



# Medical Leave and Return Process

## Office of Student Support and Accountability, MSU

*This guide is intended to provide an overview of the Medical Leave and Return Process (MLRP). The [Office of Student Support & Accountability \(OSSA\)](#) reserves the right to adjust the process structure and guidelines for good cause. Our goal is to provide detailed information about the MLRP to help Spartans and their supporters prioritize their wellbeing and promote their long-term success.*

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## What is a medical leave?

A student medical leave is a university-verified designation indicating that a personal health condition had a **catastrophic impact** on a student's ability to remain enrolled. A medical leave involves a complete withdrawal from enrollment (i.e., dropping all enrolled courses in the medical leave term). This exceptional remedy is intended to offer students time and space to prioritize their health and wellness in an individualized time frame.

A medical leave requires students be or previously have been under the care of a **licensed treatment provider** who is willing and able to attest to the health condition, its impact on the student, and the impact on their ability to maintain course enrollment during the requested term. The health condition(s) can be related to physical health, mental health, or a combination of primary concern areas.

OSSA defines a licensed treatment provider as an individual who possesses valid, active credentials from a licensing body to practice medicine or provide treatment to humans.

- Examples include but are not limited to the following: licensed nurse practitioner, licensed psychologist, licensed medical doctor, or licensed clinical social worker.

### *Who is eligible for a medical leave?*

The MLRP is available to most MSU students, except those in the College of Human Medicine, College of Law, and College of Osteopathic Medicine. Students in these colleges may seek leave information directly from their college's student affairs office.

### *What wouldn't be considered a medical leave?*

The OSSA medical leave process is not intended for students who plan to take time away from MSU in the future and do not need to address their grades or enrollment from current or previous semesters. Students who are planning to take time away in the future should inform their academic advisor or advising/student affairs office in their college.

The OSSA medical leave process also does not apply to students seeking support for pregnancy, childbirth, pregnancy-related, or parenting needs. Students should contact the [Office of Civil Rights to request supportive measures or modifications related to these needs](#).

## Withdrawal from the University

A student medical leave involves **withdrawing, also known as dropping all of your classes. Withdrawing from college is a big decision.** Deciding to withdraw can have a huge impact; it can affect finances, on-campus housing, immigration status, and more. Because of this, students are expected to review the following steps before initiating a withdrawal from MSU. [Please review the medical leave policy and the steps you must take before applying for a medical leave to decide if medical leave is right for you.](#)

A medical leave does not allow a student to maintain partial enrollment. Approval for a medical leave means all courses will be dropped when a medical leave is granted.



## What is the timeline to request a medical leave?

A medical leave request can be requested up to the commencement date of the semester one calendar year from request.

- For example, requests for the Spring 2025 semester will be accepted until the Spring 2026 commencement date. Please see the [academic calendar](#) for specific dates. Students can always consult their college for additional support or clarification including partial term courses.

Depending on when the request is submitted, it will either be considered a current term leave or a retroactive medical leave. Please see the Medical Leave Timeline on page 10.

- Students who withdraw between the Last Day to Drop with Refund and the Class Ends Date due to a personal health condition and wish to be reviewed for a refund may request a Medical Leave. A request during this time is a current term medical leave.
- Students who are requesting a retroactive withdrawal based upon a student's medical condition that prevented the initiation of a withdrawal during a term of instruction may do so. A retroactive medical leave is any leave requested after the class ends date.
  - Reminder students can request a medical leave up to the commencement date of the semester one calendar year later.

Please note that the class ends date is this is different from the “end of the semester” as it does not include finals week.

## Review timelines

Requests for Medical Leave will be reviewed in the order that they are received. On average, OSSA sends outcome of the request to the student via their MSU email within ten business days.

If a request misses the required information, the student will be notified the case has been administratively closed or given five business days to correct the issue(s). If a request is closed, the student may resubmit their request again per process guidelines and timelines.

## How long am I able to stay unenrolled while on leave?

The length of time you are on medical leave does not have maximum duration. However, students who are unenrolled for three consecutive semesters (including their semester of leave and the summer semester) must go through the [readmission procedure](#).

The length of a medical leave is a personal decision. MSU encourages students to take time to attend to their well-being and put needed support systems in place.

## How many medical leaves can I take?

Students are permitted a maximum of two medical leaves during their time in an educational program. Only the term withdrawn with the approved medical leave designation counts towards the two-term limit.



