

Clinical and Academic Policy		
	Policy Title	Involuntary Student Leave of Absence
	Policy Number	OME-900.17
	Department/Office	Office of Medical Education
	Effective Date	July 20, 2017
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	Approved By	Executive Medical Education Committee
	Approval Date	September 18, 2025
	Endorsement	Endorsed by WCM-Executive Policy Review Group on September 23, 2025

Purpose

To outline the process by which a Weill Cornell Medical College (WCMC) MD student may be placed on an Involuntary Leave of Absence from the Medical College when their behavior poses a risk to community safety or disrupts the learning environment.

Scope

This policy applies to all medical students enrolled at WCMC, including those on clinical rotations or participating in off-site educational activities.

Policy

When there is actual or threatened disruption to the Medical College community or learning environment—including, for example, risk of harm to self, patients, peers, or others—WCM may place a student on an Involuntary Leave of Absence.

The Medical College is committed to maintaining a safe, supportive learning environment. In cases where a student's conduct or behavior undermines this environment, separation may be necessary if there is sufficient evidence that the student is engaging in, or is likely to engage in, disruptive or unsafe behavior.

Procedure

The Senior Associate Dean for Education (or designee) may initiate this process after receiving a report of concern. The steps are as follows:

1. The student will be notified in writing that an involuntary leave is under consideration and the reason(s) why.
2. The student will be given an opportunity to respond.
3. The Senior Associate Dean (or designee) will gather relevant information and make an individualized assessment of the student's ability to participate safely and meet expectations for professionalism and adherence to technical standards.
4. Consultation may occur with other offices as appropriate. During these consultations, these individuals will pay particular attention to the criteria for invoking an involuntary leave, specifically whether the student's behavior is disruptive of the Medical College's learning environment and whether the behavior poses a Direct Threat to the safety of others. Consideration will also be given to accommodations that may reasonably be provided that will mitigate the need for the involuntary

leave. A mental or physical health evaluation may be required if deemed helpful to inform the decision.

5. A final decision by the Senior Associate Dean for Education will be issued in writing to the student.
6. The Office of the Senior Associate Dean will notify the Registrar regarding the effective date of the involuntary leave as well as the date of determination of the leave.
7. The student may appeal the decision to the Provost for Medical Affairs (or designee) within five (5) business days. The decision on appeal is final.
8. When safety is an immediate concern, the Senior Associate Dean for Education (or designee) may remove a student from the Medical College pending final decision on involuntary leave. If this action is deemed necessary, the student will be given notice of removal. An opportunity to be heard by the Senior Associate Dean for Education and appeal the decision will be provided at a later time.

If involuntary leave is imposed, the student will be informed of the steps required for re-enrollment (see *Request for Re-enrollment* below). If not imposed, conditions for continued enrollment may be set.

A. Implications of an Involuntary Student Leave of Absence

If an involuntary leave is imposed, the following conditions apply unless otherwise specified in the written decision:

- **Leave in Effect/Duration of Leave:** The leave remains in effect until the student satisfies the pre-requisites for re-enrollment as determined by the Senior Associate Dean for Education, based on an individualized assessment.
- **Campus Access:** The student must leave campus within the timeframe set by the Senior Associate Dean for Education. The student may only visit campus if explicitly authorized in writing for a specific purpose and duration.
- **Transcript Notation:** The leave will be recorded as a “Leave of Absence” on the student’s transcript.
- **Financial Obligations:** The student remains responsible for certain financial obligations as determined by institutional policy. All students who receive the status of Involuntary Leave of Absence are considered to be withdrawn from the institution for federal enrollment reporting purposes and will be reported to the US Department of Education as such. The student is responsible for any obligations associated with loss of subsidies due to the withdrawal.
- **Parental Notification:** The Senior Associate Dean for Education reserves the right to notify a parent, guardian, or other appropriate individual if such notification is deemed necessary for the student’s well-being. This individual may also be asked to assist in arranging the student’s safe departure from campus

1. Request for Re-enrollment

To initiate a return from involuntary leave, the student must submit a formal written request to the Dean of the Medical College, with a copy sent to the Senior Associate Dean for Education. The request should include documentation demonstrating that all conditions for return have been met.

The Senior Associate Dean for Education, in consultation with the Dean and Provost for Medical Affairs, will review the request. Additional consultations may occur with relevant offices or personnel. Conditions may be imposed to support a successful reentry to the medical college environment.

Definitions

Direct Threat: Behavior that presents a substantial risk of harm to the health or safety of others.

Involuntary Leave of Absence: A non-voluntary separation from the Medical College initiated when a student's behavior poses a direct threat to others or significantly disrupts the learning environment.

Compliance with this Policy

The Office of Medical Education is responsible for administering this policy and ensuring compliance. Students are expected to comply with all directives issued under this policy, including conditions for return if placed on involuntary leave. Failure to comply may result in further disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

Contact Information

Office of the Senior Associate Dean for Education

educationdean@med.cornell.edu

References

WCM Policy OME 900.15 – Medical Student Standards of Professionalism - Assessment and Remediation

University Policy 4.6 – Standards of Ethical Conduct

University Policy 7.3 – Processing and Reporting Changes in Student Enrollment Status Under Title IV

Policy Approval

This policy was reviewed and approved by the Executive Medical Education Committee on September 18, 2025.

This policy was endorsed by WCM-Executive Policy Review Group on September 23, 2025

Version History

Date	Author	Revisions
July 20 2017	Medical Education Council	Original date of issue.
August 1, 2020	Executive Medical Education Committee	Minor updates
July 5, 2025	Office of Medical Education	Adaptation to new policy template. Assigned policy number, "OME-900.17."

Appendix

N/A