



Division of Student Affairs
Office of Student Care and Support

The Cooper Union
for the Advancement
of Sciences and Art

29 3rd Avenue
New York NY 10003
T 212-353-4130
E studentcare@cooper.edu

The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art
The Office of Student Affairs
Medical Clearance to Return to Study Following a Medical Course Withdrawal and/or Leave of Absence

Medical withdrawals and leaves of absence are intended to give students time to focus on their health and general wellbeing so that they can return to campus and be successful in their academic, professional, and personal pursuits. The medical clearance process is designed to ensure that students have taken such care, and that appropriate supports and resources are in place for their return. The following guidelines apply to undergraduate and graduate students who are seeking to return to The Cooper Union following a medical course withdrawal and/or leave of absence.

We encourage students to take sufficient time to address the concerns that led to their leave-taking. Returning too soon sometimes results in the student continuing to struggle academically and personally. Many students choose to take two or more semesters while others return after one semester. The length of the leave is intended to allow a student sufficient time away from campus to achieve sustained stability and to engage in activities that will contribute to a successful return.

CLEARANCE TO RETURN AFTER A MEDICAL WITHDRAWAL AND/OR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Guidelines governing Medical Clearance to Return to Study Following a Medical Course Withdrawal and/or Leave of Absence seek to assure, through consultation with the student and their medical care providers, that the student will be able to function effectively in the autonomous student environment at The Cooper Union, without significant disruption to others in the Cooper Union community, and that the student can adequately monitor their own health. The clearance process also provides a review of the ongoing supports a student may need (e.g. medications, and/or continued psychotherapy appointments, and/or continued medical appointments).



The Cooper Union relies on the information received from healthcare providers to evaluate a student's ability to function autonomously within the environment of The Cooper Union. The Cooper Union does not conduct a medical review or medical evaluation of the student. The Cooper Union uses the information provided when a student initially took a medical leave, coupled with the information provided to request their return to their studies, to ensure a student is ready to return to our academic community. The Cooper Union's review of the materials and/or treatment plans are procedural and circumstantial in nature. The Cooper Union's review is conducted to ensure that the issues that precipitated the medical course withdrawal and/or leave of absence have been addressed, and that any ongoing treatment needs are able to be managed by the student, taking into account the limited direct resources available at The Cooper Union. Students at The Cooper Union are required to function independently and manage their own physical and mental healthcare needs.

Please note: The Director of Student Care and Support is available at any time to answer questions about the requested materials or any other aspect of the process.

Timelines: To ensure adequate time for The Cooper Union to review the required materials, students requesting Medical Clearance to Return to Study Following a Medical Course Withdrawal and/or Leave of Absence must send all required documents so that they are received by The Cooper Union by the following timelines:

Summer Session: Materials Must be Received by **May 15**

Fall Semester: Materials Must be Received by **July 31**

Spring Semester: Materials Must be Received by **December 15**

Note: Depending on the details of a student's unique medical situation, additional medical documentation may be required closer to the date that classes begin.

COURSE REGISTRATION: Students must communicate with their academic advisor and/or Academic Dean regarding their procedures for registering for classes. Students are responsible for paying attention to course registration timelines as students should register for classes with their cohort during the preceding semester. The timeline and registration procedure will vary, depending upon the academic school and major. Student must confirm registration procedures and timelines with the academic program / academic advisor.

Materials Required for a Request to Return to Study Following a Medical Course Withdrawal and/or Leave of Absence: Each request must include the documents that are described in detail below.



Student letter: This is a letter written by the student who is seeking to return from a leave of absence. The letter should be emailed to: alex.fischer@cooper.edu. Letters can also be physically sent to: Alex Fischer, Office of Student Affairs, The Cooper Union, 29 3rd Ave., New York, NY 10003. The letter must include:

- The student's intention to return from leave.
- Insight into the factors that led to the leave-taking.
- An overview of the care and treatment received to address any health issue that led to the leave.
- Other activities in which the student has engaged while on leave (for example: work, taking courses, volunteering, pursuing other interests) which may both contribute to their wellbeing and also demonstrate sustained stability and their readiness to return.
- Reflection on the student's ability to return to the rigors of academic study and the academic and personal demands of The Cooper Union.
- An overview of the student's plans for how they will maintain their wellbeing once they have returned (continued treatment, building a support network, accessing resources, etc.).

