

# Medical/Compassionate Withdrawal Policy

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This policy applies to all undergraduate students at Goucher College who withdraw in extraordinary cases in which serious illness or injury (medical) or another significant personal situation (compassionate) prevents a student from continuing his or her classes, and incompletes or other arrangements with the instructors are not possible.

A student may request and be considered for a medical withdrawal when extraordinary circumstances, such as a serious illness or injury prevent the student from continuing classes. The medical withdrawal policy covers both physical health and mental health difficulties.

A student may request and be considered for a compassionate withdrawal when extraordinary personal reasons, not related to the student's personal physical or mental health (for example, care of a seriously ill child or spouse, or a death in the student's immediate family), prevent the student from continuing in classes.

The following procedures provide for an individualized approach for assessing a student's eligibility to take and readiness to return from a medical or compassionate leave and are designed to be reasonable and flexible.

## Medical/Compassionate Withdrawal Procedures

1. A student seeking to withdraw from the college for medical reasons must submit a written [Semester Withdrawal Form](#) and [Health Care Provider Release Form](#) to the Associate Dean for Student Development (ADSD). The term "medical" includes physical and mental health conditions and illnesses. In support of the withdrawal request, the student must also request a treating health care provider to provide documentation to the ADSD on the letterhead of the provider including 1) diagnosis or condition; 2) date of onset of the condition; 3) dates of treatment; and 4) prognosis. Appropriate documentation for a compassionate withdrawal may also be required and is dependent upon the nature of the student's circumstances.
2. The ADSD will advise the student to consult with the Office of Financial Aid and the Bursar's office to be counseled regarding the consequences of a withdrawal on the student's financial situation (see below for additional information).
3. The ADSD or his/her designee, in consultation with the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies (AD) and appropriate campus medical or psychological professionals, will make a determination regarding the student's request. In unusual or complicated situations, the ADSD or ADSD's designee may convene a committee to assist in making this determination.

The committee shall be ad hoc in nature and shall be composed of representatives from the academic and student life divisions; it may include representatives from the Student Health and Counseling Center, the disability specialist, and the Director of the Academic Center for Excellence, at the ADSD's discretion.

4. A student may appeal the outcome of a request for medical/compassionate withdrawal by submitting an appeal in writing to Vice President and Dean of Students, or designee. The decision of the Vice President and Dean of Students, or designee, shall be the final decision of the college.
5. If a student seeking withdrawal does not intend to request to return in the following semester, they must also submit either a [Leave of Absence form](#) or [Withdrawal from the College form](#).

### **Impact of a medical/compassionate withdrawal**

1. A student who is granted a withdrawal for medical or compassionate reasons after the tenth week of the semester will receive a 'W' for all courses attempted during that semester. The W will be reflected on the student's official transcript.
2. A student who is granted a medical or compassionate withdrawal will have a hold placed upon his or her registration by the Dean's office, pending a successful request to return to the college.
3. Any adjustment to the student's tuition will be made in accordance with the college's [refund policy](#).
4. Goucher maintains a [Satisfactory Academic Progress \(SAP\) requirement](#), and a [Return of Title IV \(R2T4\) requirement](#), both of which are mandated by federal financial aid regulations. A withdrawing student must consult with the Office of Financial Aid to determine the effect of withdrawal on financial aid under these policies.
5. Goucher also has implemented and enforces a policy regarding [Academic Progress Toward a Degree](#) ("APTD" policy) for full-time students. A medical or compassionate withdrawal may affect the student's ability to meet the requirements of this policy and the student may be subject to suspension and/or dismissal under this policy. Students seeking withdrawal who may be affected by the APTD policy will be referred to the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies for advisement.

### **Returning to the college after a medical or compassionate withdrawal**

It is the college's intention to support students in a successful return to the college community when medical or personal issues have necessitated withdrawal; however, approval to return to the college following a medical or compassionate withdrawal is not guaranteed.

1. Following a medical withdrawal, a student is expected to take a leave of sufficient duration to allow the student to address the issues necessitating the medical leave. It is common for students who withdraw because of a serious illness or medical condition to

take a minimum of one full semester away from the college in order to enhance the likelihood of success upon return, and such a leave of absence may be required at the ADSD's discretion, depending on the individual circumstances of the student.

