



BROWN

Brown University Student Support Services Guidelines: Clearance to Return from Medical Leave

Medical leaves are intended to give students time to focus on their health and wellbeing so that they can return to campus and be successful in their academic and co-curricular pursuits. The medical leave clearance process is designed to ensure that students have taken such care, and that appropriate supports and resources are in place for their return. The following guidelines apply to undergraduate students who are seeking to return to Brown following a medical leave of absence. Graduate and medical school students considering medical leave should contact the Graduate School and Medical School respectively.

We encourage students to take sufficient time to address the health-related concerns that led to their leavetaking. Returning too soon sometimes results in the student continuing to struggle academically and personally. Many students choose to take two or more semesters while others return after one semester. The length of the leave is intended to allow a student sufficient time away from campus to achieve sustained stability and to engage in activities that will contribute to a successful return. Students may petition for clearance during any review period. Students who are not granted clearance may petition again at any subsequent review period.

Students who have been away from Brown for more than five years will also need to work with the Dean of the College office and the Degree Completion Committee to review the feasibility of clearance.

Medical Leave in Lieu of Academic Suspension or Refused Registration

Brown's Committee on Academic Standing (CAS) requires that a Medical Leave in Lieu of Academic Suspension lasts at least two semesters—as for all academic suspensions. Medical Leave in Lieu of Refused Registration lasts at least one semester. The CAS has a separate but parallel process for evaluating requests for return to studies from Medical Leave in Lieu of Suspension or Refused Registration. Students should consult with the Deputy Dean of the College or a senior academic dean for further details.

PETITIONING FOR CLEARANCE TO RETURN FROM MEDICAL LEAVE

Guidelines governing clearance seek to assure, in consultation with the student and their medical care providers, that the student will be able to function effectively in the autonomous student environment at Brown without significant disruption to others in the University community, and that the student can adequately monitor their own health. The clearance process also provides a review of the ongoing supports a student may need (e.g. medications, and/or continued psychotherapy appointments, and/or continued medical appointments).

Deadlines

In order to petition for clearance, a student must send all required documents by 11:59pm EST on the deadline dates below.

IT IS CRITICAL THAT THESE DEADLINES ARE MET.

- **October 15th for a Spring semester clearance**
- **January 15th for Summer enrollment and/or a Fall semester clearance (with participation in the Housing Lottery)**
- **May 1st for a Fall semester clearance (without participation in the Housing Lottery).**

Petition for Clearance Materials

Each petition must include three documents that are described in detail below.

- Student Letter
- Clinician Letter(s)
- Release of Information Form

Please note, Student Support deans are available at any time to answer questions about the requested materials or any other aspect of the process.

1. **Student letter:** The letter should be sent attention to the Student Support Dean who is working with you, Student Support Services, 42 Charlesfield Street, Box 2014, Providence, RI 02912. Letters may also be emailed to: studentsupport@brown.edu. The letter should include:
 - A header including your name, current email and physical address at which you will receive your decision letter.
 - The student's intention to return from medical leave.
 - Insight into the factors that led to the leavetaking.
 - An overview of the care and treatment received to address the health issue that led to the leave.
 - Other activities in which the student has engaged while on leave (for example: work, taking courses, volunteering, pursuing other interests) which may both contribute to their wellbeing and also demonstrate sustained stability and their readiness to return.
 - Reflection on the student's ability to return to the rigors of academic study and the social demands of Brown.
 - An overview of the student's plans for how they will maintain their wellbeing once they have returned (continued treatment, building a support network, accessing resources, etc).

2. **Treatment Provider Letter(s):** Students are required to submit a letter or letters from at least one of the two sections below. Students may submit more than one letter from care providers (e.g. a therapist and psychiatrist or a primary care and specialist health provider). In some instances, students may submit letters from both a mental health treatment provider and physician. The medical leave form signed at the time of leavetaking indicates the clearance type.
 - a. **Mental Health Treatment Provider Letter(s) (For leaves which require clearance from Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)):** The student is required to have their treatment provider (not a relative) send a letter to the Dr. Will Meek, Director of Counseling and Psychological Services, c/o Medical Leave Clearance Committee, Student Support Services, 42 Charlesfield Street, Box 2014, Providence, RI 02912. The treatment provider's letter should include the following:
 - A description of the nature of the issue(s) and/or symptoms that led to the student's treatment.
 - The type and length of the student's treatment and treatment goals.
 - A description of the course of treatment and the changes the student has made during that time.
 - A statement of your opinion on the student's readiness to return to the University and successfully navigate its academic and social context.
 - Plans for continued care (as necessary) and for proactively managing future stresses.

 - b. **Physical Health Provider Letter(s) (For leaves which require clearance from University Health Services (UHS)):** The student is required to have their physician (not a relative) send a letter to, Dr. Adam Pallant, Clinical Director, University Health Services, c/o Medical Leave Clearance Committee, Student Support Services, 42 Charlesfield Street, Box 2014, Providence, RI 02912. The physician's letter should include the following:
 - A diagnosis of the condition leading to the student's medical leave
 - The length and course of the student's treatment.
 - The current status of the student's medical health.
 - The student's attainment of treatment goals and their readiness to return to the academic and social demands of Brown University.
 - Plans for follow-up care, including recommendations for continuing medical treatment and support that may be requested from University Health Services.

