

The City University of New York Medical Withdrawal and Re-entry  
Policy and Procedures Governing Student Behavior that Presents a Direct Threat of  
Harm to Self or Others or Substantially Disrupts the Learning or Working Environment of Others

I. Introduction

The City University of New York (“CUNY”) is committed to the academic success and personal growth of its students. As part of that commitment, CUNY and its constituent campuses are responsible for providing a safe learning and working environment for students, faculty, staff and other members of the University community. Some students may, because of a medical condition, engage in behavior that presents a direct threat of harm to themselves or to others, or substantially disrupts the learning or working environment of others. In such situations, the safety and security of the campus community, including the individual student, is paramount. This policy does not replace or supersede reasonable and appropriate security and health and safety measures, such as calling 911 or taking other immediate action in case of imminent threat to life or limb.

In addition to taking action to protect the security and safety of the campus community, a college may address the student’s conduct to determine if action under this policy or under the student disciplinary process is appropriate. When a student’s conduct that directly threatens or substantially disrupts the learning or working environment of others appears to relate to a medical condition, the campus may, at its option, address the student’s conduct either in accordance with this policy, or through the student disciplinary process. If the student’s conduct constitutes a threat solely to him or herself, it should be addressed under this policy rather than the disciplinary process.

II. Policy

- A. As an alternative to disciplinary action that may be taken under Article XV of CUNY’s Bylaws, a college of CUNY may bring a proceeding to require a student to withdraw from the University, or, under some circumstances, the student’s home college and/or from residence in a college residence hall under this withdrawal policy and procedures when the student’s behavior evidences a direct threat of harm to others, or when the student’s behavior substantially disrupts the learning or working environment of others. A direct threat means a significant risk of harm to health or safety.
- B. A student who threatens to commit or attempts to commit suicide, and who does not otherwise threaten direct harm to others or substantially disrupt the learning or working environment of others, shall not be subject to disciplinary action for that threat or attempt under Article XV of the CUNY’s Bylaws. If a college determines that withdrawal of the student or retention of the student subject to specified conditions is appropriate because the student’s behavior threatens direct harm to him or herself, the procedures outlined below shall apply instead of disciplinary procedures.
- C. A student who withdraws or is withdrawn from the University, a college or college residence hall pursuant to this policy may apply for re-entry to the University, a college

and/or to a college residence hall. The application for re-entry shall be made to the student's home college's Chief Student Affairs Officer, who shall determine whether the student still presents a direct threat of harm to him or herself or others or still presents a significant risk to substantially disrupt the learning or working environment of others. If the Chief Student Affairs Officer or designee determines, based on the assessment of a qualified, licensed mental health professional, that there is not a significant risk that the behavior that required withdrawal will be repeated, he or she shall approve the student's application for re-entry.

### III. Procedures

#### A. Emergency Interim Removal

1. If a student's behavior presents an immediate, severe and direct threat to him or herself or others (by evidencing a likelihood of harm to him or herself or others), or is substantially disrupting the learning or working environment of others, the Chief Student Affairs Officer or designee (if such Officer is not immediately available) may direct an emergency interim removal of the student that restricts the student's access to the College's campus or residence hall, as appropriate, for an interim period before a final determination of the matter. The Chief Student Affairs Officer or designee shall consult with the University's Office of the General Counsel prior to making any such direction.
2. The fact that a student has threatened to commit suicide or attempted suicide, by itself, does not allow the Chief Student Affairs Officer or designee to direct an emergency interim removal. In all cases involving such students, the Chief Student Affairs Officer or designee must attempt to have the student individually assessed by a mental health professional as outlined below in A.3. before deciding whether to direct an emergency interim removal.
3. Except as permitted in III A. 1. above, before determining whether to require an emergency interim removal, the Chief Student Affairs Officer or designee shall take the following steps:
  - a. exercise all reasonable efforts to meet with the student; and
  - b. in that meeting, offer the student the opportunity to be evaluated at the college's expense by a qualified, licensed mental health professional, who may be an employee of a college of CUNY or CUNY or on retainer to a college of CUNY or CUNY. Whenever possible, that professional shall have had no prior contact with the student. The professional shall assess whether the student's behavior presents an immediate, severe and direct threat to him or herself or others or presents a significant risk to repeat behavior that substantially disrupts the learning or working environment of others, and, if so, whether the student's behavior may be the result of a medical issue. That professional shall present his or her findings to the Chief Student Affairs Officer or designee, who shall determine based on those

findings and other evidence available whether emergency interim removal under these procedures is appropriate.

