



WashU

Medical Leave of Absence Policy and Procedure

The purpose of a medical leave of absence (MLOA) is to provide undergraduate and graduate students on the Danforth Campus time away from Washington University for treatment of a physical or mental health condition that either requires concentrated treatment such that standard engagement with school is not feasible, or impairs a student's ability to function successfully or safely as a member of the University community. The authority to grant a MLOA and permission to return from a MLOA resides with the student's individual School. This policy describes: 1) the process to request a MLOA; 2) important information about the student's status during a MLOA; and 3) the process to request reinstatement following a MLOA.

Forms and additional information can be found on the [MLOA website](#).

Process for MLOA Departure Request and Approval

1. Contact WashU Cares

To begin the MLOA process, send an email to studentmedleave@wustl.edu, to schedule an appointment with the Leave Case Manager. At that meeting you will review guidelines, policies and expectations for taking a leave and returning. Students can submit the required forms (see below) with the initial meeting request or following the meeting. Please understand, no recommendation can be forwarded to your respective school or program until all forms have been received and reviewed.

2. Submit a Leave Request in Workday

All students wishing to take a MLOA must request [a leave request](#) in Workday.

3. Required Medical Documentation for MLOA Departures

- All students must provide documentation from treatment provider(s). All documentation must be written in English from the medical provider, or translated by a licensed professional translation service.
- If your treatment provider is on campus, please complete a release of information form ([medical](#) or [mental health](#)) and submit it with your documentation.
- If you have a current treatment provider off campus, you will need to sign their HIPAA compliant release of information and have the provider complete the [Reason for Medical Leave Provider Documentation Form](#).
- If you are not currently working with a treatment provider, you must complete a [Reason for Medical Leave Personal Statement](#).
- If an MLOA is recommended, the MLOA Committee will send a letter of recommendation, including recommended effective date, to the student's School and the school will make the final decision and notify the student.

4. **Required Signed Copy of MLOA Policy:** The student should send a copy of the signed MLOA policy to studentmedleave@wustl.edu.
5. **Deadlines.** Students must submit all necessary paperwork, including approval from their School or department, no later than the last day of classes by 5pm CST, this will allow their school to determine the outcome to obtain a MLOA for the current semester. Any request submitted beyond this deadline will be considered for the following semester.
6. **Determinations.** The Dean of the student's respective school or program will notify the student in writing of the determination. The determination will inform the student of the status of their current coursework, withdrawal from classes, and conditions for reinstatement.

Student Status during MLOA

1. **Student Status.** The student should check with their advisor, department, or designated School official about their status as a student while on MLOA. Students on leave retain access to their Washington University email account, however other resources and activities are not allowed while on leave.
2. **Registration.** While on MLOA, students may not register for any WashU classes unless they have completed the reinstatement process (below) and the student has been reinstated by their Dean's office.
3. **Tuition, Stipends and Scholarships.** The student should consult with their advisor, department, or designated School official about the MLOA's impact on stipends, scholarships, and refunds. It is strongly recommended that undergraduate students meet with their Student Financial Services advisor. Any students receiving funding (external, federal, sponsor, institutional, or other) are strongly encouraged to consult directly with their funding sources.
4. **Involvement in and Access to Campus.** While on MLOA, students are not allowed to take University classes, reside in university-owned student housing (including fraternity and sorority life housing and off-campus apartments), or participate in student organizations, programs, clubs, and activities.

Students on MLOA are not eligible to use Student Health Center – Danforth Campus, Center for Counseling and Psychological Services or the RSVP Center. Habib Medical, Psychiatry, Center for Counseling and Psychological Services and/or RSVP staff will work with the student to find an outside provider for their Medical Leave and will provide limited, short-term care to bridge a gap in treatment while outside care is being established. Questions about exemptions to this policy should be discussed directly with your provider.

Financial Aid. Students are not eligible for student financial aid while on MLOA; however, a LOA does not impact a student's future eligibility for financial aid.

- Students on leave will be reported to the National Student Clearinghouse/National Student Loan Data Service as on an approved leave of absence for up to 180 days; leaves of absence that are longer will after 180 days be reported as withdrawn per federal reporting requirements.