3. **Release of Information Form:** Since the clinician letter is maintained as part of your medical record in CAPS and/or UHS, a limited release of information form is required in order for the Brown clinicians to participate fully in the clearance committee. Signing the release allows Brown's clinicians to share some information included in the support letter provided to us. The form is Brown's standard release and has been pre-completed to indicate that you give the CAPS and/or UHS staff who review your letter permission to share relevant information with the committee. This release does not apply to any information aside from the letter, and it does not give permission to share the contents of the letter

with anyone outside of the committee. The form can be found in the medical leave section of the Student Support Services website and will also be provided to you as part of reminders about the clearance process.

CLEARANCE REVIEW PROCESS

Timeline & Process

In order to carefully consider each petition and the individual situation of each student, the review process takes approximately four weeks following the respective deadlines.

- Week One: Compile all materials, follow up on any missing materials, and distribute letters to deans and Brown clinicians for review.
- Week Two: Student Support deans and clinicians from Counseling and Psychological Services and University Health Services review their respective letters. These staff may reach out to students and/or clinicians to request additional information that may not be contained in the letters but which may help to understand the student's readiness to return.
- Week Three: The Medical Leave Clearance Committee meets to review each petition. The dean working with each student presents their petition. Following the meeting, deans may reach out to students with questions that the committee has about their treatment and activities while on leave or plans for care once they have returned.
- Week Four: Any follow up is completed. Decision letters are prepared and distributed.

Clearance Committee & Criteria

The committee is comprised of the Student Support Services deans as well as representatives from CAPS, UHS, the office of the Dean of the College, and Student/Employee Accessibility Services (SEAS). The committee makes an individualized assessment of each student and seeks to determine that the student has met the following clearance criteria:

- Received appropriate and sufficient treatment from psychological and/or medical health care providers.
- Demonstrates insight regarding the circumstances that led to their medical leave and an ability to use appropriate health care resources for prevention/treatment as needed.
- Demonstrates sustained stability. This may be shown through the general activities of the student while on leave that contribute to the student's readiness to return to Brown.
- Demonstrates the ability to function in the student environment without significant disruption to others in the University community, with appropriate University support.
- Demonstrates an appropriate plan for maintaining their wellbeing upon return. The plan may include their academic and social life balance, their support system (family and friends) and how it contributes to their readjustment, continued care from clinicians, and other activities in which they will engage to care for themselves.

Decision Letter & Transition

Once the review is complete, students are notified by letter of the disposition of their clearance. For students who are cleared, the letter will also include recommendations for support resources on campus that may be useful to the student. When a student is cleared, Student Support Services begins the process of notifying other offices on campus. The student may be in touch with their dean at any point with questions about the transition back to Brown. The dean will also reach out to the student shortly after their return to check in.

APPEAL PROCESS

Within five (5) days of notification of a denial for clearance, the student may appeal, in writing, the decision of the committee, setting out the reason for the appeal and any supporting materials. Appeals will be submitted to Dean of Students or their designee. Appeals will normally be considered only when: (1) there is relevant new information that was not reasonably available at the time of the original clearance deadline and that, in the judgment of the appeal officer, the introduction of the information may have changed the original decision; or (2) when a substantial procedural error by the University or Medical Leave Clearance Committee is demonstrated and in the reasonable judgment of the appeal committee such error is sufficient enough that it may have affected the original decision. If the appeal committee determines that the

appeal has merit, they may change the decision or may remand the matter to the Medical Leave Clearance Committee. Decisions will be communicated to the student within ten (10) days of the appeal deadline.

RELATED INFORMATION

Students may wish to notify other offices during their clearance process. Such offices may include:

- Contact the **Office of Residential Life** www.reslife.brown.edu/
- Contact the **Office of Financial Aid** www.financialaid.brown.edu
- Contact the **Loan Office** www.brown.edu/Administration/Financial_Services/Loan/
- Contact the **Bursar** www.brown.edu/Administration/Financial_Services/Bursar/
- Contact **Student and Employee Accessibility Services (SEAS)** www.brown.edu/campus-life/support/accessibility-services/
- Contact the Deputy [Dean of the College](#)

When Student Support Services informs the **Registrar's Office** that a student has been cleared for return from Medical Leave, the Registrar's Office will contact the student via email regarding the process for on-line registration.

A student who has been placed on **Medical Leave in Lieu of Academic Suspension** must apply to the Committee on Academic Standing for simultaneous clearance. **Brown's Committee on Academic Standing requires that a Medical Leave in Lieu of Academic Suspension last two full semesters.**

A student may contact a Dean in Student Support Services by phone at 401-863-3145 with any questions about the medical leave process at any time.

Related Links:

- Student Support Services www.brown.edu/student-support
- Committee on Academic Standing
www.brown.edu/Administration/Dean_of_the_College/academic_standing/cas.php

NOTE: These Guidelines were updated in Fall 2017 to make the process more transparent for students. If you have any questions or concerns about the changes, please feel free to contact us to discuss.