- c. If the student refuses to meet, and/or refuses to undergo such assessment or to keep a scheduled appointment, the Chief Student Affairs Officer or designee may require emergency interim removal without a meeting and/or mental health assessment if he or she reasonably concludes on the basis of the available evidence that the student's behavior evidences an immediate, severe and direct threat of harm to the student or others or is substantially disrupting the working or learning environment of others and presents a significant risk to continue that substantial disruption. The Chief Student Affairs Officer or designee shall consult with the University's Office of the General Counsel before making such a determination.
4. The emergency interim removal from the College and/or residence hall shall remain in effect until a final decision has been made pursuant to the procedures below, unless, before a final decision is made, the Chief Student Affairs Officer or designee determines that the reasons for imposing the interim removal no longer exist.

#### B. Withdrawal after Emergency Interim Removal

1. If a student has been subjected to an emergency interim removal from the college and/or residence hall, the college shall request retention with conditions or voluntary withdrawal within 7 calendar days of such removal. Should the request for retention with conditions or voluntary withdrawal request be refused, the College shall determine within 7 calendar days of such refusal whether to take further action against the student, including whether to initiate involuntary withdrawal proceedings or, disciplinary proceedings under Article XV of the CUNY Bylaws, as applicable under II A. above, and shall send notice of either such proceeding in accordance with the notice requirements of the applicable procedure within that 7-day period. For students who have been subjected to an emergency interim removal without having undergone the assessment procedures outlined in III A. 3 above, the College shall follow the assessment procedures outlined below in B.2. a. prior to determining its course of action.
2. In cases where the student has been subjected to an emergency interim removal without assessment, the procedure for determining whether withdrawal is appropriate is as follows:
  - a. The Chief Student Affairs Officer or designee shall exercise best efforts to meet with the student to discuss the student's behavior and to hear the student's explanation of the alleged behavior. If, after hearing the explanation, the Officer or designee still wishes to consider the possibility of the student's withdrawal, he or she shall offer the student an opportunity to be evaluated, at the college's expense, by a qualified, licensed mental health professional, who may be an employee of a college of CUNY or CUNY, or on retainer to a college of CUNY or CUNY. Whenever possible, that professional shall have had no prior contact

with the student. The professional shall make findings concerning whether the student's behavior presents a direct threat of harm to him or herself or others or presents a significant risk to repeat behavior that substantially disrupts the learning or working environment of others and if so, whether the student's behavior may be the result of a medical issue. The professional shall report such findings to the Chief Student Affairs Officer, who shall, based on those findings, and after consultation with the University's Office of the General Counsel, determine the appropriate action, including whether to request that the student withdraw from the University, the college and/or the college residence hall or whether to request that the student agree to specified conditions in lieu of withdrawal.

- b. If the student refuses to undergo the requested assessment, or fails to keep the scheduled appointment, and the Chief Student Affairs Officer reasonably concludes on the basis of the available evidence that the student's behavior presents a direct threat of harm to him or herself or others or substantially disrupts the learning or working environment of others and presents a significant risk to repeat behavior that substantially disrupts the learning or working environment of others, the Chief Student Affairs Officer may request that the student voluntarily withdraw from the University, the college and/or the college residence hall. The Chief Student Affairs Officer shall consult with the University's Office of the General Counsel before making any such request.
- c. If the student agrees to the request for voluntary withdrawal or to the specified conditions, the Chief Student Affairs officer or designee shall (i) discuss with the student the procedures for and consequences of voluntary withdrawal or the specified conditions, as applicable; (ii) discuss the circumstances with the student's parents or legal guardians as permissible by law and as appropriate; (iii) consult with the student's academic advisor or department, as appropriate; (iv) consult with the residence hall director, as appropriate; (v) refer the student to appropriate resources for treatment; and (vi) advise the student concerning the process for applying for re-entry, as well as on conditions for re-entry, if applicable and appropriate.
- d. If the student does not agree to the request for voluntary withdrawal or to the specified conditions, the Chief Student Affairs Officer shall determine, in consultation with the University's Office of the General Counsel, whether to take further action against the student, including whether to initiate involuntary withdrawal proceedings, or, in the case of students referenced in II A. above, whether to initiate disciplinary proceedings under Article XV of the CUNY Bylaws.

