

**Medical Leaves of Absence,  
Permanent Withdrawals, and Transfers:  
Process and FAQs**

**Medical Leave of Absence (MLOA) Process**

The purpose of a medical leave of absence (MLOA) is to provide students time away from campus for treatment of a physical or mental health condition that impairs a student’s ability to function safely and successfully as a member of our community. The authority to grant an MLOA and permission to return from an MLOA resides with the Student Assistance and Support Services team (SASS) in the Dean of Students Office.

Each leave is individualized based on the needs of the student and handled on a case-by-case basis. Students who request and obtain a voluntary MLOA during an academic semester may be eligible for a number of benefits, including:

- Tuition adjustments or refunds
- Later course withdrawals
- A coordinated treatment plan
- For international students, depending upon the circumstances, an MLOA may provide a way to remain in the U.S. while maintaining legal status

**Deadlines:**

For an MLOA to take effect during an ongoing semester, the MLOA application must typically be submitted before 5p.m. Friday during the 10th week of classes in such semester (except for summer term, see deadlines below). An MLOA typically lasts one or two semesters. The deadline for reinstatement is eight weeks before the first day of the semester in which you wish to return to the Law School.

Medical Leave request deadlines:

<b>Semester</b>	<b>Deadline for request for MLOA</b>
Fall Semester	no later than the end of the 10 <sup>th</sup> week of classes
Spring Semester	no later than the end of the 10 <sup>th</sup> week of classes
Summer Semester	no later than the end of the 5 <sup>th</sup> week of classes

Request for reinstatement from MLOA deadlines:

<b>Semester</b>	<b>Deadline for request for reinstatement</b>
Fall Semester	no later than 8 weeks prior to the first day of classes
Spring Semester	no later than 8 weeks prior to the first day of classes
Summer Semester	no later than 6 weeks prior to the first day of classes

Step 1 – Apply for MLOA:

You must first apply online [here](#).

Step 2 - Contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) or Health Services:

You must schedule an interview with CAPS (mental health-related leave requests) or Health Services (for physical health-related leaves) for evaluation.

CAPS Address:

Abbott Hall

Phone: 847.491.2151

[CAPS website](#)

Chicago Student Health Services Address:

675 North St. Clair, Suite 18-200

Phone: 847.491.8100

Chicago Student [Health Services website](#)

You must sign releases that allow CAPS or Chicago Student Health to communicate with The SASS staff in the Dean of Students office regarding your diagnosis, prognosis, and proposed treatment.

Step 3 - Contact SASS Program:

After the CAPS or Health Services evaluation, students should contact the Evanston Dean of Students office for a MLOA appointment with one of the Assistant Deans in the SASS program.

SASS Program Address:

601 University Place, Room 40

Phone: 847.491.8430

The Assistant Dean in the SASS program will work with the Law School Student Services Department to ensure all necessary program and law school approvals are obtained. The Law School will then update the student's record to reflect that the student is on an approved medical leave of absence.

Once approved for leave by an Assistant Dean in SASS, students must schedule a meeting with the Law School Dean of Students office to meet with the Dean of Students or Assistant Dean of Students.

Law School Dean of Students Office:

MC166

Phone: 312.503.0785

Students must also schedule a meeting with their Career Strategy office [advisor](#).

Students are also encouraged to consult with the Chicago Campus Financial Aid Office regarding the financial aid implications of MLOA.

Northwestern University Office of Financial Aid  
710 N. Lake Shore Drive, Room 629  
Chicago, IL 60611-3078  
Phone: (312) 503-8722  
Fax: (312) 503-8700  
Email: [financial-aid-chicago@northwestern.edu](mailto:financial-aid-chicago@northwestern.edu)

### **Determination:**

The Dean of Students Office will notify the student in writing of the determination as to the propriety of the leave. The approval for an MLOA will include some treatment expectations during the leave of absence which will be individually tailored to meet each student's situation. The DOS may notify other university departments of the student's change in status.

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### **Submitting Applications for Reinstatement from MLOA**

Applications for reinstatement must be submitted to the Dean of Students office NO later than eight weeks before the start of the term in which you wish to return to the Law School. Applications for reinstatement will not be considered after the deadline. (Please note that course registration may or may not have already taken place at that point in time. The advance notice is necessary to make sure that you are properly enrolled in University systems and to allow for any required evaluation before you may return.)

#### **Step 1 - Applying for Reinstatement From MLOA:**

Complete the following [Request For Reinstatement From MLOA Form](#).

