

MEDICAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE (MLOA)

Request for a Medical Leave of Absence (MLOA)

Ramapo College of New Jersey (RCNJ) students may apply for a Medical Leave of Absence (MLOA) from the College for reasons of physical or psychological illnesses. Students must withdraw from all registered courses under this policy. Exceptions may be considered on an individual basis. The grade for each course will be recorded as “W” on the student’s transcript. **There will be no refund for a MLOA after college refund deadlines. (see Academic Calendar).**

Students may experience medical or psychological conditions that significantly impair their ability to function successfully or safely in their role as a student. MLOAs may also be recommended if a student exhibits behavior, which is connected to a medical or psychological illness, which seriously interferes with the educational pursuits or living environment of others. It is expected that the time a student takes away from the college will be used for treatment and recovery. It should be understood that most students need a minimum of one full semester away from RCNJ in order to obtain the necessary psychological or medical treatment which would enable them to recover their health sufficiently.

Because students function not just as individuals, but also as connected parts of the College community and environment, a student who becomes impaired to the extent of needing a MLOA, may affect the functioning of the larger community in a way which interferes with the College’s fundamental teaching and learning mission. If a student initiates a MLOA, the college has a vested interest and a responsibility, both to the student and to the larger college community, to establish criteria regarding eligibility for re-enrollment. The criteria include, but are not limited to, evidence that the condition that precipitated the need for a MLOA has been sufficiently treated and ameliorated to the point where it will no longer adversely affect your safety and functioning or the safety and functioning of the larger college community. The student is advised that possible restrictions to access to the campus and its services may be invoked as a result of the circumstances associated with the MLOA. The student would be notified in writing by the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs (or designee) should any restrictions apply.

Student benefits and considerations of taking a MLOA

- A MLOA sometimes qualifies a student to initiate a leave of absence later in the semester than might normally be permitted for other forms of leave.
- If a student is covered by his/her parent’s insurance policy and at risk of losing coverage due to taking a MLOA, a letter may be provided citing the circumstances of a student medical leave of absence from the College and requesting continuation of insurance coverage due to a medical condition.
- For international students, a MLOA may affect one’s legal status. International students holding visas, including F-1 or J-1 visas, should consult with the International Student Advisor or their own counsel before filing for a MLOA to make sure they meet the immigration regulatory requirements. The Office of International Students and Scholars is located on the first floor of the Anisfield School of Business in the Roukema Center for International Education.

- Students who live in housing must follow the housing withdrawal process outlined in the Guide for Community Living. Students intending on returning to housing after obtaining clearance to return from a MLOA must contact the Office of Residence Life via e-mail at reslife@ramapo.edu. The Office of Residence Life will make every reasonable effort to provide housing to a student who is returning from a MLOA.
- Students can take as much time as needed away from the College to recover from their condition; however, students who do not take classes for two or more consecutive semesters must reapply for admission. Students who stay out for longer than two consecutive semesters and are readmitted will continue their studies under the graduation requirements in effect at the time of their readmission.
- Students who withdraw and have received financial aid must contact the Financial Aid office. Some student aid may need to be returned. Any balance that results from a reduction in aid is the student's responsibility.

Process for Obtaining a MLOA

If a student is considering applying for a MLOA he/she must contact the Center for Health and Counseling Services (CHCS) to request an evaluation for the purpose of pursuing a MLOA. If your condition is psychological in nature, contact Counseling Services (CS) (201-684-7522). Some examples of psychological conditions that may necessitate a medical leave of absence include, but are not limited to, severe depression or anxiety, post traumatic stress disorder, or schizophrenia. If the condition is medical in nature, the student should contact Student Health Services (SHS) (201-684-7536). Some examples of medical conditions that may necessitate a medical leave of absence include, but are not limited to cancer, multiple sclerosis, uncontrolled diabetes, or uncontrolled seizures.

In order to both obtain a MLOA and to return from one a student must obtain a medical recommendation from the appropriate unit (Counseling or Student Health) within the Center for Health and Counseling Services.

