

Involuntary Leave Policy for Graduate Students in the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences

Policy Statement

The primary goals of this Involuntary Leave Policy ("Policy") are to protect the well-being and safety of University students and the University community and to preserve the integrity of the University's academic, residential and administrative functions.

This Policy is not intended to replace disciplinary actions taken in response to violations of other University policies, including the University Judicial Code (UJC). A student who commits a violation of any University policy before taking voluntary leave or being placed on involuntary leave may be required to defend such charges before being considered for re-admission. Temporary suspension may also be issued in accordance with the UJC.

Examples of circumstances where this Policy may be invoked include: suicidal threats; self-starvation or purging behavior; substance abuse or addiction; threats of harm to self or others; or disturbing, disruptive or destructive behavior. This Policy will not be invoked unless the student's behavior is of such a serious nature that the continued presence of the student at the University is judged to threaten the safety, well-being or health of that student and/or others in the Washington University community, or the ability of that student or others to engage in customary functions and activities at the University.

Policy Procedures

The Vice Chancellor for Students, the Dean of any school or the designees of any of the aforementioned (referred to herein as "Administrator") may be alerted to a student's inappropriate behavior from a variety of sources on campus including the student's advisor, a college dean, student services staff, health care providers, or other faculty members. If the Administrator deems it appropriate, the following procedures may be initiated.

1. **Notification:** Whenever possible, the Administrator will notify the student that involuntary leave is under consideration and attempt to meet with the student to discuss his or her behavior. The Administrator will provide the student with a copy of this Policy. During the meeting, the Administrator may choose to encourage the student to take a voluntary leave of absence, thereby eliminating the need to complete the procedures for involuntary leave. If the Administrator believes that the student's well-being may be in imminent danger, he or she may proceed with a case conference without notifying and/or meeting with the student.
2. **Assembly of Case Conference Committee:** If the student is unable or chooses not to meet with the Administrator, or if the student chooses not to take a voluntary leave of

absence and the Administrator still believes that involuntary leave may be appropriate, the Administrator will convene a Case Conference Committee ("Committee") of appropriate individuals or their designates to conduct a case conference regarding the need for an involuntary leave of absence. The Committee may include:

- The Dean of the student's School
 - Associate/Assistant Dean of the student's School
 - Assistant/Associate Vice Chancellors for Students
 - Judicial Administrator
 - Director of the Habib Health & Wellness Center
 - Director of Mental Health Services
 - Chief of Police
 - Director of the Office of International Students & Scholars
 - University Counsel
 - The student's Advisor(s) and/or Director of Graduate Studies
 - Professors, instructors, or staff who have observed the student's behavior of concern
3. **Committee Consideration:** The Administrator should convene a Case Conference as soon as possible. During this conference, the Committee should address whether and to what extent the student engages in, or is judged to be likely to engage in, behavior described in this Policy. Where deemed necessary by the Committee to facilitate a more informed recommendation, the Committee may consult with other University administrators, faculty or staff familiar with the student. The Committee may seek additional information from the student or enlist the assistance of other University faculty or staff members familiar with the student to consult with the student on behalf of the Committee. If contacted, the student may refuse to provide information, but such refusal shall not limit the right of the Committee to make a recommendation under this Policy, nor limit the right of the University to mandate an involuntary leave.
 4. **Committee Recommendation:** Following the Case Conference and the review of relevant information, the Committee will make a written recommendation to the Administrator. In lieu of recommending involuntary leave, the Committee may make recommendations as to other conditions and/or requirements under which the student may remain at the University.
 5. **Decision:** After review of the Committee's recommendation, the Administrator will decide whether to mandate an involuntary leave of absence, to mandate other requirements if the student remains at the University, or to permit the student to remain at the University with no additional requirements. The Administrator will give the student written notice of this decision. This notice will provide (1) a brief summary of the reasons for decision, (2) the duration of the leave or a description of the requirements for the student to remain on campus, and (3) the steps that the student must take to request readmission if involuntary leave is invoked. The Administrator may notify a parent or guardian, in accordance with the Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act ("FERPA"). Pursuant to FERPA, the Administrator may also notify a spouse or partner upon obtaining the student's consent. Where an involuntary leave is mandated, the student must leave campus within the time frame established in the notice. In that event, the student's parent(s), guardian(s) or other persons may be asked to make arrangements for the safe removal of the student from the University community.

