

REQUESTING A PERSONAL OR MEDICAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Pursuant to Rule 3-21 – Withdrawal, a student may, for personal and/or medical reasons, request a leave of absence (“LOA”) from the Law School, subject to the procedures and conditions outlined below. The request must be made in writing and directed to the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (“Assistant Dean”). The request must state the reasons for the request and the anticipated duration of the LOA.

In the case of a LOA for medical reasons, the student must submit documentation from his or her health care provider(s) that provides a general description of the physical, mental and/or emotional conditions that necessitate the leave as well as an outline of the recommended course and expected duration of treatment (the “Medical Documentation”). In some cases, the Assistant Dean may conditionally grant approval of the LOA pending receipt and review of the Medical Documentation. If the Medical Documentation is unclear or incomplete, the Law School also may wish to speak with the student’s health care provider(s) directly in order to fully consider the request, and the Assistant Dean may ask the student to sign a release and authorization form to permit that communication. In evaluating the documentation provided by the student’s health care provider, the Law School may consult with the Duke University Student Health Center and/or Counseling and Psychological Services. The Law School reserves the right to deny the request if the Medical Documentation does not justify granting a medical leave of absence.

A LOA generally will be granted only for one or two semesters. A student may request a longer LOA or may request the extension of a previously granted LOA. However, in most cases, students are required to graduate from the Law School within five (5) years of his or her date of matriculation. (See Rule 2-8.)

When a LOA is granted after classes have begun for the applicable semester, the student’s transcript will reflect that he or she has withdrawn from the courses in which he or she was enrolled for that semester. Absent extraordinary circumstances, a LOA will not be granted once classes have ended for the semester and the final exam period has started.

The Law School will refund tuition according to the schedule posted on the Bursar’s website. (See <http://finance.duke.edu/bursar/TuitionFees/FallSpringTuitionWD.php>.) Students who have purchased Tuition Refund Insurance should contact the provider for information on filing a claim. Students who are contemplating a leave of absence and who received federal loans should consult with the Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs or the Director of Financial Aid for information about the effect of the leave on financial aid. In some cases, loan funds that were disbursed for the semester must be returned to the Department of Education; the amount that may need to be returned depends on the date of withdrawal. The return of federal loan funds may create a balance on the student account that must be settled before returning from leave.

A student who wishes to return to the Law School from a LOA must make a written request to the Assistant Dean at least sixty (60) days before the start of the semester in which he or she seeks to return. The request must explain: why the student wants to return; how the student has been using his or her time during the LOA; and what steps, if any, the student has taken to address the personal or medical circumstances that necessitated the LOA. In the case of a medical LOA, the Law School will require a certification from the student’s health care provider(s) that the student has complied with the

prescribed course of treatment and that the student is able to fulfill the Law School's academic requirements and adhere to its standards of conduct. In evaluating the documentation provided by the student's health care provider, the Law School may consult with the Duke University Student Health Center and/or Counseling and Psychological Services.

In all cases, requests for a personal or medical leave of absence and requests to return from a leave of absence must be approved by the Assistant Dean.

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