

**University of Massachusetts Dartmouth
Division of Student Affairs**

Policy Title	Withdrawals for Medical or Mental Health
Policy Number	STU-027
Effective Date	December 17, 2007
Responsible Office	Student Affairs
Related Policies	

Withdrawals for Medical or Mental Health Reasons – (Voluntary or Involuntary) Policy

Policy Statement

1. Course Withdrawals for Medical or Mental Health Reasons:

Some students request assistance from the Student Health Services or University Counseling Center staff to document reasons for course withdrawals, especially in courses where the student is failing. In general, course withdrawals for medical reasons will be recommended by the Student Health Services Director, treating physician or nurse clinician. Course withdrawals for mental health reasons will only be authorized for students who have been in direct contact with one of the therapists at the University Counseling Center. Even in those cases, students will be encouraged to use other avenues to reduce their course load before needing documentation from the University Counseling Center in order to obtain a course withdrawal.

Whenever a course withdrawal is indicated, either for a client who has been regularly at the University Counseling Center or for a person who has had a tragedy in the family where the reason for the withdrawal is obvious, these cases will be brought to the attention of the Director of the University Counseling Center and who with the student's written permission, will contact the Registrar to initiate the course of withdrawal. In addition, a telephone arrangement has also been developed between the University Counseling Center Director and academic deans whereby our support or non-support for special consideration can be indicated without revealing any specific information. In all cases, such withdrawals will be noted in the Student Health Services or University Counseling Center record.

2. Leaves from the University for Medical or Mental Health Reasons:

When a student's health or mental health problems precludes successful completion of his/her academic course work, the student may receive a medical leave from the University, upon recommendation by the appropriate physician or therapist of the University Health Services or Counseling Services. Normally, the leave will result from the student's voluntary efforts. In exceptional circumstances involving life threatening behaviors, a student may be required to leave the University involuntarily until life threatening circumstances have been controlled.

- A. A Voluntary Medical Leave may be requested by any student with a serious health problem who, in the opinion of the attending physician/therapist, cannot complete his/her course work. All such leaves will be reviewed and approved by the Student Health Services Director or University Counseling Center Director. In order to remove the conditions of the health leave, a student must present evidence that the health problem no longer precludes successful completion of academic work. In most cases, at least one academic semester must have passed before readmission for mental health/medical leave can be considered.
- B. An Involuntary Medical leave for health reasons may be recommended by the Directors of Student Health Services, the University Counseling Center or the Associate Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs. The University reserves the right to initiate the mandatory leaves of students who:
 - 1) Engage in, or threaten to engage in, behavior which poses a danger of causing physical harm to self or others; and/or

- 2) Demonstrate an inability, without adequate care; to satisfy personal needs (e.g., nourishment, shelter, etc.) such that there is a reasonable possibility that serious physical harm or death might occur within a short period of time.

Administrative Hearing

A student for whom an Involuntary leave has been mandated may request an administrative hearing before the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs or designee (hereafter referred to as the "hearing officer"). The following provisions will apply:

- a) The student will submit a written request to the VCSA or designee within three (3) University business days from the date of receipt of the Involuntary leave letter. The hearing date will normally be set within seven (7) University business days following the request. Pending completion of the hearing, the student is subject to interim involuntary suspension, but shall be allowed to be on the campus to attend the hearing or for other necessary purposes, as authorized in writing by the VCSA or designee.
- b) The student will be requested to authorize the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs or designee and other hearing participants to have access to relevant materials deemed necessary for the hearing process. If the student refuses to grant access to the records for the parties involved, the hearing will proceed without the requested information.
- c) Upon request of any involved party, the mental health professional that conducted and prepared the psychological evaluation will be requested to appear at the hearing and respond to relevant questions, but only if the hearing officer determines that such participation is essential to the fair resolution of the case.

Hearing procedures will be in accordance with those conducted under the provisions of the Student Conduct Code, and notice to the student will include those procedures.

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