



ROANOKE COLLEGE

Effective Date of Policy: August 1, 2025

Responsible Department: Student Success

Last Update: First Version

Permanent or Temporary/Interim Policy: Permanent

STUDENT LEAVE OF ABSENCE/WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Purpose

During their academic journey, students may encounter unexpected situations that require them to temporarily pause their studies. These interruptions are officially termed as leaves of absence (LOA). An LOA can be voluntary or involuntary, may happen whether a student is in good standing or on academic warning, and can be related to medical issues. Taking a leave can impact a student's registration status at the College. The purpose of this policy is to explain and detail the descriptions of voluntary leave, involuntary leave, and administrative withdrawal, as well as include the refund policy for such decisions. This policy also explains the steps for returning to the College after a leave of absence or administrative withdrawal.

Policy

Impact of Taking a Leave of Absence/Withdrawal on Academic Studies

Students considering taking a leave should promptly discuss their plans with their academic advisor and schedule a meeting with one of the deans in the Dean of Students office, as well as the financial aid office and the NCAA compliance officer in athletics (for student athletes). When a student takes a voluntary leave or is placed on involuntary leave under this policy, the Dean of Students (or designee) will determine any conditions for the resumption of studies in the College at a future date on an individualized basis and communicate this information to the student promptly in writing.

Leave of Absence/Administrative Withdrawal

A. Voluntary Leave of Absence

Students will typically receive permission to take a voluntary leave of absence for up to four consecutive semesters or four cumulative semesters if more than one leave is taken. In view of the nature and challenge of the academic program, it is the College's expectation that students will not exceed four cumulative semesters of leave over the course of their time as a student unless otherwise provided for by this policy.

Students planning any leave should promptly consult with their academic advisor and arrange to meet with one of the deans in the office of the College Dean of Students as soon as the need for the leave arises. Additionally, the student should consult with financial aid and, for athletes, with the NCAA compliance officer. For full tuition credit, a leave of absence must be arranged prior to the beginning of the term (see Credit Policy for Leave of Absence/Withdrawal below). Other charges (room, board, course materials, etc.) may still apply and any credits will be prorated accordingly.

A [leave of absence for health reasons](#) may be granted in situations in which a student's physical and/or psychological functioning was impaired to such a degree that the student could not complete the academic requirements for the semester. The Dean of Students has the authority to review and grant leaves of absence for health reasons in consultation with Student Health & Counseling Services.

If there has been an event with health consequences so severe that the outlined requirements are precluded or self-evident, then the student, or an immediate or designated family member, may initiate and substantiate the health leave of absence request by directly contacting the Dean of Students office.

Procedures Related to Voluntary Leave of Absence

If the leave of absence is granted, the Dean of Students' Office notifies other campus offices (e.g. the Registrar, Business Office, Residence Life & Housing, Athletics [for student athletes], Financial Aid, Campus Safety) as necessary, and a hold is placed preventing or removing the student's registration (a "Registration Hold").

A student receiving notification of a leave of absence for health reasons will also be provided information about returning to the College and lifting the Registration Hold, and should submit the form called "[Requesting a Return from a leave of absence for Health Reasons](#)." All students taking a leave of absence for health reasons must receive a clearance of health before being allowed to return and enroll. With few exceptions, a student should typically not expect to enroll the semester following the leave of absence for health reasons.

Students who are on leave may not store any belongings at the College.

Students who are taking a voluntary leave of absence are encouraged to consult with the career advising staff at PLACE, who may be able to assist them in making plans for their time away from the College.