- Ex: If a student withdraws during the Spring 2025 semester and remains unenrolled for Summer 2025, they have only taken one medical leave. However, if this same student returned in Fall 2025 and took a medical leave for that same semester, they would have exhausted both leave opportunities.
- Summer semesters are considered one singular term. The request for a medical leave can not be differentiated to only include summer session 1 or summer session 2 courses. If a medical leave is granted, all enrollment for the summer term is impacted.

## How does medical leave interact with academic recess or dismissal decisions?

If a student is academically recessed from an academic program, the student is still eligible to apply for a retroactive medical leave. If the retroactive medical leave is approved, the semester will be withdrawn. In most cases this effectively undoes the status of the recess by returning the student to the standing they had at the end of their last semester.

Please note that due to the timing of recess notices and the time it takes to initiate a review, an approved medical leave after a recess may still require students to take at least one semester of unenrollment.

If a student is academically dismissed from an academic program, the student is still eligible to apply retroactively. If the retroactive medical leave is approved, the semester will be withdrawn and the student would return to the academic standing from the end of the previous semester. In most cases this effectively undoes the status of the recess by returning the student to the standing they had at the end of their last semester.

Please note that due to the timing of recess notices and the time it takes to initiate a review, an approved medical leave after a recess may still require students to take at least one semester of unenrollment.

## Preparing Documentation

*Please note that all OSSA staff members are mandatory reporters of relationship violence, sexual misconduct, discrimination, and crimes. According to Federal and State law, and University guidelines and policies: any information shared in the Medical Leave and Return Process may be reported to one of the following offices: Counseling and Psychiatric Services, Office of Civil Rights, and/or the Department of Police and Public Safety.*

*Students should ensure that they work closely with the provider to verify completion before submitting the request. Students must use the [OSSA MLRP Request form](#) to upload requested documentation. Documentation sent via fax, email, or drop-off will not be permitted.*

## Current Term

- The current term is defined as [after the Last Day to Drop with a Refund through the Class Ends date](#).



#### *How do I initiate the request for medical leave?*

1. Contact your academic advisor or [college leave contact](#) to discuss and request a withdrawal. Once the student has been withdrawn, they can initiate a request for the medical leave designation. Medical leaves for the current term cannot be requested until the student has been withdrawn by their college.
2. Contact your licensed treatment provider to assist in the completion of the [Treatment Provider Assessment](#).
3. Once your treatment provider has returned the form to you, please upload the form into the [OSSA MLRP Request Form](#).
4. Requests will be reviewed in the order that they are received. Students will receive confirmation that their request has been received and an outcome of their request to their MSU email and the alternate email provided at the time of request within 10 business days of initiating the request.
5. Students will receive a letter confirming the decision. If the medical leave is supported, OSSA will initiate the designation process to review the request for a refund review and any updated transcript notation needs.

#### *What are the potential decisions upon review of my request for leave in the current term?*

1. **Not granted:** If a request is not supported, the Office of Student Support & Accountability will provide an explanation for the outcome and an opportunity for the student to initiate a new request for the current term.
2. **Granted:** the student's request for Medical Leave is supported by their treatment provider's documentation and the rationale indicates that the student has made sufficient progress to keep any future courses they are already enrolled in or to enroll in classes for future terms.
3. **Granted WITH Readiness to Return Required:** the student's request for Medical Leave is supported and the provider's documentation indicates the student has made insufficient progress to enroll at MSU.
  - a. When readiness to return is required, students are withdrawn from any future enrollment unless there are grades assigned. Then, a hold is placed preventing enrollment until a readiness to return request has been submitted to OSSA.

### Retroactive

- Retroactive is [after the Class Ends date through the commencement date of the semester 1 calendar year later](#).

#### *How do I initiate the request for medical leave?*

1. Students are expected to review the University Withdrawal Policy and steps [before applying for a medical leave](#).
2. Contact your licensed treatment provider to assist in the completion of the [Treatment Provider Assessment](#).
3. Once your treatment provider has returned the form to you, please upload the form into the [OSSA MLRP Request Form](#).



4. Requests will be reviewed in the order that they are received. Students will receive confirmation that their request has been received and in most cases can expect an outcome of their request to their MSU email and the alternate email provided at the time of request within 10 business days of initiating the request.
5. Students will receive a letter confirming the decision. If the medical leave is supported, OSSA will initiate the withdrawal for the term of request on the student's behalf.