Physical and/or Mental Health Treatment Provider Letter(s): Students are required to submit a letter, or letters, as noted below. Students must submit one letter, but students may submit letters from multiple care providers if appropriate (e.g. a therapist and psychiatrist or a primary care provider and specialist health provider). The student is required to have their treatment provider(s) (not a relative) email the letter to alex.fischer@cooper.edu. Letters can also be physically sent to: Alex Fischer, Office of Student Affairs, The Cooper Union, 29 3rd Ave., New York, NY 10003. The treatment provider's letter(s) must include the following:

- The provider's credentials and contact information.
- A description of the nature of the issue(s) and/or symptoms that led to the student's treatment.
- The type and length of the student's treatment and treatment goals.
- A description of the course of treatment and the changes the student has made during that time.
- A statement about the student's readiness to return to The Cooper Union and successfully navigate its academic and social context, including:
 - that the student will be able to function effectively in the autonomous student environment at The Cooper Union without significant disruption to others in the Cooper Union community; and,
 - that the student can adequately monitor their own health and independently maintain all required plans for continued care
- Detailed plans for continued care (as necessary) and for proactively managing future stresses.



Student Care Review: Upon receipt of the Student Letter on Medical Issue and Physical and/or Mental Health Treatment Provider Letter(s), the Director of Student Care and Support will review all the materials and information.

As previously noted, the Director of Student Care and Support's review of materials and information is not a medical review of the materials and/or treatment plans, but rather a procedural and circumstantial review. The Director of Student Care and Support, in consultation with others, as needed, makes an individualized assessment of each student, and seeks to determine that the student has met the following clearance criteria:

- Received appropriate and sufficient treatment from psychological and/or medical health care providers. This is based upon information provided by the student and their healthcare provider(s) when requesting the initial medical leave, and again when requesting clearance to return.
- Demonstrates insight regarding the circumstances that led to their medical course withdrawal and/or leave and an ability to use appropriate healthcare resources for prevention/treatment as needed and as recommended by their healthcare provider(s).
- Demonstrates sustained stability in relation to the medical issue necessitating the original course withdrawal and/or leave of absence. This may be shown through documentation by the treating healthcare provider and/or the general activities of the student while on leave that contribute to the student's readiness to return to The Cooper Union.
- Demonstrates the ability to function in the autonomous student environment of The Cooper Union, without significant disruption to others in the community, with appropriate and reasonable support.
- Demonstrates an appropriate plan for maintaining their wellbeing upon return. The plan may include their academic and social life balance, their support system (family and friends) and how it contributes to their readjustment, continued care from clinicians, and other activities in which they will engage to care for themselves.

Upon completion of the review, the Director of Student Care and Support will:

- Notify the student the materials submitted are sufficient and indicate that the student is medically cleared to return to their studies. Depending on the materials submitted by the student and health provider, this notification may also include conditions required for return and/or continued enrollment; or,
- Notify the student that the materials submitted are not sufficient to indicate that the student is medically cleared to return to their studies. The Director of Student Care and Support will instruct the student on additional steps to be taken and/or materials required to be submitted.
- If the materials are sufficient, the Director of Student Care and Support will notify the Academic Dean of the student's academic school that we have documentation on file



that support the student returning from their leave of absence. The Director of Student Care and Support does not approve a student's request to return from a Leave of Absence. Once medically cleared by the Director of Student Care and Support, the student must send a letter to their academic dean requesting to return from their leave and return to their studies.

Student Letter to Academic Dean: Once cleared by the Director of Student Care and Support as noted above, the student must write a letter to their Academic Dean, seeking to return from a leave of absence. The letter should be sent to the attention of the Dean of their Academic School. The letter should indicate the student's request to return from leave. This letter should not provide any information about the student's medical condition or related treatment. This letter is simply a request to the Academic Dean to return from medical leave.

Revised: April 28, 2022