

Berkeley College Voluntary Medical or Unforeseen Circumstance Withdrawal Policy and Procedures

Purpose

Berkeley College is committed to supporting the health, safety, and welfare of our students, and preserving the integrity of the learning environment. The purpose of a Voluntary Medical or Unforeseen Circumstance Withdrawal (MUCW) is to provide students time away from campus and their studies until they are able to function successfully and safely as a member of the Berkeley College Community.

Scope

This Policy applies to all current Berkeley College students. This policy does not pertain to students who are experiencing pregnancy and/or related conditions. Students should refer to the [Rights of Pregnant and Parenting Students](#) policy for guidance. In addition, students with pre-existing, recurring, or chronic medical conditions that have not worsened during the semester will not be considered.

Policy

The Voluntary Medical or Unforeseen Circumstance Withdrawal (MUCW) may be requested in extraordinary cases in which serious illness or injury (“medical”), or another significant personal situation (“unforeseen circumstance”), prevents a student from continuing his or her classes, and Incompletes or other arrangements with instructors are not possible.

MUCWs are intended for extraordinary circumstances and to be approved only once during a student’s academic career. A complete withdrawal from all classes is usually required. Students who can complete work in some but not all their classes are not typically granted a MUCW. All applications for withdrawal require thorough documentation. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis, and students who wish to pursue an exception may complete the MUCW application.

When seeking to return to Berkeley College after a MUCW, students shall apply and be approved by the MUCW Committee prior to registering for classes. Decisions made by the committee will be made in the student’s best academic interest and based, when relevant, upon the treatment provider’s recommendation.

I. Medical Withdrawal

Students may request and be considered for a medical withdrawal when a serious illness or injury occurs that prevents them from participating in classes. The MUCW policy covers both physical and mental health difficulties that lead to absences exceeding three weeks of a 15-week course or 2 weeks of a 7-week course. Examples include severe illness, sudden medical or psychological emergencies, or a sudden, unexpected worsening of known pre-existing, recurring, or chronic health conditions. Medical withdrawals are not typically approved for pre-existing, recurring, or chronic

health conditions known to the student before the start of the term. Current academic performance may be considered in whether a MUCW is granted (e.g. a MUCW may not be approved for students who are failing their courses and then experience a medical emergency late in the term).

To be considered for a medical withdrawal, students must submit a detailed statement describing the medical condition and how it impacted their academic performance in the current term and documentation completed by a licensed healthcare provider supporting how the medical condition impacted the student's ability to participate successfully and the length of time student the condition impacted a student from participating successfully (with a begin and end date). Students with pre-existing, recurring, or chronic medical conditions shall describe how their medical condition worsened during the term and provide documentation completed by a licensed healthcare provider supporting the worsening of this condition. More detailed instructions are provided in the Procedures section of this Policy.

II. Unforeseen Circumstance Withdrawal

Students may request and be considered for a withdrawal due to unforeseen circumstances when extraordinary circumstances, not related to the students' personal physical or mental health, prevent them from participating in classes for more than three weeks of a 15-week course or 2 weeks of a 7-week course. Examples that may be eligible include emergency homelessness and domestic violence situations. Current academic performance may be considered in whether a MUCW is granted (e.g., a MUCW may not be approved for students who are failing their courses and then experience an unforeseen event late in the term).

To be considered for a withdrawal due to an unforeseen circumstance, students must submit a detailed statement explaining the nature and severity of the unforeseen circumstance and how it impacted their academic performance in the current term and documentation supporting their statements. Appropriate documentation for an unforeseen circumstance withdrawal will vary according to the nature of the situation but must pertain to the situation described and support the time frame the student states they were unable to participate successfully in their studies. More detailed instructions are provided in the Procedures section of this Policy.

Procedures

Requests for a MUCW must be submitted during the term the request is being made. The last day a student may apply for a MUCW coincides with the last day to withdrawal from a class for the semester: the end of the 4th week of a 7-week course and the end of the 12th week for a 15-week course. Requests made beyond this date may be considered for extreme circumstances only (e.g., a student was in a coma during the semester). Students have one week from when the request is made to submit the application and supporting documentation. There is no extension beyond this week.

Students who are considering a MUCW shall begin the process by speaking with their Academic Advisor to ensure that all other academic options prior to applying for a MUCW have been explored. Students receiving financial aid shall also speak with the Financial Aid Department. If the student is granted a MUCW, they will receive a “W” for classes attempted that semester.

I. For Medical Withdrawals

The Academic Advisor shall initiate the MUCW application process by completing a Voluntary MUCW E-form that is then sent to the student’s Berkeley College email. In the application, the student shall submit a statement explaining how their medical condition impacted their academic performance and attach thorough documentation completed by a licensed healthcare provider which supports the student’s statement and the time period the student was unable to participate successfully. The student may choose to have their healthcare provider complete the [MUCW Request Healthcare Provider Form](#) or write a letter about the student’s medical condition. Information shall include the date of onset of issue, the dates the student has been under professional care, the general nature of the medical condition and why/how it prevented the student from completing their course work, and the anticipated date that the student can return to school. The student must also provide the last date they were able to attend class.

Medical withdrawals are not typically approved for health conditions known to the student at the start of the term. Students that require accommodation based on a known chronic health condition should register with the Office of Accessibility Services before the start of the term. A medical withdrawal may be approved as an accommodation for a disability in situations such as the worsening of the health condition for which the student receives accommodation. If a student applies for a MUCW due to a pre-existing, recurring, or chronic medical condition, the student shall describe how the medical condition worsened during the term and provide thorough documentation completed by a licensed healthcare provider as described in the previous paragraph.

