



Cooper Union Required Leave of Absence Policy

I. Rationale

The **Required Leave of Absence** is an option available to the Academic Standards Committees of the three degree granting schools to provide students who have not passed required courses or are unable to make normal progress toward their degree, the opportunity to repeat courses and master content required for successful progression in the plan of study. The curricula of Cooper Union's degree programs include pre-requisite course chains that establish lists of courses that must be taken sequentially, as well as required courses for degree progress. When a student withdraws from or fails to meet the minimum academic standard for a pre-requisite or required course, they need to repeat the course and demonstrate mastery of the content needed to progress in the degree plan. These cases generally come before the Academic Standards Committee because of academic performance and / or progress concerns.

When needed course(s) are not offered in the subsequent term, and/or when the student's advising office has determined that it is not possible to create a course plan for the coming term that would maintain the student's full-time status and the necessary course sequencing to progress towards degree, the Academic Standards Committee may require that the student take a Required Leave of Absence. The Required Leave of Absence supports the student's ability to remain in-step with the required course chains by enabling them to enroll into, repeat and master content in the required course(s) when they are next offered. Students are provided this option to support their ability to fulfill requirements and continue in the program plan.

To pursue this option, affected students will be asked by the Academic Standards Committee to complete the Required Leave of Absence (RLOA) Form. The form will be made available upon recommendation by the Academic Standard's Committee to the Dean's office and will initiate a full review of academic, financial aid and student accounts impacts and secure the student's agreement as to this course of action. The Required Leave of Absence is designed to permit students the time needed to complete their degree and regain their academic footing. Should a student decline an offer from the Academic Standards Committee for a Required Leave of Absence, the student would then be subject to dismissal from The Cooper Union.

II. RLOA Policy

The Academic Standards Committee will determine whether repeating courses and leave of absence are required to support a student's recovery from academic probation and degree progress. RLOA is advanced to support a student's ability to progress at Cooper Union. Should the Academic Standards committee require a leave of absence, affected students will need to pursue a review of the impact of the RLOA. This is because there are program planning, financial aid, billing and registration implications (among other considerations) associated with taking a leave. The review process outlined in this policy will provide students the ability to determine if they want to pursue this requirement.

This policy maintains the importance of informed consent. When considering the required leave of absence:

- Students will need to review this requirement and terms of the RLOA with their academic advisor, including the impact of taking a leave on their academic plan. Students will need to discuss their plans for their time away from Cooper Union, particularly if their ability to take a course elsewhere is allowable.
- Students who are required to take a leave for academic reasons will need to explore their [Satisfactory Academic Progress, SAP](#) status with the financial aid office.
- In reviewing this option students should also take into consideration regulations associated with US visa status and financial aid, including loan repayment policies. There are federal regulations that guide when and for how long a student may take a leave before there are financial aid considerations, particularly loan repayment.
- International students must consult with the International Students and Scholars Office regarding federal visa regulations prior to submitting the petition for a discretionary leave of absence.

A. The RLOA Form

Should the Academic Standards Committee determine that a leave of absence is required, a completed RLOA form will need to be advanced to the Registrar who will initiate the review by the Registrar's and International Students and Scholars offices to assess any adjustments to the registration and SEVIS records (if the student is on an F1 visa), as well as to the financial aid and billing offices to assess financial aid and subsequent billing implications. Students will then be contacted by each office, as appropriate, to discuss the consequences of taking leave. When contacted, students must follow up to arrange a meeting with the contacting office. Each office will sign off on the RLOA Petition signifying that they have discussed the implications of the leave with the student.

The student will be asked to acknowledge that they have been informed of how taking a leave will impact their registration status, financial aid and student account and signify that, having been duly informed, they are seeking to pursue the leave by signing off on the RLOA. The registrar's office will then submit the signed RLOA to the Dean's office for final approval and records of the Academic Standards Committee.

