

Information for Students Taking a Leave of Absence

Academic Advising, Joe Rosenfield '25 Center, 3rd floor, Grinnell College, 641-269-3713; fx: 641-269-3710

Students interested in a leave of absence should consult the text in the [Student Handbook](#) for relevant policies and procedures and review the following information.

1. Upon approval of your request for a leave of absence, any housing reservations or pre-registration for the coming semester(s) is automatically forfeited. If your plans were to include off-campus study, you must withdraw from your off-campus study by notifying the Office of Off-Campus Study in writing. Thus, if you are unsure about taking a leave, wait until you are ready to let us know, otherwise everything you had in place will be taken away.
2. While all official campus offices (Dining, Health Services, Mail Services, Residence Life, ITS, etc.) and your faculty will be notified of your leave of absence so that they can plan for your absence, this may not cover all of your personal obligations or commitments. Thus, it is your responsibility to communicate with any important people (work supervisor, student organization, etc.) that you will be gone.
3. If you are on academic probation, that status will remain throughout the duration of your leave and you will be expected to meet the terms of probation when you return.
4. Speak with the Bursar in the Office of Student Accounts (641-269-4100) about how your leave or withdrawal impacts your student account balance. Adjustments to aid and charges may be required based on the length of time you attended classes during the semester. Please be advised that these adjustments may create a balance due. Charges are only prorated through the 6th week of classes. The refund policy is in the Grinnell College *Academic Catalog* – catalog.grinnell.edu.
5. Speak with the Financial Aid office (641-269-3250) if you presently receive financial aid and want to continue to receive it when you return to Grinnell. Leaves of absence affect students in different ways. For example, students must attend 60% of the term to receive 100% of federally-awarded aid.
6. You may request permission to count credits completed at another college or university while on leave toward satisfaction of Grinnell degree requirements (subject to the maximum allowable transfer credits for first-time, first-year and transfer students). You should seek pre-approval of these credits from the Office of the Registrar using the "Transfer Course Approval Form" on the [Office of the Registrar's GrinnellShare page](#). If you plan to take a course in your major field, discuss this with your adviser; you will also need pre-approval from your department, which is only occasionally granted. Any approved credits earned while away from Grinnell will be added to your total credits, but these credits will not change your class standing at Grinnell. Grades earned at another institution are not factored into your G.P.A. either.
7. A leave of absence will affect your status for housing and your time of graduation. For housing, you will be considered one semester (or as many semesters as you've been gone) "behind" your peers, and you will not have the same status during housing selection as your classmates. Also, each semester on leave does not count towards your 8 required semesters in residence. If you plan to graduate "with your class," or in fewer than 8 semesters, you must seek approval a semester or more in advance by completing the Accelerated Graduation Application available on the [Office of the Registrar's GrinnellShare page](#).
8. Although a leave of absence holds a place for you at the College to return to, you will not be considered a student here during the period of your leave. While ITS allows students on approved leaves of absence to maintain their **email** account, other offices may not allow access or privileges (e.g., Bear Athletic Center). Students on a leave of absence may be ineligible for college-sponsored work, research, or grant opportunities during their semester(s) leave of absence, during the summer either before or after a leave of absence, and/or during the semester following a leave of absence. Students interested in participating in college-sponsored programs, such as **MAPs**, **internships**, internship funding, academic credit for internships, and **off-campus study** should consult carefully with the staff member in charge of the program in which they intended to participate to determine eligibility. Students who live in town during their leave may seek to **work at the College** as a non-student; notify your supervisor that you are not an enrolled student to determine if you are eligible for the position. Further, being on leave may affect benefits you receive personally, such as your **medical** or **auto insurance**, so be sure to check anything you receive to ensure it is not contingent on being enrolled as a full-time student.
9. F-1 International Students: Your I-20 was issued solely for the purpose of full time study at Grinnell College and your F-1 status requires full-time enrollment. The College is required by law to report your leave of absence to the Department of Homeland Security through the SEVIS system. Read "[F-1 Mid Program Departure / Return](#)" and contact Brenda Strong (641-269-3703) in the Office of International Student Affairs to discuss your plans for a lawful departure from the USA. You must also consider your unique immigration-related needs when you consider the timeline of initiating your return to Grinnell.

