

# MEDICAL WITHDRAWAL AND RETURN TO CAMPUS

## Policy

The Medical Withdrawal and Return to Campus policy of The University of Alabama establishes procedures to follow when a student suffers from a physical, emotional, or psychological condition that significantly impairs the student's ability to function successfully or safely as a student. The policy is primarily administered by the University's Student Health Center (SHC) according to the procedures described below.

## Eligibility

**Medical Withdrawals are voluntary. Eligibility for Medical Withdrawal is limited to students who have not taken a final exam or otherwise completed coursework for a final grade.** The SHC shall request documentation from the dean of the division in which the student is enrolled to verify that the student either took no final exam(s) or otherwise completed coursework for a final grade for the semester/term in question; in addition, students are expected to affirm these conditions at the time of the request. Falsely attesting to the eligibility on the *Student Request for Medical Withdrawal* form is a violation of the Code of Student Conduct and may result in the revocation of a Medical Withdrawal and/or referral to the Office of Student Conduct.

## Academic Impact

Medical Withdrawal, when approved, withdraws a student from all courses for a given semester/term. Students are not allowed to medically withdraw from individual courses. The only exception to this policy occurs when parts of a term within a semester have unique start and end dates. For example the summer semester at UA includes four separate parts (Interim Term, Summer I, Summer II, and full Summer Term). It would be possible, if approved, for a student to complete coursework in Summer I and to medically withdraw from Summer II. In this example, the student would not be medically withdrawn from the entire summer semester, but rather only from all courses for Summer II.

## Procedures

After appropriate SHC personnel have deemed a Medical Withdrawal request eligible for consideration, a designated SHC physician handles all Medical Withdrawal decisions on behalf of the University. The designated SHC physician, on behalf of the University and, where appropriate, in consultation with relevant University personnel, will conduct an individualized assessment of the student's situation before deciding to approve or deny the request and determining the effective date of the withdrawal. The effective date will be determined based on the circumstances associated with the student's participation at UA and the medically related documentation. The designated physician's decisions regarding Medical Withdrawal are final with no appeal rights. If approved, the SHC will notify the student and the Office of the University Registrar. Upon notification by the SHC, the University Registrar shall process the withdrawal and notify the student. If the request is denied, the SHC shall notify the student.

## Medical Withdrawal Documentation

1. A student **must** fully and accurately complete the *Student Request for Medical Withdrawal* form (available at [www.shc.ua.edu](http://www.shc.ua.edu)) and send the completed form by fax (205-348-7174), email ([medwithdrawal@ua.edu](mailto:medwithdrawal@ua.edu)), or, if there is time, by mail to The Student Health Center, Medical Withdrawal, 750 Peter Bryce Boulevard, Tuscaloosa, AL 35401.

2. A student **must** have a licensed medical provider (physician, nurse practitioner, or mental health professional) submit a completed *Licensed Provider Recommendation for Medical Withdrawal* form (available at [www.shc.ua.edu](http://www.shc.ua.edu)) by fax (205-348-7174), email ([medwithdrawal@ua.edu](mailto:medwithdrawal@ua.edu)), or, if there is time, by mail to The Student Health Center, Medical Withdrawal, 750 Peter Bryce Boulevard, Tuscaloosa, AL 35401. The licensed medical provider shall be the one who is currently treating the student for the condition(s) prompting the withdrawal request and is responsible for obtaining permission from the student to provide the documentation and to discuss the medical conditions, if needed, with the appropriate University personnel. If the University, in its sole discretion, determines that an extraordinary or emergency situation exists, alternative documentation may be requested and considered.

3. A student **may** also attach to the student request form any further supportive documentation from faculty teaching the student's currently enrolled courses, or if to support a retroactive withdrawal, from faculty who taught the student for the semester/term for which the withdrawal is requested.

4. In the event that the student's medical condition so incapacitates the student that the student cannot act on his or her own behalf, the student's parent or legal guardian should contact the Student Health Center at 205-348-7164 for further guidance.