#### *What are the potential decisions upon review of a retroactive medical leave?*

1. **Not granted:** If a request is not supported, OSSA will provide an explanation for the outcome and an opportunity for the student to initiate a new request for the previous term.
2. **Granted:** the student's request for Medical Leave is supported by their treatment provider's documentation and the rationale indicates that the student's health condition had an impact on enrollment but they have since made sufficient progress to keep any courses they are currently enrolled in or classes they are enrolled in for future terms.
3. **Granted WITH Readiness to Return Required:** the student's request for Medical Leave is supported and the provider's documentation indicates the student has made insufficient progress to return to MSU.
  - a. The student will be withdrawn from the term of request and a hold will be placed unless there are grades assigned. This hold is placed to prevent enrollment until a readiness to return request has been submitted to OSSA.
  - b. If the student is currently enrolled, they will be given an opportunity to accept or deny medical leave. If the student accepts this medical leave, they will also be withdrawn from all current courses in addition to the previous term of request.

#### *What factors does OSSA consider in the review of a request for medical leave?*

- a. Treatment provider's assessment of dates of impact, dates of treatment, number of appointments or sessions
- b. The treatment provider's assessment of the impact of the health condition on academic progress, functioning, and/or ability and the specific impairments linked to the condition.
- c. The treatment provider's assessment of whether the student's condition had a catastrophic impact on the student's ability to remain enrolled and the associated timeframe of the condition.
- d. The treatment provider's assessment of the students' progress towards planned goals and readiness to return to the academic environment.

#### *How should students spend their leave when required to demonstrate readiness to return?*

The short answer is... spending time doing the things that help them feel well and make the progress towards the goals they set with their providers!

How the time spent on leave looks different for each student. Students may use the time to engage in treatment agreed upon by their provider. OSSA recognizes the beneficial impact of engaging with a support system, keeping in a routine, and finding personally fulfilling activities during this time of leave.



- While students are not able to enroll at MSU while on medical leave, some students find maintaining academic engagement at a local community college helpful to their success in transitioning back to MSU. [Transfer MSU](#) contains helpful tools and resources to understand credit equivalencies. [Envision Green](#) is a partnership between Lansing Community College and MSU to help students navigate between the institutions. Students can also connect with their academic advisor or college contact to discuss options.

## Returning from Medical Leave

### My medical leave decision requires that I demonstrate readiness to return. What happens next?

1. Collaborate with your provider on a plan for re-enrollment. This looks different for everyone but may include follow-up visits, new treatment regimen, etc.
2. Once you believe you have made the expected progress, reconnect with your licensed treatment provider. Please work with them to complete the [Readiness to Return Assessment](#).
3. Once the provider has returned the form to you, please upload the completed document into the [OSSA MLRP Request Form](#) to complete your request. Requests will be reviewed in the order that they are received. Students will receive confirmation that their request has been received. Requests are reviewed on a rolling basis until the deadline to apply. Requests received after the deadline will automatically be considered for the following term.

If a student is required to demonstrate readiness to return, there exists a high probability that the student would not be able to meet the review deadline for the next term. The deadlines for applying to return are:

- **April 1** for students re-enrolling for summer term
- **June 1** for students re-enrolling for fall term AND have interest in on-campus housing
- **August 1** for students re-enrolling for fall term and do not have interest in on-campus housing
- **December 1** for students who re-enrolling for Spring term

### What resources are available to help me transition back to MSU?

- MSU has many programs, offices, and employees dedicated to supporting students on their Spartan journey. Resources specifically focused on assisting students with health matters include, but are not limited to:
  - Student Health Services (Olin): <https://olin.msu.edu/>
  - Counseling and Psychiatric Services: <https://caps.msu.edu/>
  - Health Promotion and Engagement: <https://healthpromotion.msu.edu/>
  - Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities: <https://www.rcpd.msu.edu/>
  - Center for Survivors: <https://centerforsurvivors.msu.edu/>
  - Spartan Resilience Education: <https://uhw.msu.edu/spartanresilience>
  - Nutrition Program: <https://uhw.msu.edu/students/nutrition>
  - Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) program: <https://uhw.msu.edu/students/aod>
- For information about resources available to MSU students, including academic help visit: <https://undergrad.msu.edu/resources>



## Frequently Asked Questions?

### How does a medical leave impact my...?

#### Transcript

If withdrawn on or before the midpoint of all classes, the transcript indicates a withdrawal date but does not list specific courses. If withdrawn after mid-point of any class, all classes will be listed and assigned W grade indicating “withdrawal.” There is no specific indication on the transcript that the withdrawal is medical in nature. However, students are welcome to self-disclose this when submitting transcripts for jobs, graduate school applications, etc.

