

MEDICAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE (MLOA)

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 if the request for an MLOA is completed after the College refund deadline (see Academic Calendar on the web).

Students considering applying for an MLOA need to contact the Center for Health and Counseling Services (CHCS) to request an evaluation for the purpose of pursuing an MLOA. If the condition is medical in nature, contact Student Health Services (SHS) (201-684-7536); if the condition is psychological in nature, contact Counseling Services (CS) (201-684-7522). In order to obtain an MLOA a student must obtain a medical recommendation from the appropriate unit (i.e., Health or Counseling) within the Center for Health and Counseling Services. In order for an MLOA to be processed for a given semester, the evaluation must be completed prior to the last day of the semester.

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 through the Office of Admissions. 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.

In order to be approved to return from an MLOA, a student must provide the required documentation and complete an evaluation through the appropriate unit (Health or Counseling) within the Center for Health and Counseling Services. Students returning from an MLOA must complete the process by the established deadlines: August 1 for the fall semester and December 1 for the spring semester. If the deadline is missed, the student’s return from an MLOA will be postponed until a later semester. If the process to return from an MLOA is not completed by the deadline, the student will be deregistered.

When a student experiences a medical or psychological condition that is so serious where it requires that the student take a medical leave, it is strongly recommended that the student take off, at minimum, one full semester from their academic studies. This time is often needed in order to obtain the necessary psychological or medical treatment.

Student benefits and considerations of taking an MLOA

- An MLOA sometimes qualifies a student to initiate a leave of absence later in the semester than might typically be permitted for other forms of leave.
- Taking an MLOA should not impact insurance coverage. However, it is advised that a student inquires with their insurance carrier regarding coverage.

- For international students, an MLOA may affect one's legal status. International students holding visas, including F-1 or J-1 visas, should consult with the Director of International Education or their own counsel before filing for an MLOA to make sure they meet with the immigration regulatory requirements.
- Students who live in housing must follow the housing withdrawal process outlined in the Guide to Community Living. Students intending on returning to housing after obtaining clearance to return from an 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 an MLOA.
- 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 result from a reduction in aid is the student's responsibility.

Process for Obtaining an MLOA

If a student wishes to apply for an MLOA, they must contact the Center for Health and Counseling Services (CHCS) to request an evaluation for the purpose of pursuing an MLOA. If the condition is psychological in nature, contact Counseling Services (CS) (201) 684-7522. If the condition is medical in nature, contact Health Services (HS) (201) 684-7536.

In order to both obtain an MLOA and to return from an MLOA a student must obtain a medical recommendation from the appropriate unit (Counseling Services or Health Services) 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 an 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.
- If the student is being treated by an off-campus provider, 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, 4) prognosis, and 5) treatment plan. This information is reviewed by CS to determine if the psychological condition warrants an MLOA. The withdrawal determination is based on the severity and onset of the condition and its impact on the student's ability to meet their responsibilities as a student. The student seeking an MLOA will be asked to provide written consent for CS counselors to consult with their current treatment provider(s).
- 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 they have been approved for an MLOA.

- In cases where an MLOA is denied, a student may file an appeal with the Dean of Students if the student can demonstrate that a specified procedural error or errors in the interpretation of the College regulations were so substantial as to effectively deny the person fair consideration.

Such appeals must be submitted in writing to the Dean of Students within five (5) business days from the date of notification of the denial of an MLOA. The decision of the Dean of Students is final.

If a student chooses to take an MLOA due to a psychological condition, they will be **required** to meet the following **conditions of return before they can be medically cleared to pursue re-enrollment at RCNJ**:

1. Evidence of stabilization of the psychological condition that precipitated the need for an MLOA, as evidence 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 direct contact with the student on a regular basis for a course of treatment.
2. Demonstrated readiness to resume studies and be a successful member of the campus community, as evidenced by:
 - a. The ability to pay attention in class and not interfere with the rights of others to learn, sleep and study;
 - b. Complete assignments independently ;
 - c. Relate to diverse individuals;
 - d. Carry on personal business without supervision;
 - e. Live under only very general supervision and in the company of one or more other students (if assigned to a campus residence);
 - f. Maintain reasonable standards of personal hygiene;
 - g. Refrain from violating provisions of the student Code of Conduct;
 - h. 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 a 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 the student's return from an MLOA is denied, they may file an appeal with the Dean of Students if the student can demonstrate that a specified procedural error or errors in the interpretation of College regulations were so substantial as to effectively deny the person fair consideration.

