



Policy on Student Voluntary Leave of Absence

Effective: 2019.03.01

I. Introduction

The Universidad del Sagrado Corazón (“Sagrado”) is concerned about its students' health and well-being. Students may find it necessary to take a leave of absence from the University for a variety of valid reasons, some medical or health related, others non-medical. Students who want to take a leave of absence in accordance with this Policy can promptly find the required forms in the Office of Student Affairs or the University’s official portal mi.sagrado.edu.

A leave of absence temporarily pauses a student’s enrollment for non-medical or medical reasons. The student remains a Sagrado student who is simply not enrolled during the time that he/she is on leave. If the student takes a leave of absence, a note of Leave of Absence (“A”) will appear in the student’s record until the student completes the re-entry process.

The student’s Sagrado email will remain active during the leave of absence. The Office of Student Affairs will use the student’s Sagrado email account for communication and any other alternative email account if the student has specifically requested and authorized the use of such alternate email in writing.

II. Applicability

This Policy applies to all students who find it necessary to take a leave of absence from the University for non-medical, medical or health reasons.

For students who have loans as part of their federal aid, the cumulative length of the absence including all previous absences may not exceed 180 days within a 12-month period. This 12-month period begins on the first day of the student’s initial leave of absence.

III. Non-Medical Leave of Absence

A non-medical leave of Absence temporarily pauses a student’s enrollment for reasons that are not related to medical concerns. The student remains a Sagrado student who is simply not enrolled for the academic period of leave. For a non-medical leave of absence, returning to class often simply entails advance notification to the Office of Student Affairs or the designated office of the student’s intentions. The student would then discuss his/her course registration plans with the Office of Student Affairs or the designated office.

A student may only request that a non-medical leave of absence begin prior to, or following, an academic period. A non-medical leave of absence may not begin during a academic period.

1. Request for a Non-Medical Leave of Absence

Students must request a leave of absence in advance, unless unforeseen circumstances prevent the student from doing so. A student requesting a non-medical leave of absence must complete a non-medical leave of absence request stating the reasons. Students in good standing may request one (1) academic period leave of absence.

To request a leave of absence, a student must write a letter in a timely manner, preferably at least two (2) weeks before the academic period begins, to the Office of Student Affairs or the designated office, discussing the reason (e.g., personal or family situation, financial hardship, employment) for the request. The Office of Student Affairs or the designated officer, acting on a case-by-case basis, will have sole authority to grant leave requests in accordance with this Policy.

During a leave of absence and at least one (1) month prior to the subsequent academic period, the student must inform the Office of Student Affairs or the designated office in writing of an intention to return.

The Office of Student Affairs or the designated office will inform the Registrar's Office each time a leave is granted and, also, on receipt of written notice of intention to return.

Students who are on a non-medical leave of absence are not permitted to live in University housing, attend or be enrolled in classes or maintain employment as students at the University while their leave is in effect.

If a student is interested in pursuing a non-medical leave of absence, he/she should contact the Office of Student Affairs or the designated office to discuss his/her situation for details on withdrawal and leave of absence policies.

2. Failure to Return from a Non-Medical Leave of Absence

If a student does not return from an approved medical leave of absence, it will be considered a withdrawal and the withdrawal date is the date that Sagrado determines the student began the leave of absence.

IV. Medical Leave of Absence

Purpose

A student experiencing physical or psychological conditions that significantly impair his/her ability to function successfully or safely as a student may decide that a period away from his/her studies for treatment or recovery is warranted. This time away from the University may help to restore functioning to a level that will enable the student to return and perform successfully in the

classroom and within the campus community. Accordingly, a student may request a medical leave of absence.

1. When to Request a Medical Leave of Absence

A student may request that a medical leave of absence start *during* an academic period in which a student is currently enrolled or start with the *next* academic period on the academic calendar. In the event that a student starts a medical leave of absence during an academic period, all courses on the student's transcript for that term will be assigned grades of "I". The transcript will also indicate a status of leave of absence ("A").

When a medical leave of absence applies to or encompasses a forthcoming academic period, no grades will be applied, and the student's transcript will indicate Leave of Absence ("A").