#### Housing

If you live on campus and seek a current term medical leave or you have accepted a retroactive medical leave with readiness to return required, you will be required to move out of your on-campus residence and return the room/apartment key to your primary service center.

Contact the [Residence Education and Housing Services](#) Housing Assignments Office for more information, including details on any outstanding financial needs and refund practices.

#### Financial Aid

If you receive federal, state, or institutional financial aid (such as scholarships, grants, loans, and/or work study), contact the [Office of Financial Aid](#) to learn how a withdrawal could affect your aid package.

The [Financial Aid Refund Policy](#) provides additional information about the impact of dropping credits and withdrawing, including an example of a Title IV return of funds calculation.

Medical Leaves are subject to the [Medical Withdrawal Policy for Class Tuition and Fees Refund Policy](#). For most supported requests, students receive a \$500.00 lump sum tuition refund for the term the medical leave is granted for.

#### MSU email address

Students are typically able to maintain access to their Outlook email and other Microsoft suite services until they have been unenrolled for three consecutive semesters including the semester of withdrawal and summer. If a student loses access while still within this time frame, please contact [MSU.IT](#).

#### Ability to see my on-campus provider

Each situation is unique, but it may be possible for students to continue with their current on-campus provider. We recommend that students contact their providers through CAPS, Olin, Center for Survivors, etc. to learn all available options to continue treatment while on leave.





## On-campus job

Unfortunately, students on medical leave are unable to continue in their student employment roles while on leave. Students are encouraged to speak with their supervisor about opportunities to return to the role in the future.

## Additional Support

*OSSA realizes that making decisions about health, wellbeing, and personal goals is never easy. We are here to help inform students and their supporters of the options available to them in this process.*

Website: <https://ossa.msu.edu/>

Phone: 517-884-0789

Email: [ossa.mlrp@msu.edu](mailto:ossa.mlrp@msu.edu)