Prior to requesting to return, students withdrawn for medical reasons are required to address the condition(s) that led to their withdrawal. Further, these students are encouraged to engage in activities that demonstrate their readiness to manage the rigors and challenges associated with the campus environment. This may include (but is not limited to) employment, participation in an internship, community service, or completion of online or community college coursework.

The length of leave after a compassionate withdrawal will depend upon the student's individual circumstances.<sup>1</sup>

2. A student wishing to return to Goucher following a medical/compassionate withdrawal must complete the following steps:
  - a. Notify the ADSD of an intention to return to the college by submitting a [Request to Return](#)<sup>2</sup> form and a [Health Care Provider Release Form](#), and by requesting a treating health care professional to complete a [Healthcare Provider Report](#). A student returning from leave after a compassionate withdrawal should submit a letter documenting the student's readiness to return to the college, and supporting documentation, if necessary (see paragraph c below for more details).
  - b. Submit the [Healthcare Provider Report](#) form from the treating provider to the ADSD. Such report shall provide detailed information about the student's current medical condition and ongoing treatment plan, and provide an assessment of the student's ability to undertake an intensive academic curriculum and, if relevant, to reside in the residence halls. All documentation will be held in strict confidence by the college; it will be maintained in the student's medical record and will not become part of the student's academic record. Upon request, the student will authorize the ADSD to secure any additional information necessary to assess the student's readiness for readmission.
  - c. Submit additional documentation, if in the discretion of the ADSD additional documentation demonstrating the student's ability to successfully return to the college is necessary. There are many ways in which a student might be able to demonstrate his or her day-to-day functioning. A student may choose to provide documentation from a reliable adult community observer who can comment on a student's activities and readiness to resume university life. A reliable adult

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<sup>1</sup>Note that If the student takes a leave of absence from the college for more than a total of two semesters during the student's time at Goucher, the student will be formally withdrawn from the college and will be required to submit a Petition for Reinstatement prior to returning to the college.

<sup>2</sup> If the student has taken a leave of absence from the college for more than two semesters during the student's time at Goucher, the Request to Return will be treated as a [Petition for Reinstatement](#) to the college.

community observer could be a mentor, a member of the clergy, a work or community service supervisor, co-worker, personal trainer, athletic coach, or some other individual in a position to have observed the student during the course of the leave (not a family member). Where possible, the letter should be submitted on letterhead stationery, signed, and dated, and describe the student's daily activities and the extent to which the writer feels the student is ready to resume studies at Goucher College and participate productively in college life.

Alternatively, a student may provide the name and contact information of a reference who will be able to provide information concerning the student's daily activity and readiness to resume studies to the ADSD. The student will not have to disclose the reason for the leave of absence to the letter writer or reference.

- d. Submit documentation and references by the following dates: July 1 for the fall semester and December 1 for the spring semester.
  - e. Consult with the Bursar's office and the office of Financial Aid to obtain clearance from those offices for return.
3. The ADSD, in consultation with the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies and appropriate campus medical or psychological professionals, will make an individualized determination whether to grant or deny the request to return. This decision shall be based on an assessment of the student's readiness to successfully resume academic and residential life at the college. In unusual or complicated situations, the ADSD or ADSD's designee may convene a committee to assist in making this determination. The committee shall be ad hoc in nature and shall be composed of representatives from the academic and student life divisions; it may include representatives from the Student Health and Counseling Center, the disability specialist, and the Director of the Academic Center for Excellence, at the ADSD's discretion.
  4. A student may appeal the outcome of a request to return or petition for reinstatement to the college by submitting an appeal in writing to the Vice President and Dean of Students, or designee. The decision of the Vice President and Dean of Students shall be the final decision of the college.
  5. If a student is approved to return to campus following a medical or compassionate withdrawal, that student is required to meet with a Case Manager within the first two weeks of the semester to develop a success plan. Failure to complete this meeting may result in the imposition of alternative requirements (based on a student's individualized assessment) for continued enrollment.