circumstances, however, a student within the purview of this policy may also be subject to disciplinary proceedings in the event of a conduct violation.

### **1. Interim Action**

If the University has a reasonable basis upon which to believe that a student poses a credible threat of immediate substantial harm to a member or members of the University community, it may take interim action to protect health and safety pending completion of the process set forth in sections C.2. and 3. Such decisions are made by the Dean of Students, using the Dean's reasonable professional judgement and upon consideration of all reasonably available information. As an interim action, the University may remove a student from, or limit a student's access to, property owned by or within the control of the University, including an off-campus University-sponsored event.

A student subject to an interim action under the Policy will be afforded the opportunity to meet with the Dean of Students within two (2) business days from the effective date of the interim action in order to discuss the information upon which it was based. Following the meeting, the Dean of Students may continue the interim action pending a final decision in accordance with section C.2. and 3., or may cancel or modify the interim action. If the interim action is cancelled, the matter may still proceed through the safety intervention, assessment and leave process, if deemed appropriate by the Dean of Students.

### **2. Safety Intervention, Assessment and Involuntary Leave**

Individuals who have reason to believe that a student poses a credible risk of substantial harm to a member or members of the University community, or otherwise meets the criteria for safety intervention, assessment and/or Involuntary LOA under this Policy, are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students will conduct an informal, individualized review of available information to determine whether to proceed with the procedures set forth here.

If the Dean of Students deems it appropriate to move forward with the procedures here, the Dean shall refer the matter to the TAC, who will conduct an assessment to ascertain the following:

- nature, duration and severity of the risk;
- likelihood that potential injury and/or other substantial harm will occur;
- whether the student has substantially impeded the educational, residential or other lawful activities of members of the University community, including the normal operations of the University itself; and
- whether reasonable modifications of the University's policies, practices or procedures would significantly mitigate the risk

In conducting the individualized assessment, the TAC will consider all relevant information provided by the student, including information from a health professional of choice, and will engage in an interactive dialogue with the student to determine how the student plans to mitigate the risk. The TAC may also consult with necessary University personnel and other professionals to assess the situation and assist in formulating a proposed plan.

If the student is a qualified student with a disability, the TAC will consider whether a reasonable accommodation will mitigate the risk of harm and allow the student to meet the essential responsibilities, provided that the accommodation does not fundamentally alter the education program,

lower academic standards or create undue hardship for the University. The TAC will also ensure the student is apprised of the availability of an MLOA, if appropriate.

The TAC may require the student to:

- undergo an evaluation by an independent and objective health professional, which may include the University's resources; and/or
- execute necessary releases so that the University can access reports to inform the TAC's assessment.

If the TAC determines that an Involuntary LOA is appropriate, the student shall continue to have the option of taking a voluntary Personal LOA or Medical LOA, where appropriate. In the case of an Involuntary LOA, the TAC will provide a brief written explanation of the basis for the leave. Regardless of the nature of the leave, the TAC will also delineate, in writing, the conditions for the student's readmission.

### **3. Appeal**

A student subject to an Involuntary LOA may submit an appeal to the Provost within three (3) business days of the determination. The Provost will meet with the student, hear from any witnesses presented by the student and consider other information provided by the student. The Provost may also meet with members of the TAC. After considering the available information, the Provost may uphold the involuntary leave, reinstate the student without conditions or reinstate the student subject to conditions, which may include, for example, participation in an ongoing professional treatment program, a behavior contract, a change in housing location, a reduced course load, etc. The Provost may also modify the conditions of readmission. The Provost's decision is final.

In cases when the Provost upholds the involuntary LOA, students will have an option of taking a Personal LOA or Medical Withdrawal, where appropriate.

### **D. Return to Campus or Readmission**

Students wishing to return to campus following an Involuntary LOA must submit the request in writing to the Dean of Students, providing the documentation required by the conditions of readmission, if any. The student may also include any other supporting information. In assessing whether the student should be readmitted, the Dean of Students will:

- confirm the student's fulfillment of the conditions of return, if any;
- consult with the appropriate academic office to determine whether the student is eligible for return based on the student's academic record and the University's academic policies; and
- consider all relevant information submitted by the student, including meeting with the student, when appropriate.

The Dean may consult with the TAC in evaluating the student's request for readmission. If the Dean declines to approve the student's return to campus, the student may appeal the denial consistent with section C.3. above.

The grades for students placed on an Involuntary LOA will be processed as follows:

- Drop/Add Period – students will be dropped from their courses and withdrawn from the University for purposes of Financial Aid.



- Period Between Drop/Add and Semester Examinations – prior to the end of the tenth week of classes, students will have the letter W (withdrawal) recorded for each course on their permanent record. In cases when the Involuntary LOA occurs subsequent to the end of the tenth week of classes, students will either receive a WP (withdrew while passing the course) or WF (withdrew failing) for the respective courses listed on their permanent record.
- Week of Semester Examinations – faculty will record final grade earned, regardless of whether or not the student was permitted to complete the semester examination as part of the stipulations of the Involuntary LOA.