### *Process Concerns*

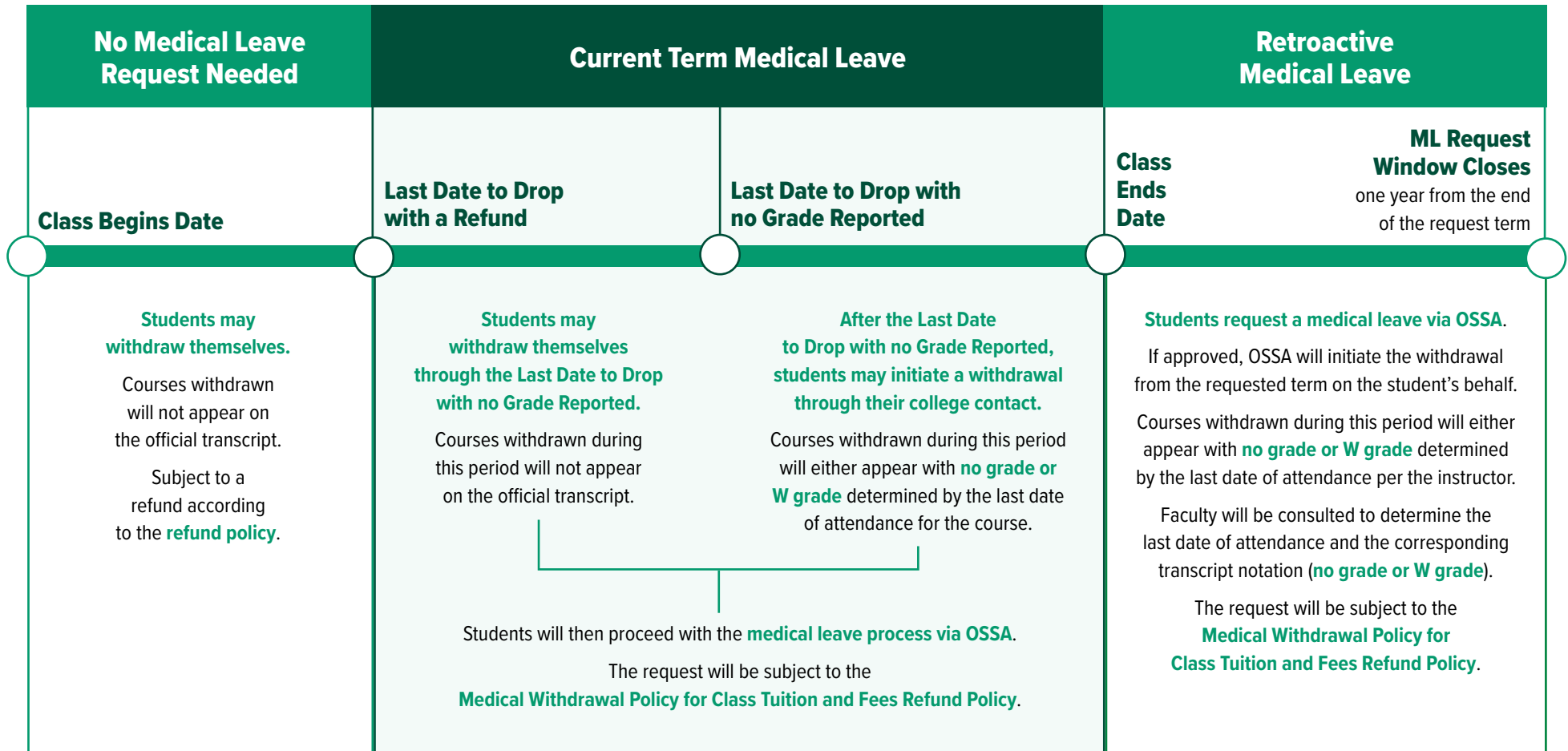
*Students who believe they have been discriminated against based upon their disability or other protected category may file a claim with the [Office of Civil Rights](#). Students may also consult with the University Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator: [www.Civilrights.msu.edu](http://www.Civilrights.msu.edu)*

# Medical Leave Timeline



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**When students are making decisions about medical leave, timing matters.** Timing affects the process of how students pursue a withdrawal and medical leave distinction, how the withdrawal is noted on an official transcript, and the result a refund review may yield. **Students should review the steps and policy associated with withdrawing from the university.**



**The specific dates for a given semester can be found in the Academic Calendar.** Note that in the case of a semester with dynamically dated courses, students should verify appropriate dates in their student information system.

**During time frames in which students may withdraw themselves, students can do so using the online enrollment system or in person at the Office of the Registrar. If students need to initiate the withdrawal through their college, they should determine their specific contact.**

**Still have questions? Contact OSSA**

[ossa.mlrp@msu.edu](mailto:ossa.mlrp@msu.edu) 517-884-0789

[ossa.msu.edu/medical-leave](https://ossa.msu.edu/medical-leave)

# Current Term Medical Leave Request

## What is a medical leave?

**A student medical leave is a university-verified designation indicating that a personal health condition had a catastrophic impact on a student's ability to remain enrolled.** This exceptional remedy is intended to offer students time and space to prioritize their health and wellness in an individualized time frame.

