

## VOLUNTARY LEAVE AND READMISSION POLICIES & PROCEDURES

### GENERAL INFORMATION

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A voluntary leave from the University is granted to students who wish to take time away from their studies for a variety of reasons, including employment opportunities, personal or family circumstances, the desire to travel, or simply to gain perspective on their academic and career priorities. After a temporary withdrawal from the University, students often return better prepared to make the most of academic opportunities at Columbia. In our experience, students who hold full-time jobs or undertake organized projects enjoy more success upon return than students who spend their leave in less structured undertakings. Students are urged to pay particular attention to the deadlines for requesting readmission. Students are required to check their Columbia email while on leave as this is the official means of communication used by the University. Advising deans in the Berick Center for Student Advising (CSA) should be consulted with any questions.

For **CC students**, a leave can be granted for a minimum of one term and a maximum of two years. As a general matter, the expectation is that a voluntary leave of absence will not extend beyond a two-year leave of absence (whether cumulatively or consecutively).

For **SEAS students**, voluntary leaves are granted for a period of one academic year only; voluntary leaves will ordinarily not be granted for one semester, or for more than one year. In exceptional cases, an undergraduate student may apply for readmission following a one-term voluntary leave of absence (please refer to this document's Readmission Deadlines and Procedures section).

Unless a student is granted an exception in extenuating circumstances, a student is permanently withdrawn after they exceed the maximum time period and must reapply for admission through the school's regular admissions process.

A student must consult with his or her advising dean to initiate a leave and then submit a petition to the Committee on Academic Standing to request a voluntary leave. While on leave, it is expected that students will remove themselves from the Columbia community and will not spend time on campus. Please note that you will not receive credit for any courses taken during a voluntary leave, and that you will not be guaranteed housing when you return.

### ACADEMIC STANDING

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Students are only permitted to take a voluntary leave if they are in good academic standing. If a voluntary leave begins on or before the CC Pass/D/Fail deadline or the SEAS drop deadline, the semester will not appear on the academic record and will not count toward the eight-semester limit. If a leave begins after that deadline, courses will remain on the transcript, and the semester will count toward the eight total semesters granted every undergraduate in CC and SEAS.

When students depart after the deadlines listed above, they must be aware that they will likely fall behind in points necessary to remain in good academic standing. To determine whether or not they will fall behind, students should remember that CC students should complete an average of 15.5 points per term to remain in good academic standing; SEAS students should complete an average of 16 points per term to remain in good academic standing. Students should consult with their advising deans to learn whether or not they will fall below the "low points threshold" established for CC and SEAS students and, if so, work with their advising deans and departments to create a reasonable academic plan to ensure completion of the degree in eight terms. Students are not permitted to earn credits toward the degree while on voluntary leave from the University.

### FINANCIAL AID

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It is vital that students direct all financial aid questions to the Office of Financial Aid and Educational Financing at (212) 854-3711. A student who is away from college for more than a semester may be required to begin loan repayments. Therefore, it is important to schedule an exit interview with Financial Aid to discuss the options for a particular loan before leaving. A student who defaults on a loan will be unable to receive any further aid until appropriate payments are made. A student who owes money to Columbia will be put on financial hold and will thereby not be able to register for classes; it is the student's responsibility to be aware of any debts that could prevent registration.

## HOUSING

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Housing and Dining will send detailed check-out information to you as soon as they receive an advising dean's notice of your withdrawal. This email will include the date and time you are required to vacate the residence halls. You are responsible for completing the online Room Condition Report and must visit the Hartley Hospitality Desk to officially cancel your room and return any room key(s). Questions about billing and account information for Housing, Flex, Dining Dollars, and Meal Plan can be answered at Hartley. Residents of the Brownstones are required to follow the same check-out procedures; students living in Carlton Arms should notify University Apartment Housing at (212) 854-9300. Even if you withdraw prior to the start of a term, there may be a cancellation fee – you can learn more by visiting the Housing website here: <http://housing.columbia.edu/terms-and-conditions/proration-schedule>

Please note: **If you take a voluntary leave of absence, you will not be guaranteed housing for the remainder of your time at Columbia.**

## CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT WHILE ON LEAVE

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Students are not permitted to audit classes, be involved in student groups or Columbia University affiliated activities, or otherwise spend time on campus during a leave. To reinforce this expectation, the student ID and swipe access are deactivated during the leave.