2. Treatment and Recovery

It is expected that a student on a medical leave of absence from the University will use the leave for treatment and recovery. Sagrado has established criteria regarding the student's eligibility for returning to the campus community.

These criteria include, but are not limited to, evidence that the condition which precipitated the medical leave of absence has been treated or ameliorated and will no longer adversely affect the person's ability to participate as a student in the University. Compliance with the treatment expectations is primary in the University's decision to approve the return of the student.

In special cases, a student on a medical leave may be allowed to take some courses. Students interested in doing so should contact the Office of Student Affairs or the designated office to review the appropriateness of this option. Some students who are on medical leave in the Spring semester may opt to take Summer courses to catch up on credits. The Office of Student Affairs or the designated office can also review the appropriateness of this option with individual students.

3. Requesting a Medical Leave of Absence

Students must request a medical leave of absence in advance, unless unforeseen circumstances prevent the student from doing so. A student requesting a medical leave of absence must complete a medical leave of absence request stating the reasons, submit it to Office of Student Affairs or the designated office and provide supporting medical documentation. Forms to request a medical leave of absence are available in the Office of Student Affairs or the University's official portal mi.sagrado.edu.

Students may request a medical leave of absence for no more than two (2) academic periods, including an academic period during which a student is enrolled in courses.

In cases where the leave is taken for psychological reasons, it is strongly recommended that the student meet with a member of the Center for Personal Development for consultation prior to

submitting a request for leave for psychological reasons. The Center for Personal Development will make every effort to assist the student prior to the start of the leave.

4. Returning to the University after a Medical Leave of Absence

Students who wish to return to Sagrado after a medical leave of absence must notify the Dean & Vice-president of Student Affairs or the designated officer in writing. The Office of Student Affairs or the designated office will review the student's record and determine if the student is functioning to a level that will enable the student to return and perform successfully in the classroom and within the campus community. If the student is a resident in the University housing, once academic eligibility is confirmed, the Office of Student Affairs or the designated office will submit the letter of request from the student and confirmation of eligibility to the Office of University Residences to initiate the re-entry process taking into account the medical documentation.

V. Approved Leave of Absence for Federal Financial Aid Recipients

If a student has loans as part of his/her federal financial aid, failing to return from a leave of absence may impact on the loan repayment terms, including the expiration of the his/her grace period. The student should seek information on this matter from the Office of Integrated Assistance ("ASI") or other official sources. If the student does not return to the University at or before the end of the leave of absence, Sagrado will treat the leave as a withdrawal for purposes of federal student aid and apply the norm established in the *Política de Reembolso para los Programas de Asistencia Económica Federal (Título IV)*.

VI. Military Leave of Absence

Students (or an appropriate officer of the armed forces or official of the U.S. Department of Defense) who are service members and cannot attend courses due to military service must give oral or written notice of such service to Sagrado as far in advance as is reasonable under the circumstances. A separate leave of absence policy and procedure apply to service members who are activated for military service. For more information, please refer to the *Policy on Military Leave of Absence*; and *Procedimiento Especial para el Manejo de Bajas para Servicio Militar*.

VII. International Students and Visa Status

Nonimmigrant students and their dependents must maintain an appropriate visa status at all times. An absence from the U.S. of five (5) or more months will result in termination of F-1 or J-1 status. If a student remains outside the U.S. for five (5) or more months, a new I-20 or DS-2019 is necessary for re-entry. For further information contact the Registrar's Office.

VIII. Reporting Violations

Violations to this Policy or consultations on the scope and interpretation of this Policy must be addressed to the Office of Student Affairs at 787.728.1515, ext. 3583, or by electronic mail at sara.tolosa@sagrado.edu.

IX. Violations to this Policy

Universidad del Sagrado Corazón reserves the right to interpret this Policy in its administration, implementation and application. Any violation of this Policy by a student, faculty or staff or any other person may result in a disciplinary action that may include expulsion from the University (students) or termination of the employment relationship (faculty and administrative staff), or other appropriate legal actions.

If there is ambiguity in any provision of this Policy, the University reserves the discretion to interpret it according to the purpose for which it was established, the impact on the operations of the University, and good faith, unless any law provides otherwise.



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