- Federal student loans go into repayment after the expiration of the grace period if the student is not enrolled for at least a half-time course load according to the academic load policies for their program level (undergraduate or graduate). A student on MLOA *does not* qualify for student loan deferment; however, the student may request forbearance from the lender which would temporarily suspend student loan repayment. For questions about the impact of a MLOA on student loans, contact [Student Financial Services](#) and the [Federal Student Loans](#).
5. **Health Insurance**. A student considering a MLOA should consult with Student Health Center – Danforth Campus regarding their health insurance eligibility under the Washington University Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP). Students who are not covered by SHIP during their MLOA should seek other insurance coverage.

Students granted a MLOA remain on SHIP only if they are approved by the MLOA committee and enrolled in the current academic term for thirty-one calendar days before requesting an MLOA. If eligible, students will remain on SHIP for the current plan year. The Student Health Insurance Plan year is August 1 – July 31. Students who go on a leave of absence during the Fall or Spring semester will retain their coverage until July 31.

- After July 31 and their SHIP coverage ends, students can enroll in the continuation plan within 30 days from July 31 (grace period). Continuation plan enrollment is available to purchase directly through United Healthcare on a student's MyAccount. If students do not wish to enroll, they can purchase health care on the healthcare marketplace.
- If a student does not meet the required thirty-one days of plan enrollment, at the time they request a MLOA, they can purchase a "continuation plan" to give them health insurance during their leave *only if they were enrolled in SHIP the previous academic year*. Alternatively, students considering a leave could purchase health care on the healthcare marketplace.

Process for MLOA Reinstatement Request and Approval

1. **Submit Reinstatement Materials to WashU Cares MLOA Committee**. In order to resume study at Washington University, the student will be asked to demonstrate that the condition that caused them to take a leave has resolved sufficiently to allow resumption of studies. The duration of the leave should correspond with an appropriate recovery time associated with the issues for which the leave was initiated.

Students must submit the documentation described below to studentmedleave@wustl.edu or by fax to the MLOA Committee at 314-970-9093. If using email, be aware that it is not necessarily a confidential method of communication. Please call (314) 935-5956 or email to confirm that we have received your documentation. Documentation from outside providers must originally be in English and on letterhead from the medical provider or translated by a licensed professional translation service.

- **Request to return in Workday** To begin this process, please submit a [request to return](#) in Workday.
- **Student Reflective Personal Statement**. To be completed by the student and turned in with paperwork. [This form](#) is only available during the reinstatement window.

- **Provider Readiness for Return Form.** The student's health care provider(s) must complete and sign the "[Provider Readiness for Return](#)" form. If the student is under the care of more than one health care provider, such as a psychiatrist, medical provider and/or therapist, a form from all providers are required. The form elicits pertinent information from the health provider including but not limited to (diagnosis, medications, dosages, length of time, and other functional behaviors).
 - **Release of Information.** Each student must complete a [HIPAA compliant release of information](#) with their provider to allow communication with the MLOA Committee to support assessment for readiness to return.
 - **Eating Disorders.** For students returning from an MLOA due to an eating disorder, the following additional information is required from the student's health care provider:
 - a. Complete history of the eating disorder (with explanation of severity of behaviors).
 - b. Report of physical exam completed by a physician within the past month.
 - c. Height and weight parameters and vital signs for the last 3-6 months (depending on duration of leave).
 - d. EKG and labs: CMP, CBC, amylase, urinalysis, magnesium, and phosphorus completed within the past 30 days (preferred) - 60 days (acceptable)
 - **Athletics.** Students returning from an MLOA may be asked to undergo an evaluation by a team physician and/or an additional healthcare provider designated by the university at the university's expense.
2. **Evaluation of Reinstatement Materials.** Applications are compiled and reviewed to ensure all necessary documents are included. If any documents are missing or more information is needed, a representative from WashU Cares will contact the student to follow-up. Once the MLOA committee has reviewed the documentation, a recommendation regarding the student's readiness to return to the University is given to the school. The school will reach out to the student to inform them of their final decision.
 3. **Confidentiality.** The Reinstatement Form and the Personal Statement and any other relevant information submitted as part of the reinstatement process may be shared with the designated School official after committee review.
 4. **Deadlines.** Requests for reinstatement beginning in a fall semester must be submitted between June 1 and July 1. Requests for reinstatement beginning in a spring semester must be submitted between November 1 and December 1.
 5. **Reinstatement Determination.** The designated School official will evaluate the information provided by MLOA Committee and make the final determination whether the student may be reinstated. Reinstatement is based on the student's readiness to manage a full-time course load (12-15 credits for undergraduates; minimum of 9 credits for graduate students). Generally, students will not be reinstated as a part-time student or for summer programs. The Dean's office will notify the student in writing of its determination. Factors the designated School official may consider include:
 - The MLOA Committee evaluation and recommendation.
 - The student's demonstrated ability to engage in productive and realistic academic planning.
 - The student's personal statement included on the Reinstatement Form.
 - Any external coursework completed or employment during the MLOA; and
 - Any other factors that the appropriate school official, in their discretion, deems relevant under the student's particular circumstances.

