

The George Washington University seeks to prioritize the safety, health, and wellbeing of all students. We recognize that each student is unique, and value their individual experiences. The George Washington University recognizes that there may be times when a student may experience a situation that impedes their ability to be successful and may even jeopardize their safety and/or that of the GW community. A leave of absence provides an opportunity for students to take time away from their academic responsibilities so that they may have the time and space needed to address the reasons that led to their leave, and return to the University to achieve their educational goals. Students are given the opportunity to opt for a voluntary [Leave of Absence](#). However, in some circumstances, it may be necessary for the University to invoke an involuntary leave of absence (hereinafter referred to as a “Dean’s Involuntary Leave of Absence”). A Dean’s Involuntary Leave of Absence may be imposed if, after conducting a thorough assessment, the University concludes that a student is engaging in, or has engaged in behaviors, conducts, and/or actions that significantly disrupt University activities and/or pose safety concerns for themselves and/or the campus community.

The Dean’s Involuntary Leave of Absence is not a disciplinary sanction; however the action(s) that may lead to a Dean’s Involuntary Leave of Absence may subsequently be the basis of disciplinary action.

### **I. Dean’s Involuntary Leave of Absence**

Behavior that can be the basis of a Dean’s Involuntary Leave of Absence includes but is not limited to situations where:

- A student poses a significant risk to the health or a safety of a member of the University community;
- A student is unable or unwilling to carry out substantial self-care obligations and poses a significant risk to their own safety not based on mere speculation, stereotypes, or generalizations, or;
- A student’s behavior severely disrupts the University environment and the student declines to take a voluntary leave of absence.

The Dean’s Involuntary Leave of Absence should only be invoked in extraordinary circumstances at the discretion of the Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, and/or an official designee at the recommendation of the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) and/or the Threat Assessment Team (TAT).

Examples of circumstances where a Dean’s Involuntary Leave may be imposed include but are not limited to:

- Demonstrated inability and/or consistent refusal to manage one’s behavior
- Inadequately managed self-harm/suicidal concern(s) or attempt(s) that disrupts other campus community members
- Evidence of threat(s) of harm to self and/or others that compromises the safety and wellbeing of the campus community
- Ongoing substance use abuse and/or addiction that creates significant safety and health concerns to self and/or others
- Ongoing behavior(s) that continues to disrupt the safety and wellbeing of others in the campus community
- Ongoing behavior(s) demonstrates support needs exceed a level of care that has or will create an undue burden on available University resources and severely disrupts the University environment.

The Dean’s Involuntary Leave of Absence will not take the place of any disciplinary or administrative action associated with a student’s behavior which may be found in violation of the University’s policies, including but not limited to, the [Code of Student Conduct](#). The University

prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of any type of disability or any other characteristics protected by applicable law in the administration of the University's programs and activities.

## II. Process to Invoke a Dean's Involuntary Leave of Absence

1. The Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, and/or an official designee will receive a written formal recommendation by the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT) and/or the Threat Assessment Team (TAT). The Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, and/or official designee will review all relevant information provided to decide whether or not concerns meet the criteria to consider a Dean's Involuntary Leave.
2. The Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students and/or an official designee will send notification to the student that a Dean's Involuntary Leave is under consideration. The written notice to the student can be sent electronically and should include:
  - a. Explanation for why the student is being considered for a Dean's Involuntary Leave
  - b. A copy of the Dean's Involuntary Leave policy
  - c. Information about how to respond and/or schedule a meeting before a decision is made
  - d. (If applicable) A copy of a Release of Information form should the student want to release and/or share any confidential medical information that may be relevant for consideration
  - e. (If applicable) Information on taking a voluntary leave/ withdrawal from the University
  - f. (If applicable) Information about campus resources
  - g. Contact information for a staff member that they can contact with any questions related to the Dean's Involuntary Leave process
3. The Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, and/or an official designee will gather all relevant information and consult with the appropriate University representatives to assess:
  - a. Whether current knowledge about a student's behavior and/or medical condition(s) provides evidence that a student is (1) a health or safety risk to a member of the campus community, or (2) unable or unwilling to carry out substantial self-care obligations and poses a significant risk to their own safety; and/or
  - b. Whether a student's behavior severely disrupts the campus community and/or University resources.

Review of all materials and any needed consultation must follow the University's [Equal Opportunity, Nondiscrimination, Anti-Harassment, and Non-Retaliation](#) policy which prohibits discrimination on the basis of any type of disability or other protected characteristic and adhere to the University's [Personal Information and Privacy Policy](#).