MLOA Due to a Psychological Condition

- Contact and schedule an appointment at CS to request an evaluation for the purpose of pursuing a MLOA. The evaluation process, which may occur over a few sessions, assesses whether a student's psychological condition meets the criteria for a medical leave.
- The student seeking a MLOA will be asked to provide written consent to consult with his/her current treatment provider(s), if applicable. If you were evaluated and treated off-campus, CS will require medical documentation or a detailed letter from the off-campus treatment provider stating: 1) diagnosis, 2) date of onset, 3) effect the psychological condition has on the student's ability to perform academically and how (if applicable) it affects social functioning, 4) prognosis, and 5) treatment plan. This information is reviewed by CS to determine if the psychological condition warrants a MLOA. The withdrawal determination is based on the severity and onset of the condition and its impact on the student's ability to meet his/her responsibilities as a student.
- After the evaluation is completed and has been approved by the Director of the Center for Health and Counseling Services, CS notifies the Registrar, who administers Withdrawal (W) grades. Counseling Services places a registration hold on the student's account until the student has been evaluated and cleared to return to Ramapo. If the student is a resident, CS notifies the Office of Residence Life that he/she has been approved for a MLOA.

- If a student disagrees with the results of the evaluation an appeal can be made to the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs.

If a student chooses to take a mental health-related MLOA, he/she will be **required** to meet the following **conditions of return before he/she can be medically cleared to pursue re-enrollment at RCNJ**:

1. A substantial amelioration of the psychological condition that precipitated the need for a MLOA, as evidenced by:
 - a. A substantially improved condition, as defined and determined by a CS counselor and if relevant, other treatment team members, which may include a psychiatrist.
 - b. Once achieved in treatment; the substantially improved condition is then maintained for a period deemed reasonable by a CS counselor and if relevant, other treatment team members, which may include a psychiatrist.
 - c. Attested to by the completion of the CHCS Community Provider Report form furnished by an off-campus mental health provider who has had direct contact with the student on a regular basis for a course of treatment.
2. The ability to function safely (if relevant to MLOA), as evidenced by:
 - a. A substantial reduction of any relevant safety related behaviors, including, but not limited to:
 - i. Suicidal behaviors
 - ii. Self injurious behaviors
 - iii. Substance abuse
 - iv. Food bingeing
 - v. Food purging or any other potentially harmful compensatory behaviors used for weight management (e.g., use of laxatives, excessive exercise, etc.)
 - vi. Failure to maintain weight at minimum of 90% of Ideal Body Weight for height after being diagnosed and treated for an eating disorder
 - b. Once safety has been achieved, the stability of that condition is maintained for a period deemed reasonable by the CS counselor and if relevant, other treatment team members, which may include a psychiatrist.
 - c. Attested to by the completion of the CHCS Community Provider Report form furnished by an off-campus mental health provider who has had direct contact with the student on a regular basis for a course of treatment.
3. After satisfactory documentation of the aforementioned two conditions of return have been received and reviewed by the CS counselor, the student must have an evaluation with his/her CS counselor, and if relevant, other members of the CS team, which may include a psychiatrist. Following this evaluation, the CS counselor will make a judgment as to the student's readiness to return to Ramapo College and will obtain approval from the Director for the Center for Health and Counseling Services.
4. If a student disagrees with the results of the evaluation an appeal can be made to the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs.

MLOA Due to a Medical Condition

- Contact and schedule an appointment at Student Health Services (SHS) to request an evaluation for the purpose of pursuing a MLOA. The evaluation process, which occurs over a few sessions, assesses whether a student's medical condition meets the criteria for a medical leave.
- The student will be asked to provide written consent to consult with current treatment provider(s), if applicable. If the student was evaluated and treated off-campus, SHS will require medical record documentation or a detailed letter from the off-campus treatment provider stating: 1) diagnosis, 2) date of onset, 3) effect the medical condition has on the student ability to perform academically and how (if applicable) it affects his/her social functioning, 4) prognosis, and 5) treatment plan. This information is reviewed by SHS to determine if the medical condition warrants a MLOA. The withdrawal determination is based on the severity and onset of the condition and its impact on the student's ability to meet his/her responsibilities as a student.
- After the evaluation is completed and has been approved by the Director for the Center for Health and Counseling Services, SHS notifies the Registrar, who administers Withdrawal (W) grades. Student Health Services places a registration hold on the student's account until the student has been evaluated and cleared to return to Ramapo. If the student is a resident, SHS notifies the Office of Residence Life that he/she has been approved for a MLOA.
- If a student disagrees with the results of the evaluation an appeal can be made to the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs.