Medical Leave of Absence Postponement: Reconsideration Request

A reconsideration request is a formal request asking the committee to review a previous decision. This might include a postponement of a student's return from medical leave of absence.

This request asks the committee to review or change their decision based on the following:

- There is new, important information that wasn't available during the original meeting (through no fault of the student) and this information could change the outcome.

Below are some examples of reasons for which reconsiderations are NOT granted (this list is not exhaustive):

1. Provider paperwork was submitted by the student after the window closed (December 1 for spring reinstatements or July 1 for fall reinstatements).
2. A student did not know, forgot, or missed the deadline.
3. A student submitted an incomplete application or did not get provider forms from each provider they worked with during their MLOA.
4. A student disagrees with the decision or didn't participate in the MLOA process.
5. A student began presumptive planning such as leasing an apartment, buying a plane ticket or moving back St. Louis early.
6. Other university financial concerns.

Reconsiderations must be submitted in writing within seven calendar days of notification of a postponement decision, providing a clear description for the request that includes the following:

1. Grounds for reconsideration in accordance with the reason being there is new, important information that wasn't available at the time of the original meeting through no fault of the student;
2. An explanation supporting the request for reconsideration (limited to 500 words), including any documentation demonstrating the student's efforts to contact their provider and obtain the required provider documentation prior to the deadline;
 - a. Example: a student contacted their provider two months prior to the reinstatement deadline and reminded their provider consistently, and the provider sent in the required paperwork two days after the deadline.
3. Copies of any new referenced in the appeal that was not included in the original case material

Submit a [reconsideration request here](#).

Appeal Request

An appeal request will initiate a review to examine that the committee operated within the University's rules and procedures guaranteeing an equitable process. It does not overturn a previous decision. Appeals require the completion of paperwork. The appeals committee will look at the information from the original committee meeting, anything submitted through this form, and the findings of the MLOA reconsideration committee.

The appeals officer, whose decision is final, review may result in the following findings:

- A substantial procedural error is demonstrated, and, in the reasonable judgment of the appeal officer, the error is sufficiently significant that it may have affected the original decision.
- Affirm the original finding.

If a procedural error was discovered, the Appeals officer will make a recommendation for next steps relative to the case. Appeals must be submitted in writing and provide a clear description of why the student believes a procedural error in the MLOA process has occurred and how that error impacted the outcome. Appeals must be submitted within seven (7) calendar days of the date of the notification of the reconsideration decision.

The appeal will be determined by the Vice Chancellor for Student Success or their designee. The current Appeal Officer is the Associate Vice Chancellor for Health and Well-being, who can be contacted as follows:

Kirk Dougher, PhD

k.dougher@wustl.edu

Associate Vice Chancellor for Health and Well-being

Discrimination, harassment or bias

Washington University values inclusive excellence and human dignity and strives to foster an environment in which all community members are respected and able to take part in academic, co-curricular and social activities. Because of these values, the university developed a system through which students, faculty, staff and community members who have experienced or witnessed incidents of bias, prejudice or discrimination can report their experiences to the [Office of Institutional Equity](#).

- View a copy of the [Discrimination and Harassment policy](#).

Please complete the below information.

I, _____ (Print Name), hereby acknowledge that I have read the above Medical Leave of Absence Policy and understand the terms and conditions set forth therein. I am further requesting a review and recommendation from the WashU Cares MLOA Committee that I be placed on a Medical Leave of Absence pursuant to the terms of this Policy.

Student Signature	Student ID#	Date

One Brookings Drive, Campus Box 1201, St. Louis, MO 63130,
Phone: 314-935-3566 Fax: 314-970-9093
Email: studentmedleave@wustl.edu
Website: <https://caresteam.washu.edu/>