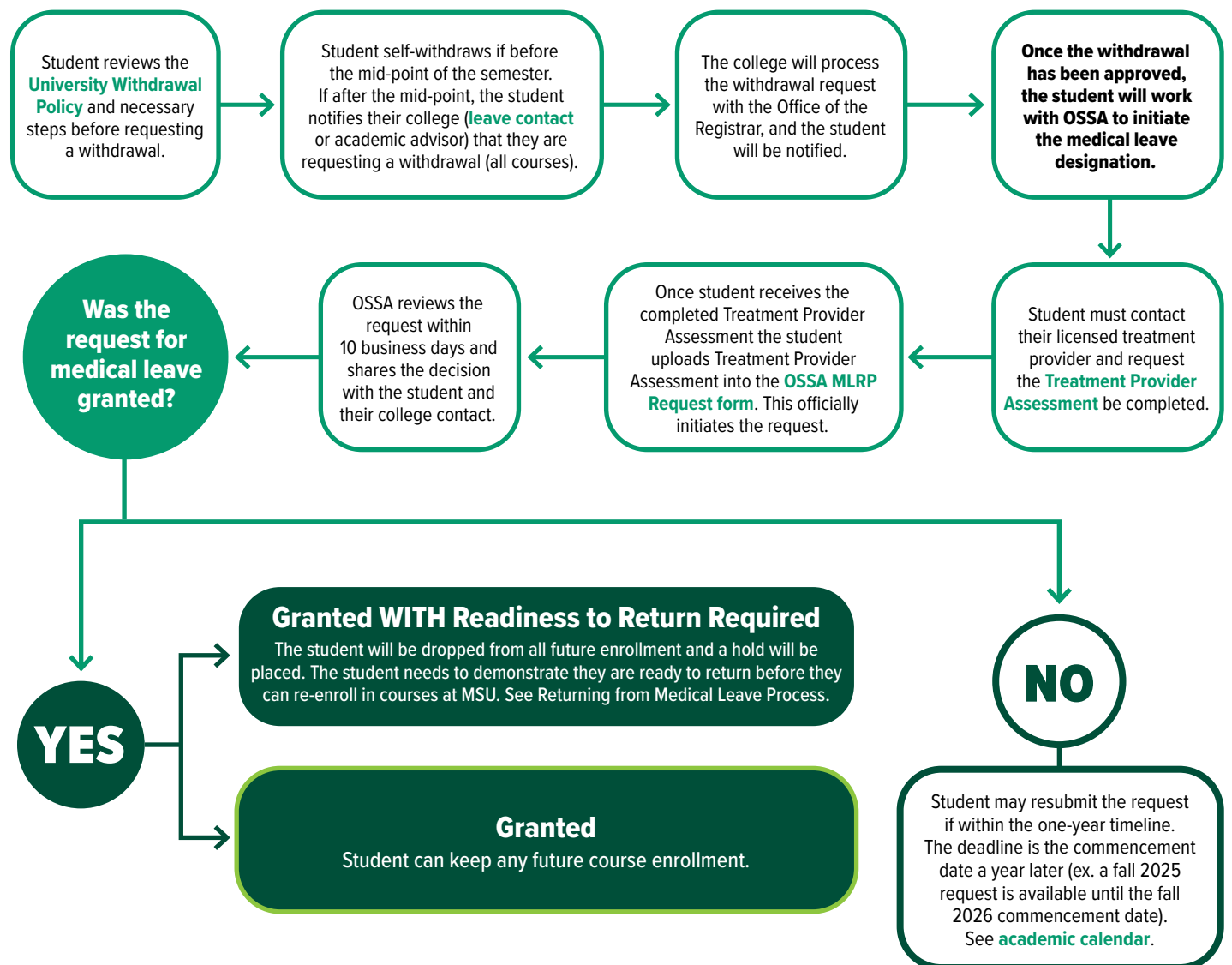
A student medical leave means withdrawing or dropping all of your classes in a given semester. Withdrawing from college is a big decision and can have a huge impact on finances, on-campus housing, immigration status and more.

Before applying for a medical leave, please review the medical leave policy and the required steps at [reg.msu.edu/roinfo/notices/withdrawal.aspx](https://reg.msu.edu/roinfo/notices/withdrawal.aspx).

When considering a medical leave, timing is important. It affects how your withdrawal and medical leave are processed, how the withdrawal appears on your official transcript and the outcome of a refund review.

You can self-withdraw until the midpoint of the course. You can then request a current medical leave once withdrawn until the Class Ends Date of the semester. After this date, the request becomes a retroactive medical leave, which can be requested up to the commencement date of the term a year later. For example, if you want to take a medical leave for fall 2025, you have until the commencement date in the fall 2026 **academic calendar** to apply.

**Whether a medical leave is granted, granted with readiness to return required, or is not granted is decided by OSSA upon review of details completed on the treatment provider assessment.**



## Still have questions?

Contact OSSA at [ossa.mlrp@msu.edu](mailto:ossa.mlrp@msu.edu) or 517-884-0789



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# Retroactive Medical Leave Request