4. Following an individual assessment not based on stereotypes, generalizations, or speculations, the review of materials and appropriate consultations, the Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, and/or their official designee will make a decision about whether or not to place the student on a Dean's Involuntary Leave and will provide a formal notice of their decision. The written notice of decision which may be sent electronically will include information about the student's right to appeal and to reasonable accommodations during the appeal process.
  - a. ***If a Dean's Involuntary Leave of Absence is imposed***- The written notice of decision to the student will set forth the basis for the decision and a time-frame for when the student must leave the University, when they may be eligible to return to the University, and the conditions, requirements the student will need to

satisfy to be eligible for return, and information about the appeals process. The written notice will also inform the student of their right to reasonable accommodations in the return process and will provide contact information who will support a reinstatement process. The length of the leave will be determined on an individual basis. If a Dean's Involuntary Leave of Absence is imposed, a separate memo should be sent to the following individuals following the appeals period: University Registrar, Academic Dean, GWorld Office, Chief of Police, and, Director of Campus Living (if applicable). A registration hold will be added to a student's account in a Dean's Involuntary Leave is imposed.

- b. ***If an involuntary leave of absence is not imposed-*** The written notice of decision will be communicated that may impose conditions and/or requirements under which the student is allowed to remain at the University.
5. If a student chooses to appeal the Dean's Involuntary Leave, they must submit a written appeal within five (5) business days (unless otherwise noted) of receiving written notice of the final decision in writing to the Provost. The written appeal request must include either evidence that the Dean's Leave Involuntary Leave policy and procedures were not followed in a material way and/or new information that was not previously available that may have impacted the decision process. In review of an appeal, the Provost or their designee should consider the following:
  - a. Was the Dean's Involuntary Leave procedure properly followed?
  - b. Were the facts and criteria used to make a decision?
  - c. (If applicable) Is the new information provided sufficient to impact the decision?
  - d. Given the facts, criteria, and procedures, was the decision a reasonable one?

### III. Implications of a Dean's Involuntary Leave

If a final determination is made to place the student on a Dean's Involuntary Leave, the student will be notified of the following:

- Confirmation that the student has been placed on a Dean's Involuntary Leave for a specific time period
- The student's access to University housing and/or University services and facilities has been restricted.
- The specific conditions for reinstatement (eg. requesting a Release of Information from medical provider(s)).

At any time before a final determination is reached, a student may initiate the procedures for withdrawal or voluntary leave from the University. If a student chooses to move forward with this option, the Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students may require specific conditions that should be considered for reinstatement.

In the event of a Dean's Involuntary Leave, changes to a student's semester or summer session enrollment will be recorded aligned with the timeframe outlined in the [University Bulletin](#). Any refund of tuition and/or fees will be calculated based on the [Student Tuition Refund Policy](#) for the academic semester or summer session in which the leave occurs. A recommendation for an exception should follow the pre-existing process established by the Tuition Refund Committee.

If the student is in housing when a student is placed on Dean's Involuntary Leave, the student's [Housing License Agreement](#) will be canceled. The time frame for the student to move out will be determined by the Vice Provost for Student Affairs based on the circumstances leading to the Leave, and will be communicated to the student. The student will receive a refund of housing fees on a pro rata basis for the academic term in which the involuntary leave occurs.

**IV. Returning from a Dean’s Leave**

A student who is placed on a Dean’s Involuntary Leave from the University or who voluntarily takes a leave while in the process of consideration for a Dean’s Involuntary Leave may only be reinstated after they have completed all required conditions.

A student seeking reinstatement must provide a written letter to the Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students and/or their designee to reiterate their desire and readiness to return to the University. The written letter should include the following:

- Rationale to explain why they are ready to return to campus
- The steps that the student has taken to address and meet the conditions of reinstatement

A student seeking reinstatement may also provide any relevant documentation with their letter to the Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students and/or their designee. The student may also be asked for further documentation by the Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students while in this process.

A student seeking reinstatement should be aware of the following deadlines:

<b>Semester of Return</b>	<b>Earliest Submission Date</b>	<b>Latest Submission Date</b>
Fall	March 1	July 1
Spring	October 1	December 1
Summer	February 1	May 1

Upon receiving notice of a student’s letter seeking reinstatement, the Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students and/or their designee will do the following:

- Provide written confirmation that the student’s request for reinstatement has been received;
- Review, and examine all relevant documentation and conduct an individualized assessment based on the objective evidence;
- Provide the student with an opportunity to meet with the Vice Provost for Student Affairs and/or their designee to discuss their reinstatement request
- Consult with BIT, TAT, and/or any University employee with a legitimate educational interest to discuss the possibility of reinstatement, as well as receive recommendations for any conditions for reinstatement;
- Decide whether a reinstatement will be approved, and if, under what specific conditions.

The Vice Provost for Student Affairs will communicate a decision on reinstatement.

If a student’s request for reinstatement is denied, the Vice Provost for Student Affairs will inform the student of the following in writing:

- Why was the request denied,
- When and if additional requests for reinstatement will be considered.



A student may choose to appeal the reinstatement decision within five (5) business days with a written request to the Provost which must either include evidence that there was improper procedural review and/or new information that was not previously available that may be significant in the decision process. In the review of an appeal, the Provost or their designee should consider the following:

- a. Was the Dean's Involuntary Leave reinstatement procedure properly followed?
- b. Were the facts and criteria used to make a decision?
- c. (If applicable) Is the new information provided sufficient to impact the initial decision?
- d. Given the facts, criteria, and procedures, was the decision a reasonable one?