Upon submission, the form will be routed to the appropriate Assistant Dean in SASS and the Associate Director of CAPS or Director of Health Services.

#### **Step 2 - Contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) or Health Services:**

The student must schedule an interview for reinstatement with CAPS (for mental health reasons) or Health Services (for physical health reasons) and provide documentation of treatment efforts/resolution. Students should also sign a release of information allowing their current treatment providers to speak with CAPS or Health Services staff.

CAPS Address:  
Abbott Hall  
Phone: 847.491.2151  
[CAPS website](#)

Chicago Student Health Services Address:  
675 North St. Clair, Suite 18-200  
Phone: 847.491.8100;  
Chicago Student [Health Services website](#)

### Step 3 - Contact the Dean of Students' Office:

After the CAPS or Health Services evaluation, the student should contact the Dean of Students office for a reinstatement appointment with one of the Assistant Deans in the Student and Support Services (SASS) Office:

Dean of Students Office  
Scott Hall, 601 University Place, Room 40  
Phone: 847.491.8430  
[Dean of Students website](#)

### **Determination:**

The Assistant Dean in SASS, based upon the recommendations from CAPS and/or Health Services, will make a determination regarding reinstatement. Reinstatement is based on the student's readiness to manage the rigorous academic program and safely function in our community. The Assistant Dean in SASS will consult with appropriate personnel in the Law School as necessary to help in making the reinstatement determination. The Dean of Students Office will notify the student and other necessary University offices in writing of the determination, and, if approved, whether any conditions will apply. If reinstatement is denied, the student may appeal the determination as described below.

### **Appeal:**

If reinstatement is denied, the student may appeal the determination to the Law School Dean of Students (or his or her designee) within ten (10) business days of the decision. The appeal should be made in writing and should set forth the basis for the appeal. The Law School Dean of Students shall review the record and any additional information submitted by the student and renders a decision within ten (10) business days of receiving the appeal. The Dean of Students' decision shall be final.

### **Permanent Withdrawals**

If you are considering a permanent withdrawal from law school, then you must first meet with the Law School Dean of Students or Assistant Dean of Student Services. If you decide to end your studies, then you must complete the Law School Leave form, obtain all necessary

signatures (some depend on your program or status), and return the form to Student Services for the final signature. Your tuition charge for that term is dependent upon the date of completion of the form. Your failure to complete the form in a timely fashion may decrease the amount of tuition returned to you.

### **Administrative Withdrawals**

A student who, without notice, fails to regularly attend class, and fails to respond to reasonable communications from the law school, may be permanently withdrawn from that course and, if this occurs in multiple courses, may be permanently withdrawn from the law school. Students withdrawn under such circumstances must re-apply to the law school in order to return to their studies.

### **FAQs**

#### 1. When can I take a leave of absence?

The presumption is that students can complete their law studies within the established time frame for the program in which they are admitted. Students should take a leave when a medical or family issue arises that is incompatible with the timely and successful completion of their studies. Most leaves are due to medical reasons and require documentation of the medical condition. Personal leaves will be granted for good cause.

#### 2. Is there a limit on the length of my leave?

Under ABA rules, you must complete your law studies within 84 months of when you start law school. A typical leave of absence is between one semester and one year. A leave in excess of one year must be supported by extraordinary circumstances.

#### 3. Is there a limit on the number of leaves I can take?

Students may take one leave of absence during their time in law school. The expectation is that the student will address all issues during this leave and return able to complete his or her studies. Only in exigent circumstances will a student be permitted to take a second leave.

#### 4. Can I take a leave in the middle of a semester? If so, what are the financial and transcript implications?

Leaves are permitted mid-semester but no later than 5p.m. Friday during the 10th week of classes in such semester. The date you take the leave has direct financial implications. You should contact both Student Accounts and Financial Aid with regard to those issues. If you take a leave after the end of the add/drop period, then your transcript may be marked with a W (withdrawn) for each course in which you were enrolled at the time of the leave. If you take a leave before the end of the add/drop period, then you will

manually withdraw from your course enrollments and your transcript will not show that you were enrolled in that semester.

5. Can I take a temporary leave for a great work opportunity?

Personal leaves will be granted for good cause. You may take a leave to pursue an employment opportunity that would be incompatible with your law school enrollment and beneficial to your career. Remember that under ABA rules, law students must complete their law studies with 84 months of when they began their course of study.

6. If I transfer to another law school, do I need to complete a permanent leave form?

Yes.