

Student Return from Medical Care Guidelines
Columbia College Chicago
Updated 7/16/2020

Purpose:

Columbia College Chicago (the “College”) acknowledges that course absences due to medical care can be detrimental to a student’s academic progress. The Student Return from Medical Care Guidelines outlines clear procedures and recommendations for students to facilitate their successful transition back to the College.

Instructor Notifications:

Course absences due to inpatient hospitalization or outpatient medical treatment (medical care provided under the supervision of a physician that does not require admission to a hospital) can severely impact a student’s ability to meet class expectations, resulting in missed assignments and a lack of preparedness for examinations. Even after students regain their ability to fully participate in classes, ongoing medical treatment may make it difficult for a student to catch up.

To mitigate these potential challenges, the Student Health & Support (“SHS”) unit within the Office of the Dean of Students is available upon request to notify affected students’ instructors that past or future absences were due to medical care. If requested by a residential student, SHS will also provide similar notification upon the same conditions to appropriate personnel in Residence Life.

To ensure timely and effective communication, students requesting instructor notification should endeavor to contact SHS within two days after unplanned course absences. Students should, whenever possible, request instructor notification from SHS at least five days before any planned medical absences. SHS will provide instructor notification only for those students who have submitted documentation from a health care provider on the provider’s letterhead evidencing injury or illness requiring course absence.

SHS will notify the student’s instructors, typically via e-mail, of the student’s absence. Faculty will not receive information identifying the student’s specific medical concern or course of treatment. Because the nature of service within SHS is designed to assist students with acute needs on a short-term basis, any notification to faculty of a medical absence should be considered temporary. The student remains responsible for communicating with instructors about the student’s current enrollment status, assignments, and attendance. In addition, these notifications from SHS do not automatically excuse a student from class. Faculty have discretion in providing consideration for missed attendance and/or missed assignments.

SHS Appointments:

Upon returning to class after a medical absence, students are strongly encouraged to meet with a SHS staff member to discuss any remaining challenges. SHS can help students identify resources both on and off-campus, including mental health counseling, safe ride programs, and academic tutoring that may ease their transition back.

Where the student is absent in connection with a threat of violence to self or threat to others, or there are other circumstances (such as a hospitalization for a contagious illness) that pose a risk to the health and safety of the campus community or otherwise merit early intervention from SHS, SHS may in its discretion require that a student attend a Wellness Check meeting prior to returning to class, and for residential students, prior to returning to their residence hall. As part of the Wellness Check, SHS may request appropriate documentation to confirm that the student is ready to return. Such documentation may include, without limitation, a discharge summary – that notes the dates of participation, successful completion of treatment, and aftercare treatment recommendations – signed by their medical provider. If the student fails to provide appropriate paperwork at their Wellness Check meeting, SHS may also place a Dean of Students hold on the student's record, which prevents enrollment in future courses at the College. The hold will only be lifted upon receipt of the required documentation.

A SHS member may request follow-up with students after inpatient hospitalization or outpatient medical treatment to help address any continuing needs. Follow-up with SHS is generally voluntary and typically involves a discussion of the student's progress and may consist of an in-person meeting, phone call, or e-mail exchange. In the limited circumstances where a student must first complete a Wellness check before returning to campus, however, attendance at follow-up meetings may be mandatory.

Course Withdrawal:

When inpatient hospitalization or outpatient medical treatment causes a student to miss a substantial number of class sessions or interferes with a student's ability to complete assignments, the student may need to withdraw from a College course. Students are encouraged to discuss the potential need to withdraw with their academic advisor before making any decisions and to remain mindful of the deadlines provided in the academic calendar. If a student needs to withdraw after the withdrawal deadline due to a significant medical concern, then the student should consider submitting a petition for exception. Students must submit all application materials for the petition for exception directly to the College Advising Center.

Additional On-Campus Resources for Support:

Other offices at the College may provide support to students with significant medical concerns. The College Advising Center offers academic planning, Columbia Central can assist with the student's financial aid and outstanding account balance (if a student needs to withdraw from a class), and Services for Students with Disabilities can help secure appropriate accommodations and provide other assistance for students with disabilities. The College strongly encourages students to connect with these offices as needed in order to address the multitude of challenges that can arise following inpatient hospitalization or outpatient medical treatment.

Counseling Services provides short-term counseling for students seeking mental health support.

Columbia students are eligible for up to 12 individual counseling sessions per academic year as determined by the Counseling Services office. However, Counseling Services is not an appropriate level of care immediately following a psychiatric hospitalization and should not be included in such students' hospital discharge plan; these students should instead expect to first utilize the designated providers as listed in their discharge plan. Once the student successfully completes all aftercare treatment recommendations and provides documentation that demonstrates this completion, the student may contact Counseling Services for an appointment. Counseling Services will then assess the level of care needed by the student, and as appropriate, schedule a counseling appointment or provide community referrals.

By following the procedures and suggestions outlined in the Student Return from Medical Care Guidelines, students may better manage their return from inpatient hospitalization or outpatient medical treatment, overcoming the challenges that stem from a medical absence.

Key Contacts for Assistance:

- Dean of Students Office
 - Student Health and Support
 - Student Relations: 312.369.8595
 - Services for Students with Disabilities: 312.369.8296
 - Counseling Services: 312.369.8700
 - Residence Life: 312.369.7803
- College Advising Center: 312.369.7645
- Columbia Central: 312.369.7140