## Types of Medical Withdrawals

1. **Regular Medical Withdrawal, within the current semester/term.** A timely regular Medical Withdrawal request must be made before the close of business on the last day of classes of the semester in question. A timely withdrawal for the current semester requires a *Student Request for Medical Withdrawal* form submitted by the student and the *Licensed Provider Recommendation for Medical Withdrawal* form submitted by a licensed practitioner (forms available at [www.shc.ua.edu](http://www.shc.ua.edu)). The student is encouraged to begin the medical withdrawal request process as soon as it becomes evident that a physical, emotional, or psychological condition significantly impairs the ability to function successfully or safely as a student. The designated SHC physician shall determine the effective date for the medical withdrawal based on the circumstances associated with the student's participation at UA and medically related documentation. An approved Regular Medical Withdrawal requires the submission of the *Licensed Provider Return to Campus (Medical Clearance)* form as described below in the section Return to the University Following Medical Withdrawal as well as its approval by the SHC-designated physician.

2. **Retroactive Medical Withdrawal.** A timely withdrawal for a previous semester must be made within sixty (60) calendar days of the last day of classes for the semester/term for which the withdrawal is requested. The student must submit the *Student Request for Medical Withdrawal* form and the *Licensed Provider Recommendation for Medical Withdrawal* form (forms available at [www.shc.ua.edu](http://www.shc.ua.edu)). For all approved Retroactive Medical Withdrawals, the effective date shall be the last day of classes for the semester/term in question. Also, if a student is seeking a retroactive medical withdrawal and is currently enrolled or intending to be enrolled or registered for an upcoming semester or term, then the student must also submit with the *Licensed Provider Recommendation for Medical Withdrawal* form a *Licensed Provider Return to Campus (Medical Clearance)* form. Failure to submit the *Return to Campus* form at the same time as the request for retroactive withdrawal will prevent the student's request for retroactive medical withdrawal from being considered. Further, if such a student's medical withdrawal is granted, but the submitted return to

campus materials are insufficient to allow a return, the student will have the option to (1) retract the request for a retroactive Medical Withdrawal and remain registered/enrolled or (2) take a Medical Withdrawal for the previous and current semester or term in which they are enrolled. If the student selects the latter option, the student will still have to submit and have approved additional *Return to Campus* paperwork before being eligible to seek re-enrollment.

**Medical Withdrawal Requests submitted outside of the semester in question, and beyond the required sixty (60) day deadline, must have clear, convincing, and extraordinary circumstances in order for the request to be considered.**

Extensive documentation (such as extended hospitalization and rehabilitation progression not met, etc.) must be submitted to the SHC and must be related to the reasons for the medical withdrawal and to the circumstances that prevented a timely request.

## Handling of a Medical Withdrawal

Once a Medical Withdrawal has been approved, the withdrawal will proceed under these guidelines:

1. The Office of the University Registrar assigns a grade of "W" on the official transcript for effective dates that fall after the add/drop period for the semester.
2. All grades from the transcript, for the term in question, are completely removed when the Medical Withdrawal effective date falls within the add/drop period for the semester.
3. The impact of an approved non-medical semester withdrawal (administrative withdrawal) for the same semester is addressed in the following way:
  1. If an approved non-medical withdrawal from an academic division predates the approved Medical Withdrawal effective date, the earlier date will be applied by the Office of the University Registrar.
  2. If the approved Medical Withdrawal effective date pre-dates an approved non-medical withdrawal, again, the earlier date will be applied by the Office of the University Registrar.

## Return to the University Following Medical Withdrawal

When the Medical Withdrawal is approved, an SHC representative shall place a medical clearance hold on the student's record. A medical clearance hold will remain in place until the appropriate medical documentation is received and a designated SHC physician approves release of the hold. If the hold is not removed by approximately one week prior to the start of classes for the term in question, all of the student's classes will be dropped for that term, regardless of whether or not an appeal is in process.

