



Personal Leave of Absence Policy

Revision: July 1, 2021

Purpose

Muhlenberg has traditionally recognized the educational and personal rewards that many students receive from a semester or two away from the College. Personal issues of a non-medical nature may require that a student remain away for more than the usual vacation period. Moreover, certain unforeseeable personal issues may occur during the course of the semester which may impact a student's ability to meet the academic expectations of their faculty. The College encourages students to carefully consider their situations, to clarify their objectives, and to evaluate whether they should temporarily interrupt their studies and take a personal leave of absence from all courses.

Students may choose to take a personal leave for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to: attending to family needs, working, traveling, or gaining fresh perspective on their intellectual commitments, career plans, or educational priorities. Students who wish to explore the advantages and disadvantages of a personal leave may wish to confer with the Dean of Academic Life, their faculty advisors, or family.

General Guidelines

- Students seeking a leave for medical reasons, including mental health, are encouraged to follow the medical leave of absence process. Information regarding that process is available on the Dean of Students website: <https://www.muhlenberg.edu/offices/deanst/services/medicalleaveofabsencepolicy/>
- Unresolved disciplinary infractions, including both social and academic violations, will not be discharged through the application of a personal leave of absence and may need to be resolved prior to the student's return to campus. Students are encouraged to consult with the Dean of Academic Life or the Dean of Students for additional information.

- A student may accumulate no more than four total semesters of any combination of personal and medical leaves.
- Prior to the conclusion of add/drop, students who apply for a personal leave of absence will have their courses dropped and the courses will no longer appear on their transcript. From the end of add/drop to the course withdrawal deadline, students who apply for a personal leave of absence will receive withdrawal (W) grades in each of their courses. In both cases, the leave of absence will be noted on the student's official transcript.
- Requests for a same-semester personal leave of absence will not be granted after the course withdrawal deadline except through a successful petition to the Dean of Academic Life.
- Students may transfer up to four courses per semester while on a leave of absence. Students must seek pre-approval from the department chair for the subject area at Muhlenberg prior to enrollment at another institution.
- A request to extend or return from a personal leave of absence must be submitted prior to the first day of the semester in which the student is scheduled to return. Students are strongly encouraged to begin the process as soon as they know of their intent to return; this will allow for timely course registration. Students should also take note of applicable housing and course registration deadlines.
- Students who fail to comply within the timeline stated above will be unofficially withdrawn from the College. Students who are unofficially withdrawn must petition the Dean of Academic Life for reinstatement if they wish to return.

Request a Personal Leave

1. The student must complete the [Request Leave of Absence](#) form in WorkDay.
2. The student should then complete the [Request for Personal Leave survey](#).
3. After completing both steps, the Assistant Dean of Academic Life will be in touch to schedule a brief interview to review the circumstances that prompted the request.
4. Once the leave of absence is approved, the following departments will be notified: Registrar's Office, Business Office, Financial Aid, Housing and Residence Life, and Dean of Students. The student's academic advisor(s) will also be informed.
5. Students and families should work with the Business Office and/or Financial Aid regarding fees and any refunds by contacting them directly at 484-664-3150. The college's refund policy is posted on the Financial Aid website at:
<https://www.muhlenberg.edu/financialaid/generalinformation/refundpolicy/>

6. The Assistant Dean for Academic Life or designee may remain in periodic contact with the student while on a personal leave.

Extend a Personal Leave

1. All personal leaves are approved on a per semester basis.
2. Students must be in contact with the Assistant Dean for Academic Life regarding their intent to extend their personal leave prior to the start of the next semester.
3. Once the extension is approved, the student's academic advisor(s) will be informed.

Return from a Personal Leave

1. Students must request to return from a personal leave prior to the start of the semester in which they intend to return.
2. The student must complete the [Request to Return from Leave of Absence](#) form in WorkDay.
3. The student should then complete the [Return from Personal Leave survey](#).
4. After completing these steps, the Assistant Dean of Academic Life will be in touch to schedule a brief intake.
5. Once the return from leave is approved, the following departments will be notified: Registrar's Office, Business Office, Financial Aid, Housing and Residence Life, and Dean of Students. The student's academic advisor(s) will also be informed.
6. Students and families should work with Housing and Residence Life, the Business Office and/or Financial Aid as needed.
7. Students with transfer courses must send an official transcript to the Registrar's Office.
8. Students returning in poor academic standing (i.e., academic warning or probation) will be required to meet periodically with a member of the staff as designated by the Assistant Dean for Academic Life. This will ensure a smooth and successful transition back to classes.

Withdrawal From Muhlenberg College

1. The student must complete the [Request Institutional Withdrawal](#) form in WorkDay.

Questions Regarding Personal Leaves

Students are encouraged to contact David Hallowell, Assistant Dean for Academic Life, at davidhallowell@muhlenberg.edu or 484-664-3408 with any questions or concerns they may have regarding the leave of absence policy or process.