

CORNELL LAW SCHOOL

**A. Withdrawals and leaves of absence.** A student may withdraw from the law school at any time by submitting a written notice of withdrawal to the Law School Registrar. Subject to the provisions of paragraph D (2) below, the withdrawal is effective on the date the written notice is received by the Registrar. A student who withdraws from the Law School is not entitled to return.

All students are eligible to request a leave of absence from the Law School by submitting a written petition to the Law School Administrative Committee c/o the Law School Dean of Students. The petition should describe in detail the circumstances surrounding the request. For a copy of the Law School's leave of absence policy and for procedures for return, including procedures for reentry following a health leave of absence, write or call the Law School Registrar at 255-3628.

**B. Tuition refund policy.** Amounts personally paid for tuition may be refunded if the student requests a leave of absence or withdrawal from the Law School. The date of the written request will determine the tuition liability for the semester. Previously matriculated students who terminate their registration with the university during a fall or spring semester in this manner will be charged tuition from registration day through the date of their request as follows: first six days of the semester (including registration day), no charge; seventh day of the semester, 10 percent; second week, 20 percent; third week, 30 percent; fourth week, 40 percent; fifth week, 60 percent; sixth week, 80 percent; seventh week to the end of the semester, 100 percent.

First-time matriculates will be charged tuition from the university registration day through the date of their request as follows: first six days of the semester (including university registration day), no charge; seventh day of the semester, 10 percent; second and third weeks, 20 percent; fourth week, 30 percent; fifth and sixth weeks, 40 percent; seventh week, 50 percent; eighth and ninth weeks, 60 percent; tenth week to the end of the semester, 100 percent.

**C. Repayment policy.** Students receiving financial aid from Cornell University or the Law School who withdraw or take a leave of absence during a term will have their aid reevaluated, possibly necessitating repayment of a portion of aid received. Repayment to aid accounts depends on the type of aid received, government regulations, and the period of time in attendance. Students with questions should consult with the Law School's director of financial aid.

**D. Return of Federal/Title IV Funding – Calculation.** This policy applies to students who withdraw, are administratively withdrawn, are approved for a leave of absence for longer than 180 days, or are academically dismissed from Cornell Law School. Refunds for these students are determined according to the following policy:

- 1) The term "Title IV Funds" refers to the federal financial aid programs authorized under the Higher Education Act of 1965 (as amended) and for students enrolled at Cornell Law School includes all federal educational loan programs applicable to Law School.

- 2) A student's withdrawal/leave of absence date is:
  - a) The date the student began the Law School's withdrawal process or officially notified the Law School of intent to withdraw; or
  - b) The student's last date of attendance at a documented academically related activity; or
  - c) The midpoint of the period of enrollment for a student who leaves without notifying the Law School.

The determination of the student's withdrawal/leave of absence date shall be made by the Law School.

- 3) Determining the amount of Title IV funds to be returned:

Refunds on all allowable charges including tuition and fees will be prorated on a per diem basis based on the number of days in attendance as a proportion to the number of days in the term or period of enrollment, up to the 60% point in the semester. There are no refunds after the 60% point in time, as the federal regulations view the aid has been "100% earned" after that point in time. A worksheet for this calculation and examples can be requested from the Law School Financial Aid Office.

More details are available at <http://ifap.ed.gov/fsahandbook/1213FSAHbkVol5.html>

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES GOVERNING LEAVES OF ABSENCE

1. The expectation of the Law School is that, once a student begins his or her studies, he or she will complete the degree program in the standard length of time (e.g., three years for a J.D. student). However, in appropriate cases, a Cornell law student in good academic standing may apply for a leave of absence prior to completing the degree, such leave to take effect immediately upon completion of the semester in which the application is made. (Only in extraordinary circumstances, e.g., those involving severe medical/psychological problems, will permission be given for a leave to begin during the course of a given semester.)
2. To apply for a leave, a student must submit a written petition to the Administrative Committee describing the reasons for the leave. In the event a student is incapacitated due to medical/psychological problems, a petition for a health leave of absence may be submitted by a parent, spouse, or any other person designated by the student in advance. In extraordinary circumstances, e.g., where the student's conduct has been unusually disruptive to the Law School or University community or where the student's conduct suggests that remaining in school poses a significant risk to the health or safety of the student or others in the Law School or University community or a significant risk of disruption to the Law School or University environment, the Dean, in consultation with the Administrative Committee, may require the student to take a leave of absence.
3. Leaves are typically granted for one year only. Where the leave begins during a given semester, the student would normally be expected to return at the beginning of that same semester the following year. Prior to the expiration of the leave, a student may request, in writing, a one year extension of the leave. Only in extraordinary circumstances will a leave be extended beyond two years, and a decision to extend a leave beyond two years may be made only by the Dean in consultation with the Administrative Committee. Only in extraordinary circumstances will a student who has already taken one leave of absence be granted a second leave of absence.
4. If a leave of absence is granted, the Law School and/or the University will maintain jurisdiction over the adjudication of any Law School and/or University disciplinary action involving the student. A student may be required to participate in the adjudication of the disciplinary action while on leave.
5. In certain circumstances, the Committee may attach written conditions to the leave. For example, where a health leave of absence is requested, the leave may be conditioned on counseling or medical treatment while on leave of absence or other requirements appropriate to the conditions giving rise to the leave.

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\* **This language is not intended to discourage interested students from applying for a leave of absence** during the early weeks of a semester. Any student at any time with an interest in a leave of absence is encouraged to speak with the Dean of Students whenever the need arises during the semester.

6. Before the end of the semester in which the leave is scheduled to expire, the student must notify the Administrative Committee that he or she expects to return to school at the beginning of the following semester. **Included in the notification must be a statement that the student has not been charged with any crime during the period of the leave**, or if a student has been charged with a crime, the full details of the incident(s) leading to the charge. If conditions have been attached to the leave, the student must demonstrate that such conditions have been satisfied.

7. As a general matter, a student will not be permitted to resume his or her studies unless the Administrative Committee is satisfied that the student has the ability to complete law school and the judgment and integrity to function as a member of the profession. For example, in the event that the leave of absence was granted due to medical/psychological reasons, the Administrative Committee must be satisfied that the problems which precipitated the leave are resolved and that the student is able to handle all of the physical or emotional stress, as applicable, of attending law school, and that there is no significant risk of danger to the student or others or of disruption to the Law School or University environment. The Committee may require the student to make available relevant health records, to permit the Committee to communicate directly with the student's physicians or counselors, and, in appropriate circumstances, to undergo additional medical/psychological evaluation.

8. Reentry may be conditional. For example, a student may be required to engage in regular and ongoing medical, psychiatric or psychological treatment when specifically related to the conditions giving rise to the leave if the Committee believes that, without such ongoing treatment, the individual will not be able to function effectively as a student or will pose a significant risk to the health or safety of himself or others or a significant risk of disruption to the Law School or University environment.

9. If the Administrative Committee determines that the student will not be permitted to return to the Law School, the decision may be appealed to the Dean of the Law School. The Dean's decision will be final.

10. The Law School may modify its leave policy in light of experience and consistent with the law.

11. Please note that when a student requests a health leave of absence, the Law School works closely with the staff of Cornell Health. Details of the Voluntary Leave of Absence for Health Reasons policy are available online at <http://health.cornell.edu/>