## What is a medical leave?

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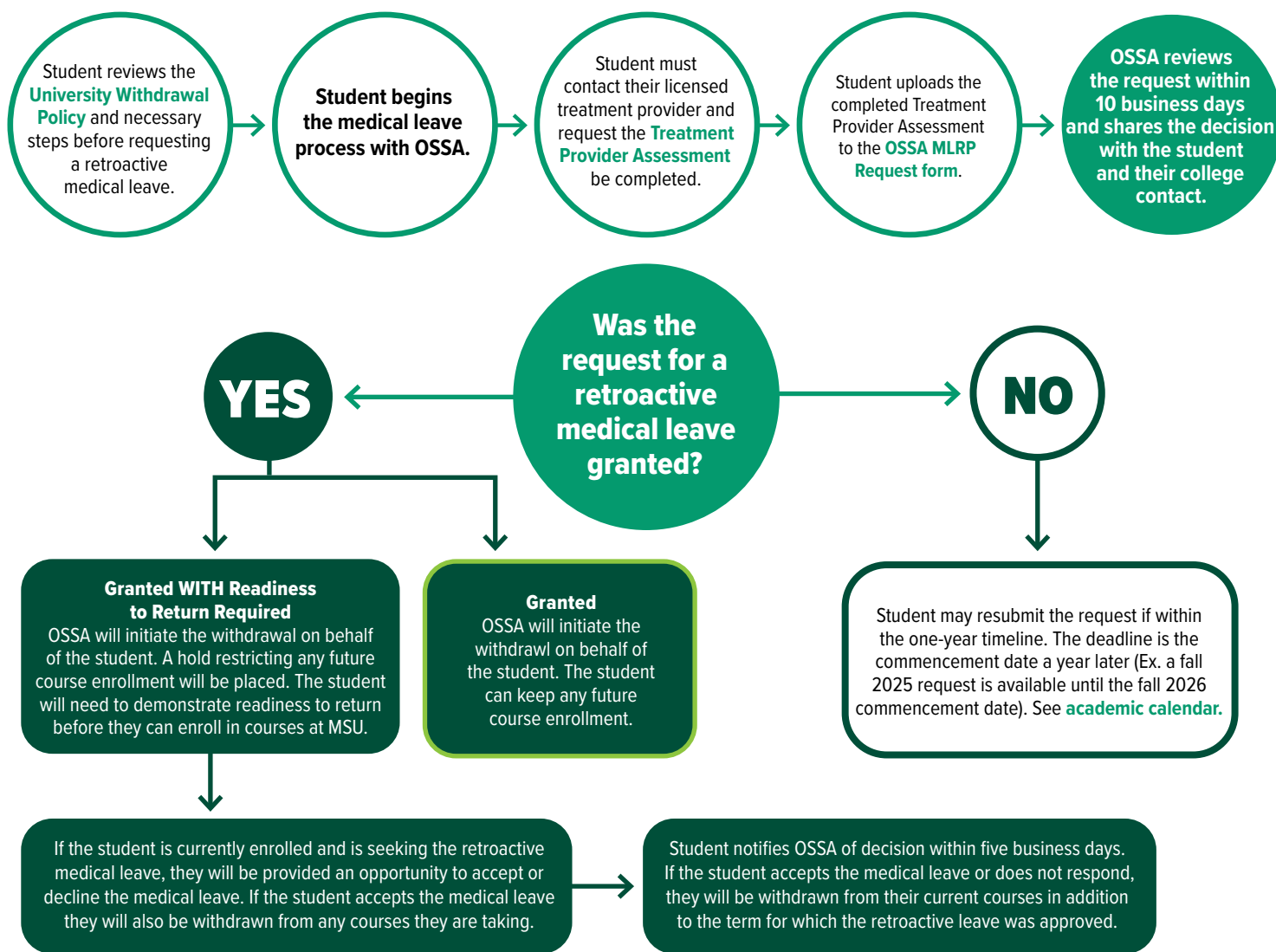
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When considering a medical leave, timing is important. It affects how your withdrawal and medical leave are processed, how the withdrawal appears on your official transcript and the outcome of a refund review.

You can self-withdraw until the midpoint of the course. You can then request a current medical leave once withdrawn until the Class Ends Date of the semester. After this date, the request becomes a retroactive medical leave, which can be requested up to the commencement date of the term a year later. For example, if you want to take a medical leave for fall 2025, you have until the commencement date in the fall 2026 [academic calendar](#) to apply.

