

D02.1 STUDENT LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Scope: Applies to all RIT students

There are two types of student leave of absence: voluntary (planned and immediate) and involuntary.

A student on a leave of absence, whether voluntary or involuntary, will not attend classes, must vacate university owned housing as outlined in the Terms & Conditions of Housing, Debit, and Meal Plans, and may be entitled to whatever refunds of tuition, fees, and room and board charges as would be appropriate for the effective date of the leave of absence. A student on a leave of absence will not have access to the Student Life Center facilities or the ability to check out Wallace Center materials.

I. VOLUNTARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE (LOA)

- A. A voluntary leave of absence may be requested by a full-time, degree-seeking student to provide assurance that the student can retain their active student status and complete all curriculum requirements in place at the time of original matriculation to his/her program of study. All voluntary leave of absence requests must be approved or denied by the student's primary academic unit head or designee. In emergency cases, the chair of the Student Behavior Consultation Team (SBCT) may initiate and process the leave of absence in conjunction with the student's primary academic unit.

Any voluntary leave of absence requires the approval of the student's primary academic unit head or designee. Based on the information provided by the student, an academic unit may deny the request for a voluntary leave of absence. If the voluntary leave of absence is denied, the student and advisor will discuss the best course of action for the student. A student can appeal the academic unit's decision on a voluntary leave of absence request to the dean.

A voluntary leave of absence can be granted by a primary academic unit head or designee for up to three consecutive terms, including summer but excluding intersession; if a longer period is requested, the student will be required to withdraw from the university. If the student wishes to re-matriculate at a later time, the student must reapply through the Admissions Office. A student on a voluntary leave of absence who fails to enroll in the term expected, as indicated on the Leave of Absence Request form, will be classified as discontinued and will be withdrawn from the university, as per RIT Policy [D02](#), section III.B.

In special circumstances, a student may request an extension to his/her voluntary leave of absence. This request can be approved or denied by the primary academic unit head or designee. Extensions will be granted for no more than two consecutive terms and a new LOA request form must be completed by the primary academic unit.

In circumstances where a student has a pending academic action or conduct action, a voluntary leave of absence may be approved but if the results of the academic or conduct action result in suspension of the student, those results will take precedence over the voluntary leave of absence status and will be indicated as such on the student's record.

B. Types of Voluntary Leave of Absences

There are two types of voluntary leave of absences that can be requested: planned and immediate. Factors such as the nature and the timing of the request determine which type applies.

1. Planned Leave of Absence

A planned leave of absence is requested for the succeeding term prior to the start of that term. The student agrees to complete any courses currently in session, understanding the leave will begin the following term and any courses enrolled for the requested term will be dropped.

A student should contact his/her academic advisor to discuss the reason for the leave request, develop a re-entry plan, and submit the *Request for Leave of Absence* form for approval.

2. Immediate Leave of Absence

An immediate leave of absence is for students who request to leave after a term begins.

- a. If an immediate leave of absence is requested after a term begins but prior to the end of the Add/Drop period, all courses for the term will be dropped and the student's leave begins immediately.
- b. If an immediate leave of absence is requested after the Add/Drop period and before the last day of classes in the current term due to extenuating circumstances, such as illness, injury, family emergency, or on the recommendation of the chair of the SBCT, the student will receive grades of 'W' (Withdraw) in all courses enrolled for the current term. Any courses enrolled for future terms will be dropped. The current term will be counted as one of the three consecutive terms comprising the leave.

It is the student's responsibility to initiate the immediate leave of absence process with his/her academic advisor as soon as he/she stops attending classes because of the potential impact on financial and immigration status. Exceptions can be made for students who are unable to give consent.

If an immediate leave of absence is deemed appropriate, the student, in conjunction with the academic advisor, will develop a re-entry plan and submit the *Request for Leave of Absence* form for consideration.

c.

C. Return from Voluntary Leave of Absence

To return from a voluntary leave of absence, a student must contact his/her academic advisor to review the re-entry plan and ensure the student has an enrollment appointment assigned. The re-entry plan may require prior approval by the chair of the SBCT.

If a student has a Student Affairs hold he/she will need to contact the chair of the SBCT to provide any documentation required per the re-entry plan and request that the hold be removed.

II. INVOLUNTARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A. The university may place a student on an Involuntary Leave of Absence, hereafter referred to as involuntary LOA, when a student is unwilling or unable to make a determination to take a voluntary leave of absence and when there is evidence to suggest that:

1. The student poses a significant danger of imminent or serious harm to self or to others, or to the property of the campus, or,
2. The student, although not posing the risk of imminent or serious harm to self or others, impedes the lawful activities of other members of the campus community. Examples of such behavior include being disruptive to the environment or having needs which exceed the level of care and supervision that the university community can provide.
- 3.

The policy and procedures for initiating an involuntary LOA do not take the place of disciplinary actions (e.g. suspension, dismissal, or expulsion) that are in response to violations of the [RIT Code of Conduct](#).