B. Guidance on taking a Leave of Absence

The following guidance regarding "leave of absence" applies to discretionary leave, medical leave, military leave, required leave, as well as withdrawal from a semester and "stopping out".

- "Term Withdrawal" and "Stopping Out" will count as a term of leave.
- A student is limited to four leave of absence terms in the course of completing their undergraduate degree program at Cooper Union. The maximum of four leave of absence terms is the sum of non-consecutive and / or consecutive leave of absence terms.
- In completing the RLOA form, the student in conjunction with the terms established by the Academic Standards Committee, will indicate their date of return to classes. Students who will be on leave for more than one term (such that they will be on leave for more than 180 days) will need to be administratively withdrawn from School. This is an administrative action to comply with federal regulations. In the event the student needs to be withdrawn from School, they will be asked to reinstate their record by completing the Reinstatement Form.
- The Registrar's office will process leave of absence requests (including RLOA) recording the effective data and return date of the leave in the system. Based on these record updates, the registrar sends official communications to students regarding their status, and notifies relevant offices (Student Financial Services, Campus Safety and Security, Advising Offices, etc.) of student status changes.

Should a student be required to take a leave of absence they are not enrolled for the duration of the leave and as such, will not have access to the Cooper Union facilities, including labs or studios. Students on leave or who have withdrawn for the term, are not permitted to live in university housing, attend classes or maintain employment as students at Cooper Union while their leave is in effect.

C. Relevant Definitions

- **Stop Out:** Students who stop attending courses but do not take formal action to their record by petitioning for a leave of absence or course withdrawal for the term will be considered "stop outs". Because students who stop out have not taken action to their record by notifying their advising office or the registrar, they run the risk of having grades assigned to their record and will be responsible for the tuition expense for the term. Therefore, students who are believed to have stopped out (no attendance or homework/project submissions) will be asked by their dean's office

to formally notify the school of their decision not to attend courses by submitting a course withdrawal or institutional withdrawal request. In the event the student takes no action, they will be administratively withdrawn from the term by the Registrar's office.

Stop Out students will have one term to pursue record adjustments. Should they be withdrawn, their withdrawal will count as one of four allowable terms of leave of absence.

- **Satisfactory Academic Progress:** Withdrawal from courses counts against [Satisfactory Academic Progress, SAP](#). Federal financial aid regulations require that students meet minimum academic requirements to make progress toward degree and remain eligible for financial aid. The Office of Financial Aid has established standards in keeping with federal guidelines to monitor academic progress. These standards are established in the SAP policy including GPA and credit progress requirements.
 - C. all courses after the add/drop period. This usually occurs in the case of exigent circumstances. Full withdrawal from courses will result in a federal financial aid recalculation, and potentially, a re-assessment of the Cooper Union tuition grant in keeping with the [refund schedule](#).
- **Term Withdrawal:** Withdrawal from all courses for the term. Full withdrawal from courses will result in a federal financial aid recalculation, and potentially, a re-assessment of the Cooper Union tuition grant in keeping with the [refund schedule](#).

In the event a student withdraws from all courses after the add/drop adjustment period, the term will count as one of the four terms of "leave" that are allowable. The students should discuss the need to withdraw from all courses for the term with their advisor. In such cases, students are also strongly encouraged to discuss the impact of full-term withdrawal on their [Cooper Union Tuition Grant](#) and potential financial obligations that result from the withdrawals with the financial aid office. Moreover, students should review how withdrawal from all courses after the add/drop adjustment period impacts [Satisfactory Academic Progress, SAP](#) and financial aid eligibility.

- **Withdrawal from the School:** A student who seeks to withdraw from The Cooper Union is severing their relationship with the school. If, in executing a withdrawal from Cooper Union, the student is seeking to withdraw from all courses after the add/drop period, a federal financial aid recalculation, and potentially, a re-assessment of the Cooper Union tuition grant in keeping with the [refund schedule](#) will need to be conducted. A return to Cooper Union will require coordination with the student's advising office and an application for readmission.