B. Involuntary Leave of Absence

The Dean of Students in the College may place a student on an involuntary leave of absence according to the policies set forth in this document. Because of the College's unique

educational environment, a student may also be placed on an involuntary leave of absence in the following cases:

1. Medical circumstances: (a) The student poses a direct threat to the health or safety of the student or others or has seriously disrupted others in the student's residential community or academic environment; and (b) the student's behavior or threatening state is determined to be the result of a medical condition, or the student refuses to cooperate with efforts deemed necessary by Student Health & Counseling Services to evaluate the cause of the student's behavior or threatening state. In some circumstances, the level of care and accommodation needed may exceed the resources or appropriate staffing capabilities of a residential college or may be beyond the standard of care that a college health service can be expected to provide or monitor, in which case continued enrollment may constitute a serious disruption of the residential community or the academic environment, justifying an involuntary leave of absence.
2. The student has allegedly violated a disciplinary rule of the College and the Dean of Students, in consultation with the Vice President for Student Success and the Roanoke Experience, concludes that the student poses a significant risk to the safety or educational environment of the community.
3. There is a reasonable basis to believe the student has engaged, or threatened to engage, in conduct that has caused or is likely to cause serious disruption to the learning, extra-curricular and/or living activities of members of the community or others, including by impeding the rightful activities of others.
4. The student is unable to function as a student.
5. The student's continued presence on campus poses a serious threat to the physical safety of any person or property.
6. The student is banned from campus.
7. The student has not registered as required at the beginning of each semester.
8. The student withdraws from all courses. The leave of absence will be effective immediately.

An incident that gives rise to an involuntary leave of absence may subsequently result in disciplinary action.

When the College receives information indicating that a student may meet one or more of the above criteria, the Dean of Students (or designee) will, in most cases and if feasible, first make reasonable attempts to meet with the student to discuss their concerns. The Dean of Students (or designee) may also seek other information, which can include but is not limited to

requesting that the student be assessed by Student Health & Counseling Services or another health provider. Using reasoned judgment and taking into account the individual circumstances, the Dean of Students (or designee) may determine that the student (1) may remain enrolled without conditions, (2) may remain enrolled with conditions that are to be described in writing, or (3) should or, in some circumstances, must take a leave.

In making an informed and individualized decision to place a student on an involuntary leave, the Dean of Students (or designee) will consider germane information, including information provided in a timely manner by the student. When appropriate, the student may be asked to sign a health records release to authorize direct communication between and among the Dean of Students (or designee), Student Health & Counseling Services, and/or the student's health provider(s). If a student declines to provide requested information and/or authorizations, the Dean of Students (or designee) will make their determination after considering the available information and will do so without the benefit of information that may be directly germane to the decision.

If a leave is indicated, the student normally first will be given the opportunity to take the leave voluntarily, thereby eliminating the need to complete the involuntary leave process. If the student declines to take a voluntary leave, the Dean of Students (or designee) has the authority to place the student on an involuntary leave.

When the Dean of Students decides that a leave of absence is appropriate, the decision and the conditions for resumption of studies will be communicated in writing. A student on a leave of absence no longer attends classes, participates in College programs, holds a College job, or uses College facilities. A student placed on leave of absence must immediately vacate College housing and may be entitled to credits of tuition and fees. Charges for room and board will be credited at a prorated rate (see Credit Policy for Leave of Absences/Withdrawals below). Ordinarily, a student placed on involuntary leave will not be allowed to resume the student's studies until, at minimum, one semester has passed.

Any student who wishes to return to campus during the period of leave must seek advance authorization by the Dean of Students.

A student placed on an involuntary leave of absence may request, within fifteen days of the date of the decision, a review of the decision according to this policy by the Vice President of Student Success and the Roanoke Experience. The student must submit the request for a review of the decision and any supporting materials in writing. The decision of the Vice President of Student Success and the Roanoke Experience is final and cannot be appealed.

A student placed on an involuntary leave of absence will not be permitted to resume their studies until the Dean of Students makes a fact-specific assessment of the circumstances and concludes that the circumstances that brought about the leave no longer exist or the situation

can be eliminated by reasonable modification or accommodation. (See Returning to the College from a Leave or Administrative Withdrawal below.)

If the involuntary leave results in a student exceeding the maximum four semesters of cumulative leave from the College, unless otherwise provided for in this policy (see Voluntary Leave of Absence above), the student will need to petition the Dean of Students to return to their studies. The College is not obliged to approve a student's return.

A student's transcript and all external communications by the College will make no distinction between a voluntary and an involuntary leave.