**Whether a medical leave is granted, granted with readiness to return required, or is not granted is decided by OSSA upon review of details completed on the treatment provider assessment.**



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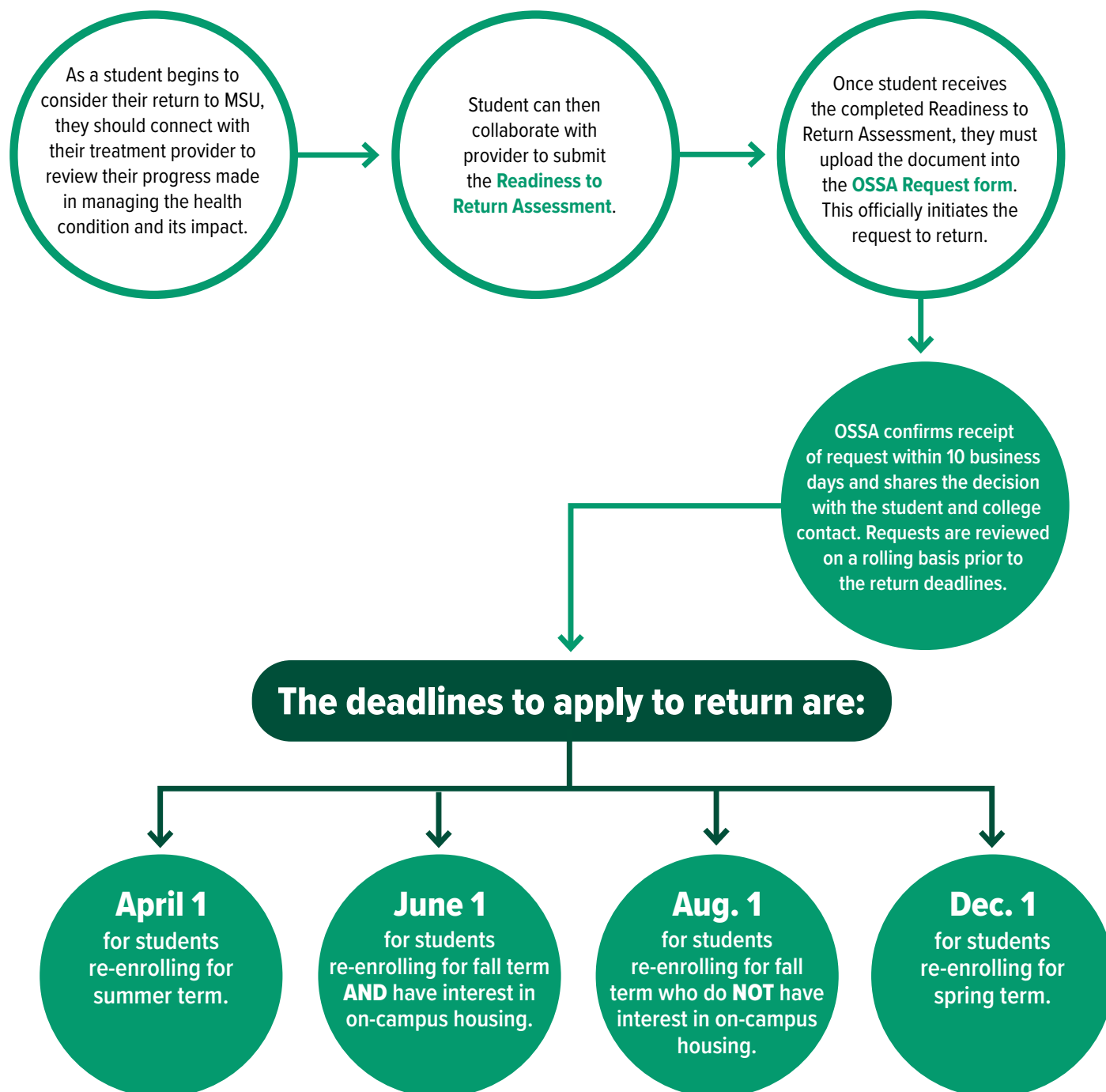


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# Returning From Medical Leave

Returning from medical leave can bring a variety of emotions. The Office of Student Support & Accountability and the Spartan Community are here to help in the transition back to MSU.

Students who are required to demonstrate readiness to return (as indicated in the initial leave decision and by the presence of a hold) will use this process to request to return to MSU.



Students who submit materials or receive a decision requiring them to demonstrate readiness after these dates will be required to wait to enroll until the following semester. A student may submit a request to return from medical leave for an earlier review than the deadline that corresponds with their desired re-enrollment term.

## Still have questions?

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