

Policy Number: D02.1

Policy Name: Leave of Absence and University Withdrawal Policy

Scope: Applies to all students

I. DEFINITIONS

A. Leave of Absence

A leave of absence is a temporary separation from the University. If approved, a leave of absence may not exceed three (3) consecutive terms of non-enrollment, including summer but excluding intersession. After three (3) consecutive terms of non-enrollment any student that has not returned to the University will be withdrawn, as per RIT Policy D02.0.III.B. The University defines non-enrollment as a term in which there were no classes enrolled.

Students on leave of absence retain their matriculated student status and upon return to the University, complete all curriculum and program requirements that were in place at the time of matriculation into their program of study. Academic suspension or disciplinary suspension override a leave of absence.

A student on a leave of absence cannot return to the University in the same term that a leave of absence has been approved and processed. Students on leave of absence cannot attend classes, and must vacate university owned housing as outlined in the RIT Housing Operations *Terms & Conditions*. Financial adjustments to tuition, fees, room and board, and student financial aid will be applied. A student on a leave of absence will not have access to University services including, but not limited to the Student Life Center and the Wallace Center.

There are two types of Leave of Absence: Voluntary and Involuntary.

1. Voluntary Leave of Absence

- a. **Planned Leave of Absence:** Students applying for a planned leave of absence agree to complete any courses in the current term, understanding that if approved the leave of absence will begin the following term. Any courses enrolled in subsequent terms will be dropped by the Office of the Registrar.
- b. **Immediate Leave of Absence:** An immediate leave of absence is reserved for the unusual situation where a student is unable to complete the current term. In such cases, students may request an immediate leave of absence. **Requests for an immediate leave of absence can be made between the first day and the last day of classes (in cases where the last day of class is a Saturday requests must be completed by close of business Friday).** Any courses enrolled in subsequent terms will be dropped by the Office of the Registrar.
 - a. If an immediate leave of absence is approved prior to the end of the Add/Drop period all classes for the current term will be dropped.

- b. If an immediate leave of absence is approved after the Add/Drop period and through the last day of class for the current term, the student will receive grades of 'W' (Withdraw) in all courses enrolled for the current term.

Requests received by the primary academic unit for the current term, after the last day of classes (in cases where the last day of class is a Saturday requests must be completed by close of business Friday) as defined on the University calendar will be processed for the next academic term (barring extenuating circumstances and with the approval of the student's academic unit head).

2. Involuntary Leave of Absence

The university may place a student on an involuntary leave of absence when a student is unwilling or unable to request a voluntary leave of absence and when there is evidence to suggest that:

- a. The student poses a significant danger of imminent or serious harm to self or to others, or to the property of the campus.
- b. The student, although not posing the risk of imminent or serious harm to self or others, impedes the 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.
- c. The student has a medical reason that will prevent them returning to the university in the foreseeable future.

In emergency cases, where the student is unable to initiate the request, the chair of the Student Behavior Consultation Team (SBCT) may initiate and process a leave of absence in conjunction with the student's primary academic unit. In such cases the involvement of the chair of SBCT and supporting documentation may be accepted in lieu of the student signature on the Request for Leave of Absence form.

An involuntary leave of absence may be executed at any time.

B. University Withdrawal

A university withdrawal is a permanent separation from the University. Any student who plans to leave the University on a permanent basis must formally withdraw. Any student who has withdrawn from the University and then wishes to return is required to go through the Admissions process. Academic suspension or disciplinary suspension will override a University Withdrawal.

A withdrawn student cannot petition to return to the University in the same term that the University Withdrawal occurred. Withdrawn students cannot attend classes, and must vacate university owned housing as outlined in the RIT Housing Operations *Terms & Conditions*. Financial adjustments to tuition, fees, room and board, and student financial aid will be applied. A withdrawn student will not have access to University services including, but not limited to the Student Life Center and the Wallace Center.

1. **Planned University Withdrawal:** Students requesting a planned university withdrawal agree to complete any courses in the current term, understanding the university withdrawal will begin the following term. Any courses enrolled in subsequent terms will be dropped by the Office of the Registrar.
2. **Immediate University Withdrawal:** An immediate university withdrawal is reserved for the unusual situation where a student is unable to complete the current term and does not plan on returning to RIT. In such cases, students may request an immediate university withdrawal from the first day and the last day of class. Any courses enrolled in subsequent terms will be dropped by the Office of the Registrar.
 - a. If an immediate university withdrawal is requested prior to the end of the Add/Drop period all classes for the term will be dropped.
 - b. If an immediate university withdrawal is requested after the Add/Drop period and through the last day of classes (in cases where the last day of class is a Saturday requests must be completed by close of business Friday) for the current term the student will receive grades of 'W' (Withdraw) in all courses enrolled for the term.

Requests received by the primary academic unit for the current term, after the last day of classes (in cases where the last day of class is a Saturday requests must be completed by close of business Friday) as defined on the University calendar will be processed for the next academic term.

II. REQUESTING LEAVE OF ABSENCE OR UNIVERSITY WITHDRAWAL

- A. **Requesting a Voluntary Leave of Absence:** A student must initiate the request for a voluntary leave of absence with their primary academic unit. Once requested, the academic unit head or their designee must formally approve or deny the request on the Request for Leave of Absence form.

An academic unit may deny the request for a voluntary leave of absence. If a leave of absence is denied, the student has the right to appeal the decision to the Dean of their primary college in accordance with the college's appeal process.

- B. **Requesting a University Withdrawal:** A student must initiate the request for a university withdrawal with their primary academic unit. In extraordinary cases, where the student is unable to initiate the request, academic unit may initiate and process a university withdrawal. In such cases the involvement of the academic unit and supporting documentation may be accepted in lieu of the student signature on the Request for University Withdrawal form.

III. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is the responsibility of the student who is considering a leave of absence or university withdrawal to contact the Student Financial Services office and their financial aid counselor (if applicable) to discuss any possible financial impact before initiating the process.

In accordance with federal regulations, the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships will recalculate federal aid eligibility for students who withdraw, drop out, are suspended, or take a

leave of absence prior to completing more than 60 percent of the term. Other financial aid will also be adjusted based on a student's last date of enrollment.

Information regarding tuition and fees, billing dates and payment options can be found on the Student Financial Services webpage (<https://www.rit.edu/fa/sfs/>). Detailed information about student financial aid can be found on the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships webpage (<http://www.rit.edu/financialaid>).

IV. RETURNING TO THE UNIVERSITY

- A. **Return from Leave of Absence:** To return from a leave of absence, a student must contact their academic department and request a return from leave of absence. The academic department will work with the student to complete a Return from Leave of Absence form. If a student has a Student Affairs hold they will need to contact the chair of the SBCT to provide any documentation required and request that the hold be removed.

A student on a leave of absence who shows no enrollment for 3 consecutive terms of non-enrollment (including summer and excluding intersession) will be discontinued and withdrawn from the university, as per RIT Policy D02.0.III.B. Students who are discontinued and withdrawn from the university who decide to return to the University must apply for readmission through the admissions office.

- B. **Returning to the University after University Withdrawal:** Students who have formally withdrawn from RIT and decide to return to the University must apply for readmission through the admissions office.

Responsible Office: Office the Senior Vice President for Student Affairs and the Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Effective Date:

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