

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Emergency Leaves of Absence for Medical Reasons

The document addresses questions about Grinnell's emergency leave of absence policy. If students are unsure if their situation warrants an emergency leave of absence or if they qualify for such, students may meet with Joyce Stern, Dean for Student Success & Academic Advising by contacting advising@grinnell.edu or calling 641-269-3702.

When is a medical leave warranted?

An emergency leave of absence for medical reasons is possible at any time when a documented illness causes a disruption in a student's ability to be a full-time student at Grinnell. The most common reasons are that

- (1) the medical care required by the student is not available in this community and issue would be of significant duration as to take the student out of school for a week or more and, therefore, make it too difficult to catch up (e.g., the student needs in-patient treatment, significant surgery, etc., that can't/shouldn't be done here and the recovery period is long); OR
- (2) it is incompatible to both attempt recovery and be a full-time student at Grinnell College (i.e., even if the treatment is available here, it is not medically advised to try to engage treatment and be a full-time student and/or try to recover here); OR
- (3) the student is not able to function as a student, meaning that the illness is causing significant difficulty or incapacitation in those dimensions required to be a student (e.g., attendance in class, navigating campus, social interactions, managing day-to-day responsibilities, clear cognition, etc).

How do I apply for an emergency leave of absence?

- a) Complete the emergency leave application,
- b) Read the informational handout, and
- c) Request that a letter from your doctor or therapist be faxed to Dean for Student Success & Academic Advising at 641-269-3710.

Timeliness is essential to complete the process. If you're applying for an emergency leave of absence then clearly there is an emergency to attend to and we need documentation that you're taking care of this right away.

What should the letter from my healthcare provider say?

The letter should be from a licensed medical or psychological professional who is most holistically involved in your treatment or who has conducted a recent clinical assessment. The letter should document your current needs: the issues at hand and a clear rationale for an emergency leave of absence, explaining why you cannot be a full time student at Grinnell right now. The letter should be on letterhead indicating the person's professional credentials and affiliation.

How long are emergency leaves for medical reasons?

Medical leaves typically last for one or two full semesters. They can be longer, if there is a documented reason. The colleges allows sufficient time for the student to both recover from their health condition and regain sustained wellbeing before returning.

I want to leave Grinnell. What are my options for leaving *during* this semester?

1. **Taking an Emergency Leave of Absence for medical reasons** – to apply for an emergency leave of absence see answer above.
2. **Withdrawing from the College** – to withdraw you will need to talk with Sarah Moschenross, Dean of Students. She can be reached by calling 641-269-3700. Students can apply to be re-admitted from Withdrawal, but the process goes through the Registrar's Office and the Committee on Academic Standing; readmission is not guaranteed. Students have to be away from Grinnell for a minimum of two semesters before returning. Further guidelines about withdrawing can be found in the *Student Handbook*.

I want to leave Grinnell. What are my options for being gone *next* semester?

1. **Taking a Personal Leave of Absence** – to apply for a personal leave of absence see application and informational handout on GrinnellShare.
2. **Withdrawing from the College** – to withdraw you will need to talk with Sarah Moschenross, Dean of Students. She can be reached by calling 641-269-3700. Students can apply to be re-admitted from Withdrawal, but the process goes through the Registrar's Office and the Committee on Academic Standing; readmission is not guaranteed. Students have to be away from Grinnell for a minimum of two semesters before returning. Further guidelines about withdrawing can be found in the *Student Handbook*.

I want to stay in school right now, but I need an adjustment. What options are available?

Grinnell seeks to support students to complete their semester whenever possible.

- If academic support is needed, you can meet with a member of the Academic Advising staff to discuss options such as advocacy with your professors, a reduction in course load, and/or incompletes.
- If you need personal support, the Assistant Dean of Students can provide holistic care and direction.
- If you seek health or mental health care locally, contact SHACS for assistance in determining options.
- If you seek accommodations for a disability or want to renew or revisit existing accommodations you already have, you can meet with Disability Resources.

How do I return from medical leave?

There is a handout available that explains the process for returning from a leave of absence.