Before You Leave Campus

10. Leave a forwarding address at the Mail Room. Know that the Mail Room staff will discard anything in your mailbox that does not have a postmark on it, so warn them if you expect on-campus mail and find out the procedure.
11. Return any textbook rentals and college property (e.g., library books, A/V equipment, and musical instruments).
12. Pack and move all your belongings out of your room. Notify your RLC of your departure and schedule a time to complete a formal checkout of your room. If you would like to complete an informal checkout, simply return your key (see 13). (NOTE: Any damage charges assessed to the room after your departure cannot be contested if a formal checkout is not completed). College trunk rooms are not available to students on a leave of absence. If you would like to have your room packed for you and your items shipped home or stored while you are away from campus, two options are available:
 - For Shipping Needs:** Total Choice Shipping (ph: 641-236-7447 or email grinnell@totalchoiceshipping.com)
 - For Packing & Storage Needs:** C&K Transfer (ph: 641-236-3418)
13. Return your room key to your RLC (preferred), to Lauren Myers (JRC Third Floor; 8am-5pm M-F), or to Campus Safety (1432 East St.—available 24/7) to receive your key deposit refund.

Returning to Grinnell

The College expects that all students who take a leave of absence will return to complete their degree. The letter you receive from the Academic Advising Office at the time you are approved for your leave of absence details the process for returning to Grinnell – so keep this letter. Below is a summary.

For Students on Personal Leave:

1. Contact the Dean for Student Success & Academic Advising [sternjm@grinnell.edu] by email or in writing, by October 15 or April 1 of the semester before you intend to return to Grinnell. In your email state your intent to return to Grinnell for the coming semester. If you are unable to provide notification by these dates, you might still be able to be re-admitted for the subsequent semester, but keep in mind that it can take time to process a return from a leave of absence and also to take care of details listed in items 2-4 below. Students re-admitted after the housing and pre-registration processes are complete will be at a slight disadvantage, of course, for selecting courses and housing.
2. Contact the Department of Residence Life – 641-269-3700 – regarding your preferences for housing. If applicable, you will be issued a housing number and you can participate in room draw in April by authorizing, in writing via email, to choose a room for you. If you want to be considered for off-campus housing or program housing, know that these may have separate procedures and earlier deadlines.
3. Contact the Cashier Office – 641-269-4100. In order to register for classes, all past due balances must be paid in full. Once your account meets these criteria, the Registrar's Office will send you pre-registration information for the semester in which you intend to return.
4. Upon notification of your return to Grinnell, you will automatically be placed on the full meal plan. As soon as your housing is confirmed, contact Dining Services regarding your meal plan preference.

For Students on Emergency Leave of Absence for Medical Reasons:

At least eight weeks prior to the beginning of the semester for which you intend to return, provide a written request to return in the form of a personal statement about your recovery during your time away to the Dean for Student Success & Academic Advising. You must also present a letter from a licensed health care provider who has been holistically involved in your treatment during your leave of absence. The letter should be on letterhead indicating the provider's professional credentials and affiliation. The letter should clearly state that you are ready to enroll in a full academic course load (12-18 credits), and it should identify your current condition and the current impact of the condition on your ability to do work and live in the residence halls. Specifically, your doctor may find it helpful to simply address the following: 1. Diagnosis(es); 2. Dates seen; 3. Course/duration of treatment; 4. Present treatment/medications; 5. Follow-up plans/recommendations (include assessment of need for continued treatment/therapy). It will also be necessary for the Dean and/or staff from health and counseling services to talk with this medical professional and to consult with each other, so please sign appropriate releases so that this can happen. Once medical documentation has been received, reviewed and approved, the Dean will notify the relevant campus offices of your approval for return, and then you should follow steps 2 through 4 in the above Personal Leave section.