

# LEAVE OF ABSENCES

Students may encounter unexpected issues that change their anticipated degree progress. They may “stop out,” deferring enrollment to subsequent terms. They should check with the Financial Aid office about any effects on their anticipated aid awards. Students who have questions about or are considering leaves of absence should contact their academic adviser. (<https://sps.northwestern.edu/student-services/>)

## The Following Policies Apply to Leaves of Absence

- Students may “stop out” by simply not signing up for courses for up to four consecutive quarters.
- Students who have stopped out for more than four consecutive quarters lose their active status as a student and must submit an Application for Readmission, located on the SPS Forms and Documents (<https://sps.northwestern.edu/main/forms-and-documents.php>) page, in order to request to return to their program.
- Students who have not formally begun a program may defer starting it for up to three quarters from their terms of admission. For example, a student admitted for a fall quarter may defer fall, winter and spring quarters but must start the program by the summer. Students who do not start their programs within this time must apply for readmission.

## Voluntary Medical Leave of Absence

### Purpose

The purpose of a voluntary medical leave of absence (MLOA) is to provide students time away from academic studies, for treatment of a physical or mental health condition that impairs a student’s ability to function safely and successfully as a member of the Northwestern University School of Professional Studies (SPS) community. The authority to grant a MLOA and permission to return from a MLOA resides with the Associate Dean of Students at SPS. Each leave is individualized based on the needs of the student and handled on a case-by-case basis.

### Deadlines

Students can apply for a voluntary MLOA at any time; however, in order for a MLOA to take effect during an ongoing quarter, **the process must be completed before final exam date or final coursework is due**; whichever happens first. In addition, an MLOA cannot be processed if a student has taken a final exam or final coursework for any of their classes in the given quarter.

A voluntary MLOA lasts at least two full academic quarters. If a MLOA lasts for longer than an academic year, students are expected to adhere to curriculum changes in their program of study during their absence.

Requests for reinstatement from a voluntary MLOA must be submitted no later than six weeks before the term in which the student wishes to start. Applications for reinstatement will NOT be considered after the deadlines.

Quarter of Leave	Request for Reinstatement from MLOA Deadlines
Fall quarter	Six weeks prior to the start of summer term
Winter quarter	Six weeks prior to the start of fall term
Spring quarter	Six weeks prior to the start of winter term

Summer quarter	Six weeks prior to the start of spring term
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Exact deadlines are indicated on the Academic calendar as “Application for Readmission” due dates.

## MLOA Request Process

To begin the process of applying for a MLOA, the student reaches out to their academic adviser or to [SPS-MLOA@northwestern.edu](mailto:SPS-MLOA@northwestern.edu). The adviser will guide the student through all leave options available, the MLOA process, and required documentation to request a leave.

The adviser will provide the student with the Request for a Medical Leave of Absence form. The form, a statement why the leave is being requested, and a signed statement from the student’s current treatment provider(s) verifying the need for leave and the estimated duration of treatment are required to request MLOA. The information should be submitted to [sps-mloa@northwestern.edu](mailto:sps-mloa@northwestern.edu).

## Registration During MLOA

While on MLOA, a student may not register for classes at Northwestern until the student has been reinstated by the Associate Dean of Student Services and the Leave hold preventing registration in courses has been removed from their student account.

All incompletes must be resolved before applying for reinstatement from MLOA.

Students on medical leave are strongly encouraged to consult with Student Services in advance and have an academic plan in place, to allow registration to occur once the hold is removed.