If a student chooses to take a MLOA due to a medical condition, he/she will be **required** to meet the following **conditions of return before he/she can be medically cleared to pursue reenrollment at RCNJ:**

1. Evidence of stabilization of the medical condition that precipitated the need for a MLOA. This must be demonstrated by:
 - a. A substantially improved condition, as defined and determined by a SHS staff member and if relevant, other treatment team members, which may include a collaborating physician.
 - b. A substantially improved condition that has been maintained for a period deemed reasonable by a SHS staff member and if relevant, other treatment team members, which may include a collaborating physician.
 - c. The completion of the CHCS Community Provider Report form by an off-campus medical provider who rendered direct care to the student on a regular basis for the course of treatment.
2. The ability to safely self-manage the medical condition (if relevant to MLOA), as evidenced by:
 - a. A substantial reduction of signs and symptoms that would indicate instability of the current medical condition, including, but not limited to:
 - i. Blood sugar levels
 - ii. Breakthrough seizures or sudden unconsciousness
 - iii. Asthmatic events
 - b. Once self management has been achieved, it is maintained for a period of time deemed reasonable by Student Health Services staff and if relevant, other treatment team members, which may include a collaborating physician

c. Completion of a Student Health Services CHCS Community Provider Report form from an off-campus medical provider who rendered direct care to the student on a regular basis for the course of treatment.

3. After satisfactory documentation of the aforementioned two conditions of return have been received and reviewed by the SHS staff member, the student must have an evaluation with his/her SHS staff member, and if relevant, other members of the SHS team, which may include a collaborating physician. Following this evaluation, the SHS staff member will make a judgment as to the student's readiness to return to Ramapo College and will obtain approval from the Director for the Center for Health and Counseling Services

4. If a student disagrees with the results of the evaluation an appeal can be made to the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs.

Deadlines for Requesting a MLOA

Students requesting a MLOA must have **completed** an evaluation, through the Center for Health and Counseling Services, **no later than the final day of classes as listed on the on-line academic calendar** in order for a MLOA to be processed for that semester.

Deadlines for Returning from a MLOA

In order to return from a MLOA the student must notify the appropriate unit of the Center for Health and Counseling Services in writing by August 1st to return for the coming Fall semester and by December 1st to return for the coming Spring semester. The Community Provider Report form (available on CHCS website) must also be received by the appropriate unit within the Center for Health and Counseling Services no later than August 1st for a planned fall semester return or December 1st for a planned spring semester return. Once all the documentation has been received you will be scheduled for an evaluation at CHCS to discuss your request to return to RCNJ. Should she/he have any questions, please contact the staff member who conducted his/her evaluation in order to facilitate the MLOA. **If the student misses the deadline, his/her return from MLOA will be postponed until a later semester. If the process to return from a MLOA is not completed by the deadline, the student will be deregistered.**

Disability Support Services for Students Following a Return from a MLOA

Ramapo College of New Jersey supports the protections available to students with disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The Office of Specialized Services (OSS) facilitates equal access to the programs and activities at Ramapo College for students with documented physical, sensory, learning, or psychological disabilities. Students whose medical or psychological conditions meet the criteria for a disability are encouraged to register with the Office of Specialized Services in order to receive accommodations.

Academic Standards and Code of Conduct

The granting of a MLOA does not in any way excuse the student from the usual academic standards and judicial processes set forth by College policy. Therefore only students free of academic suspension, dismissal, or expulsion due to academic or conduct issues are eligible to apply for and return from a MLOA.

Notification

The College reserves the right to notify a student’s designated emergency contact that a MLOA has been issued. The student’s designated emergency contact may be asked to make arrangements for safe removal of the student from the college environment. The College may notify a student’s designated emergency contact if the student poses a threat of harm to self or others.

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I have read the above information and have asked for any needed clarification and explanation. I understand the required conditions of return and the deadlines involved in returning from a MLOA. I accept these conditions and deadlines as part of my responsibilities in taking a MLOA from Ramapo College of New Jersey. I understand that once my courses have been dropped or “W” grades have been awarded this cannot be reversed. I agree to abide by these conditions.

Signature

I prefer any correspondence about this leave be sent to me at the following address:

Print Name

R-Number

Cell phone (or another number where we may call and leave a message for you).

Date

Semester applying for MLOA ___ Fall ___ Spring ___ Summer ___ Year

Are you registered with the Office for Specialized Services (OSS)? ___ Yes ___ No

*****Instructions to staff – make student a copy*****