Request for a Voluntary Leave of Absence for Health Reasons

General information

Cornell students may apply for a Voluntary Leave of Absence (a separation of the student from the university) for Health Reasons. A Health Leave of Absence (HLOA) is recommended when a student’s health condition is judged to significantly impair his or her ability to function successfully or safely as a student. HLOAs are coordinated through Gannett Health Services.

It is expected that the time a student takes away from the university for the HLOA is used for treatment and recovery. Gannett provides each student with specific expectations for treatment while away on leave. Compliance with the treatment expectations is a primary factor in Gannett’s eventual assessment of whether a student is ready to return to Cornell.

Not all situations are similar. The amount of time students take for a HLOA will vary depending on circumstances (such as treatment recommendations, and time needed to assure recovery of health and re-establish the ability to sustain health).

A Gannett clinician or counselor will provide treatment recommendations as part of the HLOA agreement.

COLLEGE/SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS: In order to obtain a HLOA and to return from one, a student must obtain a health leave of absence recommendation from Gannett and then an administrative approval from the advising office of the student’s college or school. For graduate students, this approval must be given by the dean of the Graduate School. Schools, colleges, and graduate fields have separate and often differing policies regarding leaves of absence, including specific restrictions on or requirements for the amount of time a student is to be away on leave and distinct requirements or criteria for re-enrollment following a leave of absence. Students who are considering a HLOA must contact their advising office (not their faculty advisor) to find out the specific conditions or restrictions will apply to them in conjunction with a HLOA.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: Students must contact their college or school to determine the financial implications of taking a HLOA. Undergraduates who have financial aid must contact the Office of Financial Aid. The University Bursar provides information regarding eligibility for tuition reimbursement: www.dfa.cornell.edu/treasurer/bursar/studentsparents/leaving.cfm

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: International students must contact the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) to determine the impact of a leave on their visa status: www.isso.cornell.edu

HEALTH INSURANCE: Students considering a HLOA must review their health insurance coverage. Students enrolled in Cornell’s Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) who take a HLOA are automatically covered for the remainder of the plan year; they also may be eligible to purchase a one-time, one-year extension of SHIP insurance. The Office of Student Health Insurance can provide detailed guidance (607 255-6363). Students with other health insurance plans should contact the plan provider to clarify coverage (see number on the insurance card). In some cases, students may need to apply for continuation of coverage (COBRA); enrollment in COBRA is time sensitive.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Learn more about taking a HLOA at www.gannett.cornell.edu/HLOA.

DEADLINE for beginning a health leave of absence

- To have an HLOA processed for the current semester, students must have completed an evaluation and all of the necessary paperwork with a Gannett clinician no later than the last day of classes (not study or exam period) of this semester.
- Requests for HLOA made after this deadline will only be considered for the following semester.
- Gannett does not make HLOA recommendations retroactively (that is, for a semester prior to the current one).
- Gannett does not make HLOA recommendations based solely on evaluations done by non-Gannett clinicians. An evaluation with a Gannett clinician is required.

DEADLINES for returning from a health leave of absence

- Deadline #1: Students must notify Gannett in writing of their wish to return to Cornell. Email healthleaves@cornell.edu.
  - Fall semester: no later than June 1
  - Spring semester: no later than November 1
- Deadline #2: Students must then submit to Gannett all required documentation of treatment obtained during their HLOA:
  - Fall semester: no later than July 1
  - Spring semester: no later than December 1
- If a student misses these deadlines, their return from HLOA will be postponed until a later semester.
Required conditions for return from a HLOA

Health clearance must be obtained from Gannett before a student may pursue reenrollment at Cornell following a HLOA. To obtain this health clearance, every student must meet all of the following required conditions:

1. The student must demonstrate a substantial amelioration of the health condition that precipitated the need for a HLOA, as defined and determined by Gannett clinical staff.
2. The student must demonstrate the ability to function safely, as defined and determined by Gannett clinical staff.
3. The student must be cleared by the Gannett HLOA Committee in order to pursue reenrollment, which may require evaluation by Gannett clinical staff.

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- I understand that I cannot simply mail this form to Gannett, but that I must have completed an assessment and all of the necessary paperwork with a Gannett clinician for my request to be processed.
- I understand that my signing this form does not guarantee that I will receive a HLOA from my College or School.
- As part of my request, I authorize Gannett Health Services to disclose to my college or school the minimum protected health information about me that is necessary to coordinate my request for a Health Leave of Absence and my eventual return from my Health Leave of Absence.
- International students registered with the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO):
  As part of my request, I authorize Gannett Health Services to disclose to ISSO the minimum protected health information about me that is necessary to coordinate my request for a HLOA and my eventual return from my HLOA.
- Students living in on-campus housing:
  As part of my request, I authorize Gannett Health Services to disclose to the Residential Programs office the minimum protected health information about me that is necessary to coordinate my request for a HLOA.
- I have read the information above and have asked for any needed clarification and explanation. I accept these conditions and deadlines as part of my responsibilities in taking a health leave of absence from Cornell University. I agree to abide by these conditions, and I voluntarily request that Gannett issue a recommendation that I be granted a leave of absence for health reasons.

Student signature __________________________ Date __________________________

Please print legibly:

Student name __________________________ Cornell ID# __________________________

Student’s college/graduate school/professional school __________________________

Contact information for communication about this leave:

Postal address __________________________

Email address __________________________

Phone number (including for leaving phone messages) __________________________

Name of college or school __________________________

Are you an NCAA Athlete? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Do you live in any on-campus housing? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Are you registered with the International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO)? ☐ YES ☐ NO

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