An involuntary LOA can be imposed for up to three consecutive terms, including summer but excluding intersession. If the stipulated conditions are not achieved or complied with in this time period, the student must reapply through the Admissions Office. A student on an involuntary leave of absence who fails to enroll in the term expected will be classified as discontinued and will be withdrawn from the university, as per RIT Policy [D02](#), section III.

B. Procedures for Emergency Situation/Imminent Danger

1. When a student is identified as posing an immediate or serious threat to harm him/herself and/or others, Public Safety (and/or other law enforcement/emergency response personnel) and appropriate designated RIT administrators are contacted.
2. Members of the SBCT, in consultation with Public Safety and/or emergency response officials if appropriate, evaluate the situation, accessing any information available to them at that time.
3. If student behavior is determined to be an immediate or serious threat, the student is placed on 'interim LOA' by the chair of the SBCT effective immediately.
4. Interventions to ensure the safety of the student and/or the community will be implemented and referred for proper evaluation and/or treatment as indicated.
5. The student is notified in writing by the chair of the SBCT that an interim LOA is in place and of the restrictions on his/her contact and interaction with members of the community as a result of the LOA.
6. The student receives notification that the case is being considered for referral for either a conduct hearing and/or Involuntary LOA review through the SBCT.
7. The student is informed in writing of the conditions required for requesting to return to RIT, the advisable or minimum length of separation, and the documentation required to support consideration of return to school.
8. The appeal process may be utilized to obtain reinstatement but the interim LOA persists until the appeal process is completed.

C. Procedures for Non-imminent Emergency Situations

1. Members of the SBCT evaluate the situation accessing any information available to them at the time. Possible outcomes/recommendations of this meeting include:
 - a. Voluntary LOA
 - b. Involuntary LOA
 - c. Remain in school under specified conditions
 - d. Referral to campus or off-campus service

2. Following an SBCT meeting, the student will be notified of a meeting with the chair of the SBCT to discuss the outcome/recommendations. The student will be informed of his/her rights (see 5 below).
3. The chair of the SBCT shall meet with the student to review the recommendation of the SBCT.
4. The student will also be notified in writing of the conditions for reentry in the event a voluntary LOA is taken or an Involuntary LOA is imposed or any conditions required for remaining in school.
5. A student subject to an involuntary LOA is entitled to the following:
 - a. Notice of intent to remove the student pursuant to this policy, stating the reasons for the action.
 - b. The opportunity to review and discuss the information upon which the decision is being made.
 - c. The opportunity to present relevant information on his/her own behalf (or by a health professional working with the student if the student is not capable of self-representation).
 - d. The right to a non-legal advocate.
6. In the event the student disagrees with the recommendation of the SBCT, the student may appeal the finding. The appeal must be made in writing to the vice president for Student Affairs (or his/her designee) within three (3) business days after the date of the notification of the recommendation to the student. The appeal notification must state the grounds for the appeal (see 7 below) and the evidence or reasons supporting this position. If the decision of the SBCT is to place the student on an involuntary LOA, this involuntary LOA will be in effect during the appeal process.
7. An appeal of an involuntary LOA will be limited to the following grounds:
 - To determine whether the process used to impose the involuntary LOA was in accordance with designated procedures.
 - To determine whether the decision reached was based on information and situational conditions that support the conclusion.
8. The findings and recommendations of the vice president for Student Affairs will be communicated to the student and the chair of the SBCT along with any changes that will be made to the original decision as an outcome of the appeal. The written communication will be sent to the student within ten (10) business days after receiving the student's written appeal. The decision of the vice

president for Student Affairs shall be final.

9. Students who are on an involuntary LOA will have a hold placed on their records which will prevent them from being readmitted or re-enrolled in the university until the conditions for readmittance (which will be spelled out in the letter to the student) have been met. It is the responsibility of the student to provide documentation of compliance with such conditions. Readmission is at the discretion of RIT.

10. Students placed on an involuntary LOA have the following responsibilities:
 - a. Abide by the restrictions and recommendations of the involuntary LOA as outlined in written notification.
 - b. Meet all conditions outlined by RIT before submitting a request for readmittance.
 - c. When seeking readmittance, submit supporting documentation at least three (3) weeks in advance of the beginning of the term he/she plans to return.
 - d. Permit (with appropriately signed release of information) exchange of information between designated RIT staff and mental or other health care providers in order to determine a timely and acceptable return to RIT.

11. A student who is not placed on an involuntary LOA may be subject to conditions to continue enrollment at the university. In such cases, the student will be provided with a written summary of conditions and must meet all conditions in order to maintain student status. A student who fails to meet such conditions will be subject to an involuntary LOA by the chair of the SBCT or will be subject to charges through the RIT student conduct process for failure to comply.

Responsible Office:

Office the Senior Vice President for Student Affairs and the Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. Inquiries may be directed to academicaffairs@rit.edu.

Effective Date:

August 26, 2013

Policy History:

Leave of Absence as stated on D2.0 – Admission approved September 1958 and revised in March 2011.
Involuntary Leave of Absence approved in May 2000, revised April 8, 2009 and edited August 2010
Policies combined into a single policy – May 8, 2013