



## **Withdrawal and Leave for Electronic Education LL.M. and M.J. students**

This policy applies to students enrolled in programs primarily or exclusively taught by electronic education. The College of Law understands that some students may need to leave school for some period of time. The policies and procedures below describe the circumstances under which a student may leave and return to the College of Law. Students in the J.D. program, or in another program not offered primarily by electronic means, are governed by the Leaves of Absence and Withdrawals policy.

### **A. Leave of Absence**

*Eligibility:* A student who has completed at least one semester of study at the College of Law may request a leave of absence. The request must be provided to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, and must be in writing and signed by the student [an electronic signature is acceptable]. The petition must set forth the circumstances of the request and the length of requested leave. To be eligible for a leave of absence, the student must intend to return to the College of Law within the stated period, which will not exceed one calendar year unless approved by the Academic Standards Committee. The granting or denial of a leave of absence will be provided by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in a written letter to be placed in the student's file. A student must complete all degree requirements within six calendar years, including any periods in which the student was granted a leave of absence or withdrew from the College of Law.

Grounds for denial of a request for leave of absence include:

1. the student is being investigated for a violation of the Student Code of Professionalism and Conduct or the Honor Code;
2. the student has matriculated or intends to matriculate as a degree-seeking candidate at another school;
3. the student does not intend to return within one calendar year;
4. completion of all degree requirements within six years of matriculation would be unlikely if the student is granted a leave of absence;
5. the student has been granted previous leaves of absence or has previously withdrawn from the College of Law, and these prior leaves or withdrawals suggest a lack of commitment to the student's education; or

6. other compelling circumstances warranting denial of leave of absence.

A student who enrolls as a degree-seeking candidate at another school while on an approved leave of absence will be converted to a withdrawn student.

*Return:* A student on an approved leave of absence from the College of Law must submit a letter to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at least four weeks before the end of the granted leave of absence indicating his or her intent to return to the College of Law. If the student is or has been licensed to practice law, the letter must include information about any pending or completed disciplinary action against the student's license to practice law. If the student fails to timely submit this letter or fails to return within the time of the granted leave, the student will not be granted an automatic return and must instead petition the Academic Standards Committee to be permitted to return. A student returning from leave of absence may be required by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs or the Academic Standards Committee to provide documentation of an ability to return to his or her studies before being permitted to return to the College of Law.

*Tuition and Financial Obligations:* Normal rules regarding refunding of tuition apply if a student is granted leave of absence after the semester or session begins. In addition, students should understand that funds that might be returned to a lender are still due and owing to the College of Law. The College of Law will refund tuition for students called to active military students. In addition, the Dean and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs have the discretion when a student is granted a leave of absence for medical reasons to apply some or all tuition paid from the semester in which the leave is taken to the semester in which a student returns from leave. A student who is on an approved leave of absence retains in-institution status for Title IV loan repayment purposes. However, if the student fails to return from leave of absence within the stated time period, the student's loan grade period starts at the date the leave began. Moreover, Title IV regulations limit leaves of absence to 180 calendar days for recipients of federal funding. If the student has not completed the coursework from the semester in which leave was taken or is not re-enrolled at the end of 180 calendar days, the leave of absence is treated as a withdrawal for federal financial aid purposes. Students considering leave of absence are strongly advised to meet with the Office of Financial Aid and the Business Office to discuss the financial impact of leave of absence.

*Transcript:* A student who is granted a leave of absence after the first day of class in a semester in which the student is enrolled will receive "W" grades on his or her transcript. The transcript also will contain the notation "Leave of Absence."

## **B. Withdrawal from School**

*Eligibility:* This policy applies when a student is withdrawing from the entire academic program in a given term. Withdrawal from a particular course (if taking more than one course in the term) is covered by the policy on enrollment, attendance, and withdrawal. A student who wishes to leave the College of Law but does not qualify for leave of absence must withdraw. A student may withdraw from the College of Law at any time, except that a student must be in good standing to withdraw. Students not in good standing fall under the Academic Exclusion and Readmission policy.

Procedure: To withdraw, the student should obtain and complete a Withdrawal form, which is available in the Registrar's Office and on the Registrar's Web page. The student must complete the form and return it to the Registrar's Office. The student must also meet with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the Director of Accounting, and the Director of Financial Aid; these meetings can be done telephonically or by email. These meetings are to ensure that the student has fulfilled all outstanding obligations. A withdrawal is not effective until the student has completed the withdrawal form and returned it to the Office of the Registrar *and* has met with each dean or director as noted above.

Tuition and Financial Obligations: Normal rules regarding refunding of tuition apply if a student withdraws after the semester or session begins. In addition, students should understand that funds that might be returned to a lender are still due and owing to the College of Law. Tuition refunds, if applicable, will be calculated on the basis of the official date of withdrawal from the College of Law. A withdrawal does not count as a leave of absence. If a student stops attending school without notifying the College of Law, a federal statutory provision allows the College to use the midpoint of the payment period as the withdrawal date for calculating the Federal Return of Title IV calculation. Otherwise, the College may use the student's last day of academically related activity if it can document the student's attendance.

1. A withdrawal affects Federal Stafford loans as follows: Stetson must perform a Return of Title IV calculation that is actually a prorated amount of Federal Stafford loans. As a result of the calculation, we must return the school portion to the lender. We must report the withdrawal to the Department of Education and the lender six-month grace period begins as of the withdrawal date. Prior loans that are in deferment are returned to a grace or repayment status.
2. A withdrawal affects private alternative loans as follows: Stetson must report the withdrawal to the lender. A nine-month grace period begins as of the withdrawal date with interest accruing.

Honor or Conduct Code Proceedings: If a student withdraws when an investigation is pending under the Honor Code or the Code of Student Professionalism and Conduct, the relevant investigator may place a memo in the student's file in the Registrar's Office outlining the charges and the status of the proceedings. An Honor or Conduct Code proceeding may continue even after a student withdraws.

Transcript: A student who withdraws after the first day of a semester in which the student is enrolled will receive "W" grades on his or her transcript. The transcript also will contain the notation "Withdrew." However, if the student withdraws after having taken one or more examination, the grades for the examination(s) will be posted on the student's transcript. Those grades may be converted to "W" only if a petition is submitted to and granted by the Academic Standards Committee.

Returning to School: A student who is or has been licensed to practice law, must provide information under either (a) or (b) about any pending or completed disciplinary action against the student's license to practice law.

1. Students who withdrew after having completed one full semester, including final examinations, may petition the Academic Standards Committee for readmission. At least four weeks before the student seeks to return, he or she should obtain a petition form from the Registrar. The completed form should be returned to the Registrar, who will present the petition at the Committee's next meeting. The Committee may grant, grant with conditions, or deny the petition. The Committee will use the standards outlined in the Academic Exclusion and Readmissions policy. The Committee may require documents, such as a doctor's note, that reflect the student has met stated conditions of the leave and/or is ready and able to return to school. If the student does not return within a two-year period, he or she risks losing all credits already earned and having to reapply for admission as a new student. A student must complete all degree requirements within six calendar years, counting all periods of leave or withdrawal.
2. Students who withdraw during their first semester must re-apply as a new student. Regular deadlines for admission, and all other admissions policies will apply.

*Adopted by the faculty on January 21, 2009.*