

Westfield State University

Administrative Procedure Document

Procedure Number: ADM010 **Title:** Leave of Absence and Readmission **Effective Date:** 2022-08-15

1. Purpose and Overview

Westfield State University recognizes that students may need to temporarily interrupt their studies for various personal, medical, or military reasons. This document outlines the policies and procedures for requesting a formal Leave of Absence (LOA) and the subsequent process for readmission to the University. A Leave of Absence is a formal, temporary separation from the University for one or more major academic semesters (Fall or Spring). This policy is designed to provide a clear and structured process for students, ensuring a smooth transition back to their academic programs upon their return.

This procedure ensures that students who take a leave of absence in good academic and disciplinary standing can resume their studies without needing to re-apply for admission to the university, provided they adhere to the conditions and timelines outlined herein. The university is committed to supporting students during their time away and facilitating their successful return.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all fully-admitted undergraduate and graduate students at Westfield State University who wish to take a temporary leave from their academic studies. It does not apply to non-degree-seeking students, students enrolled in certificate programs, or students who have been academically dismissed or suspended for disciplinary reasons. Separate policies govern withdrawals and dismissals.

3. Procedures

3.1. Types of Leave of Absence

Westfield State University offers three types of Leave of Absence:

- **Voluntary Leave of Absence:** For personal reasons, such as to pursue a special project, travel, or for financial reasons.
- **Medical Leave of Absence:** For students who need to take time off for medical or mental health reasons.
- **Military Leave of Absence:** For students who are called to active military duty.

3.2. Procedure for Requesting a Voluntary Leave of Absence

1. **Consultation:** Students considering a voluntary LOA are strongly encouraged to meet with their academic advisor to discuss the potential impact on their academic progress and to develop a plan for their return.
2. **Complete the Form:** The student must complete the “Leave of Absence Request Form,” available on the Registrar’s Office website. The form requires the student to specify the reason for the leave and the expected duration.
3. **Submit the Form:** The completed form must be submitted to the Registrar’s Office by the published deadline for the semester the leave is to begin. Deadlines are published on the academic calendar.
4. **Approval:** The Registrar’s Office will review the request and notify the student of the decision in writing via their official university email address. A hold will be placed on the student’s account to prevent registration during the leave period.

3.3. Procedure for Requesting a Medical Leave of Absence

1. **Consultation:** Students are encouraged to discuss their situation with the Dean of Students Office and their academic advisor. The Dean of Students Office can provide support and guidance on the process.
2. **Obtain Documentation:** The student must obtain a letter from a licensed healthcare provider that recommends a medical leave and specifies the expected duration of the leave. The documentation should be on official letterhead but should not contain detailed medical information to protect the student’s privacy.

3. **Complete the Form:** The student must complete the “Medical Leave of Absence Request Form,” available from the Dean of Students Office.
4. **Submit Documentation:** The completed form and supporting medical documentation must be submitted to the Dean of Students Office. The information will be kept confidential.
5. **Approval:** The Dean of Students Office, in consultation with University Health Services or Counseling and Psychological Services as needed, will review the request. The student will be notified of the decision in writing.

3.4. Procedure for Requesting a Military Leave of Absence

1. **Notification:** Students who are called to active duty must notify the Registrar’s Office and their academic advisor as soon as possible.
2. **Provide Orders:** The student must provide a copy of their military orders to the Registrar’s Office.
3. **Arrangements:** The Registrar’s Office will work with the student to make appropriate arrangements for the interruption of their studies, which may include a full tuition refund for the semester.

3.5. Maximum Leave Duration

A student may take a leave of absence for a maximum of four consecutive fall and spring semesters. If a student does not return after four semesters, they will be administratively withdrawn from the university and must reapply for admission through the regular admissions process. Summer and Winter terms are not counted towards the four-semester limit.

3.6. Readmission Procedures

To be readmitted to the University after a Leave of Absence, students must follow these procedures:

1. **Submit Intent to Return:** The student must submit an “Intent to Return from Leave of Absence” form to the Registrar’s Office by the stated deadline. The deadlines are October 15 for the Spring semester and March 15 for the Fall semester.

2. **Clear Holds:** The student must clear any outstanding financial or administrative holds on their account before they can be reactivated.
3. **Academic Advising:** Upon approval of the Intent to Return, students must meet with their academic advisor to plan their course schedule for the upcoming semester.
4. **Registration:** Once advising is complete, the student will be able to register for classes during the regular registration period.

3.7. Readmission After a Medical Leave of Absence

In addition to the general readmission procedures, students returning from a Medical Leave of Absence must provide documentation from their healthcare provider to the Dean of Students Office, confirming that they are ready to resume their studies. This documentation is due at the same time as the Intent to Return form and will be kept confidential.

4. Deadlines and Timelines

Action	Deadline
Submit Leave of Absence Request	See Academic Calendar for semester-specific dates
Submit Intent to Return (Spring)	October 15
Submit Intent to Return (Fall)	March 15
Submit MLOA Readiness Documentation	Same as Intent to Return deadline

5. Required Forms and Systems

- **Leave of Absence Request Form:** Available on the Registrar's Office page on the university website.
- **Medical Leave of Absence Request Form:** Available from the Dean of Students Office.

- **Intent to Return from Leave of Absence Form:** Available on the Registrar's Office page on the university website.

All forms should be submitted through the university's secure online portal, MyW.S.U.

6. Contact Information

For questions regarding this procedure, please contact:

Registrar's Office Location: Student Services Building, Room 101 Phone: (555) 123-4567 Email: registrar@westfieldstate.edu

Dean of Students Office Location: Student Union, Room 205 Phone: (555) 987-6543 Email: deanofstudents@westfieldstate.edu

7. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: Will my financial aid be affected if I take a Leave of Absence?

A: Yes, a Leave of Absence can impact your financial aid. You are required to complete exit counseling for any federal student loans you have received. Your eligibility for institutional scholarships and grants upon your return may also be affected. It is crucial to meet with a financial aid advisor before taking a leave to understand the full implications.

Q: Can I take classes at another institution while on a Leave of Absence?

A: Students on a Leave of Absence are not permitted to enroll in courses at another institution with the expectation of transferring those credits back to Westfield State University. If you wish to take courses elsewhere, you must officially withdraw and then apply for readmission as a transfer student.

Q: What happens to my university housing and meal plan?

A: If you are living in university housing, you must officially check out and vacate your room. Your housing and meal plan charges will be prorated based on the date of your official leave. Contact the Office of Residence Life for specific procedures.

Q: Will I still have access to university facilities and services during my leave?

A: No, students on a Leave of Absence are not enrolled and therefore do not have access to university services such as the library, gym, or health services. Your student ID card will be deactivated.

Q: What if I decide not to return to the university after my leave?

A: If you decide not to return, you should notify the Registrar’s Office in writing. If you do not return within the maximum four-semester leave period, you will be administratively withdrawn and will need to reapply for admission if you wish to return in the future.

8. Revision History

Date	Version	Author	Summary of Changes
2022-08-15	1.0	Registrar’s Office	Initial document creation.
2023-05-20	1.1	Dean of Students	Updated MLOA procedures and contact information.
2024-01-10	1.2	Registrar’s Office	Clarified deadlines for Intent to Return forms.