Option of Voluntary Leave: At any time prior to the Administrator's decision, the student may choose to take voluntary leave. The University expects students to notify family members when they voluntarily withdraw from the University. However, when permitted by FERPA, the University retains the discretion to notify parents, guardians, spouses or partners if the student chooses to leave.

Transcripts & Tuition: Leave may have an effect on academic grades, credits and access to University housing or other facilities. Tuition, financial aid, and housing costs will be refunded in accordance with University policy. Regardless of whether leave is voluntary or involuntary, the following notation will be made on the student's transcript: "*Leave of Absence.*" When involuntary leave is not mandated, but a student is required to fulfill certain requirements to remain on campus, no notation will be made on the transcript.

Safety & Security: In cases involving serious and imminent threat to the safety, well being or health of the student or other members of the campus community, or to the ability of others in the University community to conduct their customary University functions and activities, the Administrator may take immediate action to remove the student from the University community. In such event, the Administrator may immediately notify the student's parent, guardian, spouse, partner, or other relevant individuals in accordance with FERPA. The parent, guardian or other person may be asked to make arrangements for the safe removal of the student from the University community pending a decision on involuntary leave.

Request for Re-enrollment

When a student is placed on involuntary leave or accepts voluntary leave, a letter from the Administrator to the student will outline the conditions for re-enrollment. Conditions for re-enrollment are at the discretion of the Administrator. If the leave was for health or medical reasons, the Administrator will work with the Director of Health Services or his/her designate to formulate appropriate conditions of return, which may include requirements and/or guidance regarding treatment. A copy of this letter will be forwarded to the Academic Dean of the student's College or School and, where health-related, to the Director of the Habib Health & Wellness Center.

When a student's voluntary or involuntary leave is not health-related, the procedures to request re-enrollment will be outlined in the Administrator's letter.

The following process will guide re-enrollment for all students taking involuntary or voluntary leave of absence for a health-related reason:

1. The student must contact in writing both the Academic Dean and the Director of the Habib Health & Wellness Center to request re-enrollment between June 1 and July 1 for the upcoming fall semester or November 1 and December 1 for the spring semester.
2. The student's health status must be reviewed by the Director of the Habib Health & Wellness Center or his/her designate. As part of the review, the student may be asked to present written evidence that the student has been evaluated and completed follow-up measures recommended by the student's treating health care professional. This evidence

may include a recitation of the health care professional's credentials, a description of their contact with the student, the evaluation method, the diagnosis, the recommended follow-up measures and the student's efforts to complete them. The student's efforts to complete those follow-up measures will be evaluated to determine whether the student used the time away from the University to address the issues that led to the separation and to acquire skills to facilitate a successful return to the University.

3. A recommendation regarding medical eligibility for re-enrollment will be made by the Director of the Habib Health & Wellness Center or his/her designate and forwarded to the student's Academic Dean and the Administrator. The Academic Dean, in consultation with the Administrator, will determine academic eligibility for re-enrollment and will communicate in writing the final decision and any conditions to the student.

Appeal of Administrator Decisions

A student may submit, within 24 hours of receiving the written decision from the Administrator, a written appeal to the Provost who will review the written record only. A decision to affirm or reverse the Administrator's decision will be rendered within 48 hours. The decision of the Administrator will be affirmed if supported by substantial information appearing in the record of the case. The decision of the Provost is final.

Confidentiality

The University will strive to protect, to the greatest extent possible, the confidentiality of students involved in matters of voluntary or involuntary leave. Because the University has an obligation to preserve the security of its community, the University cannot guarantee complete confidentiality where it would conflict with the University's obligation to investigate meaningfully matters which may threaten a student's health or safety or the safety and security of the University community. When some disclosure of the University's information or sources is necessary, that disclosure will be limited to the extent possible. Medical records of a student will be protected in accordance with the Washington University Habib Health & Wellness Center Notice of Privacy Practices. The University will, to the extent permitted by law, keep confidential all records of Committee reviews. The records maintained by the Case Conference Committee will be available only to the Administrator and other University officials in accordance with FERPA. All records will be destroyed after a period of ten (10) years from the date of final decision on involuntary leave or the student's decision to take voluntary leave, or ten years from date of graduation or last semester of enrollment.

Adopted August 18, 2014