## PARENTAL NOTIFICATION

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Ordinarily, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified when a student's status changes at the university, (e.g. when a student goes on leave and when a student is readmitted from leave).

## WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

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To take a voluntary leave of absence, complete the following checklist:

- Meet with your advising dean as soon as possible to discuss the leave.
- Complete and submit a Petition to Take a Voluntary Leave of Absence. Petitions may be submitted to your advising dean or to the Berick Center for Student Advising in 403 Lerner Hall.
- If you are a resident of **Columbia Housing**, including the Brownstones and Fraternity/Sorority Housing and are requesting a **Voluntary Leave during the semester**, take the following steps:
  - Make plans to leave university housing within 48 hours of your withdrawal date. The Housing and Dining Office will send detailed check-out information to you as soon as they receive your advising dean's notice of your withdrawal. This email will include the date and time you are required to move out of the residence halls.
  - Complete the online Room Condition Report: <http://housing.columbia.edu/procedures/check-and-check-out>
  - Visit the Hartley Hospitality Desk to officially cancel your room and return any room key(s) and ask any remaining questions about billing and account information for Housing, Flex, Dining Dollars, and Meal Plans.
  - Students living in Carlton Arms should notify University Apartment Housing at (212) 854-9300.
- If you have signed a housing contract to live in Columbia Housing, including Fraternity/Sorority Housing and are requesting a Voluntary Leave before the start of the next semester, you must follow procedures to cancel your housing contract: <http://housing.columbia.edu/procedures/cancelling-housing>
- Return all mailbox keys to the package room on the fourth floor of Lerner Hall.
- Call the Mail Center at (212) 854-0100 to request that your first-class mail be forwarded for one month and to reserve your current mailbox number for up to two semesters. More information is available at: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/student-services/mail/mailPolicies.html>.
- If you receive Financial Aid, notify the Office of Financial Aid and Educational Financing at (212) 854-3711.
- If you are covered by a Columbia health insurance plan, contact the insurance office at (212) 854-7210 to complete the process to ensure full coverage. If you have waived Columbia insurance, you must contact your own insurance provider for details on coverage.
- If you are an **international student**, please note you must leave the United States within 15 days of your withdrawal date. Contact the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) to discuss your plans at [isso@columbia.edu](mailto:isso@columbia.edu) or (212) 854- 3587. Visit the ISSO website for more information: [http://www.columbia.edu/cu/isso/visa/F-1/F-1\\_LOA.html](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/isso/visa/F-1/F-1_LOA.html).
- Columbia University will send you an official notification that your withdrawal has been processed and informing you whether or not you will be receiving a refund. This notification is in addition to the courtesy e-mail you will receive from the Berick Center for Student Advising informing you that your request for withdrawal has been approved. Once you have received the official notification from Columbia University, you can contact Student Financial Services at (212) 854-4400 to inquire about the status of your refund.

## READMISSION DEADLINES AND PROCEDURES

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You must complete the following readmission procedure by **April 1 for a summer session, June 1 for a fall term, or November 1 for a spring term**. All financial obligations to the University must be cleared before readmission. No student will be readmitted who has not met the following requirement:

**Submit a letter to your advising dean requesting readmission. The letter should review the circumstances that led to the leave, describe in detail any activities pursued while out of school, and explain why you now feel able to resume studies successfully.**

In exceptional cases, a SEAS student may apply for readmission following a one-term voluntary leave of absence. In addition to the letter outlined above, the student will need to provide to the Committee on Academic Standing a well-developed academic plan that has been approved by the departmental adviser and the CSA as part of the readmission process. This plan must demonstrate that his or her return to Columbia Engineering following a one-semester leave of absence will allow the student to properly follow the sequence of courses as required for the major and to meet all other graduation requirements by their 8<sup>th</sup> semester.

## SEARCHING FOR OFF-CAMPUS HOUSING

You may apply for on-campus housing through the undergraduate waitlist at <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/reshalls> or by calling 212- 854-2775 for an application. For off-campus alternatives, contact the Off-Campus Housing Assistance (OCHA) office at <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/ire/ocha/>.

## QUESTIONS

If you have any questions regarding your voluntary leave or readmission please contact your advising dean in the Berick Center for Student Advising (CSA). If you do not know who your advising dean is, you can check your SSOL or write to [csa@columbia.edu](mailto:csa@columbia.edu).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF POLICIES

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Please sign below that you have read and understood all of the above policies and procedures.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

UNI: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_