C. Administrative Withdrawal

Students may be administratively withdrawn from the College because of financial or administrative restrictions. Restrictions may result from a student's failure to fulfill financial obligations to the College or to comply with college rules and regulations. Whenever possible, students are warned of an impending restriction and are notified when one has been imposed. In order to resume studies in subsequent semesters, students need to clear the restriction with the administrative or academic office which imposed it. If a student anticipates being unable to clear the restriction in a timely manner, they should meet with a dean in the office of the Dean of Students as soon as possible to request a leave of absence.

Students who have exceeded their four semesters of approved leave, or who failed to meet with one of the College deans of students to formally request the leave, will be withdrawn from the College and must petition the Dean of Students to return, except as provided for in this policy.

Returning to the College from a Leave or Withdrawal

Upon return to the College from a leave of absence or withdrawal, students are expected to complete the requirements for the degree without further interruption. Students who intend to resume studies may also wish to contact the Financial Aid Office at least six weeks before matriculation to determine financial aid eligibility and contact the office of Residence Life & Housing to apply for residential housing.

A resumption of studies conference with their college advisor or one of the deans in the Dean of Students office is typically required in the first week of the semester.

(a) Returning to the College --Voluntary Leave

Students may return from a voluntary leave of absence, which has not exceeded the four-semester cumulative limit, by notifying in writing the Dean of Students in the College. This notification may be by email. The notification must include a statement expressing the student's intention to return and describing the student's activities while on leave. The deadline

for notifying the Dean of Students is at least four weeks prior to the start of the semester in which the student intends to return.

(b) Returning to the College -- Voluntary Leave -Academic Warning

In cases where students are granted leaves of absence while on academic warning, the statement must also include an explanation of what conditions contributed to the academic difficulties and how the student will ensure that the same conditions will not be present upon the student's return.

Students taking a leave while on academic warning will remain on warning upon their resumption of studies. Additionally, in the first semester of resuming studies while on academic warning, students must either achieve the required minimum GPA for their classification at the time of evaluation (which may be different from when they were placed on warning) or earn at least a 2.0 term GPA in each subsequent term of warning. Otherwise, students who do not meet the GPA requirement will be suspended for one regular term and must petition to resume their studies in the College (see Warning, Suspension, and Appeals). If the suspension for an additional term results in a student exceeding the maximum four semesters of cumulative leave from the College, then the student will need to petition the Dean of Students (see below).

(c) Returning to the College – Voluntary Leave—Medical Conditions

In cases where a student's leave involves medical conditions, the resumption of studies is contingent upon the condition being resolved or managed successfully. Given these circumstances, it is expected that students will take suitable actions to remedy the problems necessitating the leave of absence and provide substantiating documentation to assess and assure their academic readiness and ability to participate in all aspects of the campus community. Therefore, prior to your return to Roanoke College you will need to provide a written personal statement indicating:

- Explanation of the situation that necessitated the leave of absence for health reasons;
- What actions have been taken since taking the leave of absence to resolve the impairments in functioning due to the health conditions and any other problems that contributed to the leave;
- A description of the resources and behaviors that the student plans to use to succeed when they return to Roanoke College.

In making an informed decision to allow a student to resume the student's studies, the Dean of Students (or designee) will consider germane medical and other information available to them, including information provided in a timely manner by the student. The student may be asked to sign a medical records release, and to authorize direct communication between the Student Health & Counseling Services' Director (or designee) and the student's medical provider(s) regarding the circumstances and the student's medical information, and to authorize the

Director to share the substance of those communications with the Dean of Students or others, as appropriate. Clinicians from Student Health & Counseling Services will receive and review documentation from healthcare providers and provide a recommendation to the Dean of Students Office regarding a leave of absence for Health Reasons request.

If a student declines to authorize communications between and among the student's provider, the Dean of Students, and Student Health & Counseling Services' Director (or their designee) and/or declines to authorize the release of germane medical records, then the Dean of Students will make the decision after considering the available information and will do so without the benefit of information that may be directly germane to the decision.