II. For Unforeseen Circumstance Withdrawals

The Academic Advisor shall initiate the MUCW application process by completing a Voluntary MUCW E-form that is then sent to the student’s Berkeley College email. In the application, the student shall explain the nature and severity of the unforeseen circumstance that impacted their academic performance. Appropriate documentation for an unforeseen circumstance withdrawal will vary according to the nature of the situation but must pertain to the situation described by the student and support the time frame the student states they were unable to participate successfully in their studies. For example, students who were unable to participate successfully in school due to homelessness can submit eviction notices, court appearances, or other documentation

supporting the change in housing. Students who have been impacted by domestic violence can submit a temporary restraining order, police reports, statements by a social worker, documentation supporting the change in housing, and receipts of expenses incurred as a result and after the incident.

If a student has a pre-existing, recurring, or chronic medical condition which was worsened by an unforeseen event or situation, the student shall provide thorough documentation completed by a licensed healthcare provider which supports the student's statement of the worsening of the condition during the time frame indicated by the student. The student may choose to have their healthcare provider complete the [MUCW Request Healthcare Provider Form](#) or write a letter about the student's medical condition. Information shall include the date of onset of issue, the dates the student has been under professional care, the general nature of the medical condition and why/how it prevented the student from completing their course work, and the anticipated date that the student can return to school. The student must also provide the last date they were able to attend class.

III. Processing MUCW Applications – MUCW Committee

A MUCW Committee, led by an Academic Dean or Department Chair, will include at least one faculty member and one staff member from each of the following departments: Academic Advisement, Accessibility Services, Personal Counseling, and Students Accounts. The Committee will approve or deny MUCW requests within fourteen days of student submission. The Committee may request additional information or documentation from students when necessary. Students can appeal denied requests by submitting a written appeal with appropriate supporting documentation, within seven days of the date of the denial, to the Provost. The decision by the Provost shall be final.

IV. Return from MUCW Leave – Re-Entry Plan

Students shall contact Academic Advisement when they are ready to return to Berkeley College. Students then complete the Voluntary MUCW Readmission Application where, for a medical withdrawal, they explain how they have recovered or are recovering from their previous condition(s), or for an unforeseen circumstance withdrawal, they explain how they are currently managing the situation(s) that led them to withdraw. Students shall include documentation to support their statement. If students left due to medical reasons, they shall submit the [Berkeley College Return from Leave Healthcare Provider Report](#) from a qualified healthcare provider supporting that they can successfully resume their studies. When pertinent, students shall include evidence of how their difficult circumstances have been mitigated or are being managed.

Students must submit their application (statement and supporting documentation) at least two weeks before the start of the semester. Students may take up to three semesters off before returning. If more time is needed, students shall contact Academic Advisement and submit proper documentation to be considered for additional time.

Upon receipt of the Return from Leave form, the MUCW Committee will convene and review the application. Decisions made by the committee will be made in the students' best academic interest and based, when relevant, upon the treatment provider's recommendation. Students may be requested to clarify their statements or provide additional documentation. Students can appeal denied requests by submitting a written appeal with appropriate supporting documentation, within seven days of the date of the denial, to the Provost. The decision by the Provost shall be final.

The MUCW Committee may make non-binding recommendations to increase the safety and success of the students upon their return to Berkeley College. Recommendations made may include regular check-ins with Academic Advisement and Personal Counseling; taking a part-time load of classes; registering for disability accommodations; and attending regular tutoring sessions with the Center for Academic Success.

V. Financial Aid

Students who complete and sign the MUCW application authorize Berkeley College to return all their financial aid for the semester for which the leave is applied. Likewise, the College will remove all related charges for that semester, which will generally leave the student with a zero balance for that semester. However, prior balances and bad debt will not be waived. Further, in addition to reducing student debt, by returning all other federal, state, and institutional aid, it ensures that the student does not lose future eligibility due to the leave. The exception to the zero-balance referenced above is if a student received a financial aid refund. Under those circumstances, the student will be responsible for repaying this refund to the College. Students who receive financial assistance are strongly encouraged to consult with a Financial Aid advisor to identify and understand the financial implications of taking a MUCW.

Session I Completers

Students who complete Session I, and are *not registered* for any additional courses for that semester (15 weeks and/or Session II) when Session I is completed, would not be required to apply for a MUCW leave, should they encounter a MUCW type event. They are considered to have completed the semester and they can choose to return or not return for more semesters. Therefore, this Policy does not apply to them.

Students who complete Session I, and are *registered* for additional courses for that semester (15 weeks and/or Session II) when Session I is completed, can apply for a MUCW leave for the current semester. If approved, the college will return all Financial Aid for that semester. Although the student will still incur full charges for the current semester, the College will cover all these costs.

Loan Repayment

A student who is approved for a MUCW leave will be reported "out of school" to the Department of Education. If that student has college loans, the loans will go into

repayment six months after the student's last day of attendance. This six-month period is considered a "grace period." If the student returns to school *within* six months, loan repayment will be deferred while the student remains in school, and the six-month grace period will not have been used. If, however, the student returns *after* six months, repayment will again be deferred while the student remains in school, but the six-month grace period will have been used, resulting in immediate repayment at the student's next separation from the College.

Enforcement

This Policy shall be enforced by Academic Advisement and Accessibility Services. The Policy shall be reviewed annually by these two Departments.