A student seeking to return following a Medical Withdrawal must provide appropriate medical documentation from a licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or mental health professional who is knowledgeable of the student's full health history and has treated the student since the effective date of Medical Withdrawal. This medical documentation must indicate that it is appropriate and safe for the student to resume classes at the beginning of a specified semester/term. A completed *Licensed Provider Recommendation for Return to Campus (Medical Clearance)* form (available at [www.shc.ua.edu](http://www.shc.ua.edu)) must be submitted to the Student Health Center, by fax (205-348-7174), email ([medwithdrawal@ua.edu](mailto:medwithdrawal@ua.edu)) ([medwithdraw@ua.edu](mailto:medwithdraw@ua.edu)), or, if time allows, by mail to Student Health Center, Medical Withdrawal, 750 Peter Bryce Boulevard, Tuscaloosa, AL 35401 .

Upon receipt of the required *Licensed Provider Recommendation for Return to Campus (Medical Clearance)* form and other appropriate medical documentation, a designated SHC physician, on behalf of the University and, where appropriate, in consultation with relevant University personnel, will conduct an individualized assessment of the returning student's situation. The assessment will include reviewing materials submitted by the student or on the student's behalf. During the process of reviewing a student's request to return, if at the discretion of the SHC physician, a determination is made that the information provided by a treatment provider or student is incomplete, requires further explanation or clarification, or when there is a discrepancy between the medical information provided and other available information relating to the student, the student may be required to provide additional documentation and/or grant permission to the SHC to obtain further information about the student's current condition. In extraordinary circumstances (e.g., concern exists about the medical provider's credentials/assessment, etc.), the student may be asked to undergo, at their expense, additional evaluation or assessment to assist with the determination about readiness to return. All steps that the SHC may initiate as part of its individualized assessment are aimed at ensuring the student is ready to resume studies and be a successful member of the campus community.

Every effort will be made to respond to a student's request for return within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt of all requested or required materials. A longer response time may be caused by the inability to reach a student's treatment provider, clinic closure during University holiday periods, or other extenuating circumstances.

If the decision is made to grant the student's request to return and lift the medical clearance hold, relevant University personnel may contact the student to discuss or review a plan for sustained health. Recommendations for return shall, if applicable, include, but will not be limited to, ongoing treatment, accommodations, or other resources to help the student succeed.

If, at the discretion of the SHC physician, it is determined that the hold should remain in place because a student is not yet ready to return, the student will be advised in writing by letter or via email to their University account. A student may appeal that decision by submitting an appeal letter in writing to the SHC by email ([medwithdrawal@ua.edu](mailto:medwithdrawal@ua.edu)) or fax (205-348-7174) within fourteen (14) calendar days of receiving the SHC physician's decision. A designated Appeal Team, which will consist of the executive director of the SHC, the director of Student Care & Well-Being, and a designee of the provost, shall review the matter and make a final determination as to the student's ability to return. Once the Appeal Team's determination has been made, that decision is final and no further appeals are permitted.

A student registered for a future term and seeking a medical withdrawal will have a medical clearance hold placed on the student's record, which will temporarily preserve the enrollment for that future term assuming all financial obligations are met. The student will have until one week prior to the start of the future term to have completed the protocol listed above and *have the hold removed*. The medical clearance form should be submitted one month prior to the first day of classes for the semester the student wishes to attend. The process normally takes about 14 working days, depending on the need for additional communication with the licensed provider.

If the medical clearance hold is lifted, the returning student may have additional holds on their record (e.g., conduct hold, financial hold, academic hold, etc.) that will need to be resolved through other areas of the University before the student may return. Additionally, to return, the student must meet any applicable admission and enrollment

requirements of the University and of the school or college in which they wish to be enrolled.

## **Financial Impact of Medical Withdrawals**

The purpose of this policy is to provide academic relief to the student, not financial relief. Please refer to Student Account Services policy for the financial impact of withdrawals at different stages in the semester (<https://studentaccounts.ua.edu/financial-implications-of-withdrawal-impact-on-institutional-costs-and-charges/>). Financial questions may also be directed to Student Account Services, 205-348-5350.

## **Other Options For Students When Medical Withdrawal is Not Appropriate**

When Medical Withdrawal is not appropriate, the student is directed to his or her dean's office student services area for other potential options.

## **Questions**

Please call 205-348-7164 for clarification or more information.