Additional conditions may be required of the student requesting to return, depending on the student's medical condition (e.g. requirements for continued treatment, professional monitoring of the student's condition by a local treatment team, etc.). In such cases, the student will be notified of the additional requirements prior to the student's return. Students who need reasonable accommodations for a disability in conjunction with their return to enrollment should promptly contact Accessible Education Services and follow the required protocols.

(d) Returning to the College ---Withdrawal/Involuntary Leave

Students on leave who have pending disciplinary cases will ordinarily not be permitted to resume their studies until the disciplinary case has been resolved. If the time taken to resolve the case, or any sanction imposed as part of the resolution of the disciplinary case, results in a student exceeding the maximum four semesters of cumulative leave from the College, then the student will need to petition the Dean of Students in order to return (see below).

A student who has been withdrawn must petition the Dean of Students to return to their studies.

The College is not obliged to approve student resumption of studies. Students who are allowed to resume their studies after an administrative withdrawal are expected to complete their studies without further interruption.

Petitioning for Additional Leave of Absences

Students who have exceeded four consecutive or cumulative semesters of approved leave ordinarily will be administratively withdrawn effective at the end of the fourth semester. Petitions may be granted to extend a leave for additional semesters for students fulfilling a military service requirement, religious obligations, as a reasonable accommodation for a disability, or otherwise as required by law. Students seeking an exception to the four-semester maximum must petition the Dean of Students no later than the end of the fourth semester of leave (see further Military and Veterans' Educational Benefits).

Students who have exceeded four semesters of approved leave, unless otherwise provided for in this policy, or who have been administratively withdrawn are required to submit a completed petition to resume studies along with supporting materials no later than eight weeks prior to the start of the semester of intended return.

The petition will be reviewed by the Dean of Students, who will exercise reasoned judgment in deciding whether the resumption of studies is appropriate. The results of the review will be timely communicated in writing to the student upon completion of the review. The College is not obliged to approve a student to resume the student's studies. The decision of the Dean of Students is final and unreviewable.

Credit Policy for Leave of Absences/Withdrawals

The College operates on an annual budget with commitments for faculty salaries and educational and plant expenses made a full year in advance. Therefore, Roanoke College has established a credit policy which is equitable to the College and students. The date of the leave of absence/withdrawal used to compute credit for future terms is the date the student last attended class, as recorded by the Registrar's Office. Local students living on campus not withdrawing from the college but electing to move home once the term has started will not receive a refund or credit of room and board regardless of the date they move off campus.

For students who take a leave of absence, withdraws or separates from the College for any reason prior to the beginning of a term, a refund or credit of all tuition, room, board, and fees paid will be made, less the advance payment required of all students, provided a written notice is presented to the Office of the Registrar by the matriculation date.

If an enrolled student takes a leave of absence, is administratively withdrawn or separates from the College before the 60% point of the period of enrollment, a credit of tuition, room, board, and activity and technology fees will be calculated using calendar days and pro-rated based on the student's date of leave or withdrawal. Any financial aid that is not earned must be returned to its source. The calculation of the return of these funds may result in the student owing a balance to the College or Federal Government. Federal funds will be returned in accordance with federal regulations. In addition, balances owed to Roanoke College - such as parking fines, student health fees, disciplinary fines, library fines, etc. - will be deducted from any credit or refund due before any disbursement is made to the student or the student's family.

In accordance with federal regulations, the College believes that it is the responsibility of the student and the student's family to pay affordable educational costs before any financial aid is paid. In view of this basic approach to family support, any charges to a student account that are assessed for the period of enrollment prior to a leave, withdrawal or suspension are viewed as first having been paid by the student and his or her family. Therefore, all financial aid will be returned to its source before any funds will be credited or refunded to the student or his or her family.

Upon a leave of absence, withdrawal or separation from the College for any reason, the Housing Agreement is terminated and the resident student forfeits any current or future room assignments. Residents must vacate their living areas within 48 hours. Upon return to the College, the student will be assigned housing based on available accommodations. Changes in room assignments can be made by contacting the Residence Life and Housing office.