Such appeals must be submitted in writing to the Dean of Students within five (5) business days from the date of notification of the denial of an MLOA. The decision of the Dean of Students is final.

MLOA Due to a Medical Condition

- Contact and schedule an appointment at Health Services (HS) to request an evaluation for the purpose of pursuing an MLOA. The evaluation process, which occurs over a few sessions, assesses whether a student's medical condition meets the criteria for a medical leave.
- If the student is being treated by an off-campus provider HS will require medical 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's ability to perform academically, 4) prognosis, and 5) treatment plan. This information is reviewed by HS to determine if the medical condition warrants an MLOA. The withdrawal determination is based on the severity and onset of the condition and its impact on the student's ability to meet their responsibilities as a student. The student seeking an MLOA will be asked to provide written consent to consult with his/her current treatment provider(s).
- After the evaluation is completed and has been approved by the Director for the Center for Health and Counseling Services, HS notifies the Registrar, who administers Withdrawal (W) grades. 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, HS notifies the Office of Residence Life that they have been approved for an MLOA.
- In cases where an MLOA is denied a student may file an appeal with the Dean of Students if the student can demonstrate that a specified procedural error or errors in the interpretation of College regulations were so substantial as to effectively deny the person fair consideration.

Such appeals must be submitted in writing to the Dean of Students within five (5) business days from the date of notification of the denial of an MLOA. The decision of the Dean of Students is final.

If a student chooses to take an MLOA due to a medical condition, they will be **required** to meet the following **conditions of return before they can be medically cleared to pursue re-enrollment at RCNJ**:

1. Evidence of stabilization of the medical condition that precipitated the need for the MLOA. This must be demonstrated by:
 - a. A substantially improved condition, as defined and determined by a HS 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 HS 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. Demonstrated readiness to resume studies and be a successful member of the campus community, as evidenced by:
 - a. The ability to pay attention in class and not interfere with the rights of others to learn, sleep and study;
 - b. Complete assignments independently;
 - c. Relate to diverse individuals;
 - d. Carry on personal business without supervisions;
 - e. Live under only very general supervision and in the company of one or more other students (if assigned to a campus residence);
 - f. Maintain reasonable standards of personal hygiene;
 - g. Attested to by the completion of a 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 HS staff member, the student must have an evaluation with a HS staff member, and if relevant, other members of the HS team, which may include a collaborating physician. Following this evaluation, the HS 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 the student's return from an MLOA is denied they may file an appeal with the Dean of Students if the student can demonstrate that a specified procedural error or errors in the interpretation of College regulations were so substantial as to effectively deny the person fair consideration.

Such appeals must be submitted in writing to the Dean of Students within five (5) business days from the date of notification of the denial of a return from an MLOA. The decision of the Dean of Students is final.

Deadlines for Requesting an MLOA

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

Deadlines for Returning from an MLOA

In order to return from an MLOA the student should notify the appropriate unit of the Center for Health and Counseling Services and submit the Community Provider Form (<http://www.ramapo.edu/chcs/mloa/>) by August 1st to return for the coming Fall semester and by December 1st to return for the coming Spring semester. Requests received after these deadlines may be considered depending on the circumstances that led to the late submission. Once all the documentation has been received, the student will be scheduled for an evaluation to determine their readiness to return from the MLOA. **If the process to return from an MLOA is not completed by the deadline, the student will be deregistered from courses for the upcoming semester.**

Disability Support Services for Students Following a Return from an MLOA

Ramapo College of New Jersey supports the protections available to students with disabilities under Section 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 2008 (ADAAA), and any applicable State regulations. 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 have their request for accommodations evaluated.

Academic Standards and Code of Conduct

The granting of an MLOA does not in any way excuse the student from the usual academic standards and student conduct processes set forth by College policy. Unless there is documented preexisting condition, students who are accused of violating the Code of Conduct are not eligible to apply for an MLOA.

Notification

The College reserves the right to notify a student's designated emergency contact that an MLOA has been issued. The student's designated emergency contact may be asked to make arrangements for the safe removal of the student from the college environment.