C. Withdrawal of Students Without Emergency Interim Removal

1. Students Who Present a Direct Threat of Harm to Others or Substantially Disrupt the Learning or Working Environment of Others

a. Voluntary Withdrawal or Retention with Conditions

- (1) In situations where a student's behavior evidences a direct threat of harm to himself or others or substantially disrupts the learning or working environment of others and presents a significant risk to repeat behavior that substantially disrupts the learning or working environment of others and the Chief Student Affairs Officer reasonably believes that the student's behavior may be connected to a medical issue, the Chief Student Affairs Officer or designee may request that the student voluntarily withdraw or agree to retention under conditions.
- (2) If the student agrees to the request for voluntary withdrawal or to the specified conditions, the Chief Student Affairs officer or designee shall (i) discuss with the student the procedures for and consequences of voluntary withdrawal or the specified conditions, as applicable; (ii) discuss the circumstances with the student's parents or legal guardians as permissible by law and as appropriate; (iii) consult with the student's academic advisor or department, as appropriate; (iv) consult with the residence hall director, as appropriate; (v) refer the student to appropriate resources for treatment; and (vi) advise the student concerning the process for applying for re-entry, as well as on conditions for re-entry, if applicable and appropriate.

b. Involuntary Withdrawal

- (1) If the student does not agree to the request for voluntary withdrawal or to the specified conditions, the Chief Student Affairs Officer shall determine, in consultation with the University's Office of the General Counsel, whether to take further action against the student, including whether to initiate involuntary withdrawal proceedings or disciplinary proceedings under Article XV of the CUNY Bylaws.
- (2) Before initiating involuntary withdrawal proceedings under this procedure, the Chief Student Affairs Officer shall follow the assessment procedures outlined above in B.2.

2. Students Who Present a Direct Threat of Harm Solely To Themselves

- a. The College shall follow the assessment and other procedures outlined above in B.2 a.-d. in order to determine the appropriate course of action.

#### D. Involuntary Withdrawal Procedures

1. The following shall be the procedures for involuntary withdrawal:
  - a. Notice of the involuntary withdrawal hearing and the time and place of the hearing shall be personally delivered or sent by the Chief Student Affairs Officer or designee of the student's home college to the student at the address appearing on the records of the College, by overnight or certified mail, by regular mail, and, for students who have a college e-mail address, to that e-mail address. Notice of at least five business days shall be given to the student in advance of the hearing unless the student consents to an earlier hearing.
  - b. The notice shall contain (i) a statement of the reasons involuntary withdrawal is sought (ii) the type of withdrawal sought (from the University, the college and/or from the college residence hall); and (iii) a statement that the student has a right to present his or her side of the story, to present witnesses and evidence on his or her behalf, to cross-examine witnesses presenting evidence against the student, to remain silent without assumption of guilt, and to be represented by legal counsel or an advisor at the student's expense.
  - c. CUNY shall constitute a Health Review Panel, comprised of qualified, licensed mental health professionals employed by a college of CUNY or by CUNY, or on retainer to a college of CUNY or CUNY. CUNY's Vice Chancellor for Student Development shall appoint the members of the Health Review Panel. Members of the Health Review Panel, in committees constituted separately for each hearing ("Health Review Committee"), shall be responsible for adjudicating all involuntary withdrawal hearings held according to these procedures. For each involuntary withdrawal hearing, the Vice Chancellor for Student Development or his designee shall constitute a three-person Health Review Committee from the Health Review Panel to adjudicate at that hearing. No member of the Health Review Committee shall have had prior contact with the student. All decisions of the Health Review Committee shall be made by majority vote.
  - d. The hearing shall be closed, unless the student requests an open hearing. However, the Health Review Committee may overrule a request for an open hearing if it determines that an open hearing would be inappropriate or disruptive in light of the nature of the evidence to be presented.
  - e. After the evidence is presented at the hearing, the Health Review Committee shall determine whether the College has proved, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the student's behavior presents a direct threat of harm to him or herself or others, or has substantially disrupted the learning or working environment of others and presents a significant risk of threatening further substantial disruption of the learning or working environment of others, and if so, what the appropriate remedy should be. The Health Review Committee may also set reasonable and appropriate conditions on re-entry. The decision of the Health Review Committee shall be made within five business days from the close of the hearing.

#### E. Appeals

An appeal from the decision of the Health Review Committee may be made to the President of the student's home college or the President's designee within thirty calendar days after the delivery of the decision appealed from. The President or designee shall make his or her determination on the appeal within fifteen business days from receipt of the appeal. The President's decision may be appealed to the Chancellor of the University or his or her designee within thirty calendar days after the delivery of the President's decision on appeal. The Chancellor or designee's decision shall be made within fifteen business days from receipt of the appeal. The Chancellor (or designee's) decision shall be final. The bases overturning a decision of the Health Review Committee at both levels of review are limited to the following: (i) clearly erroneous factual findings; (ii) procedural irregularities; (iii) newly available evidence that would have affected the outcome; (iv) the remedy and/or conditions on re-entry were unreasonable or inappropriate.

#### F. Re-entry

1. A student who is withdrawn from the University, a student's home college and/or a college residence hall under this policy may be considered for re-entry.
2. A student wishing to be considered for re-entry should contact his or her home college's Chief Student Affairs Officer and provide appropriate documentation of behavioral change and resolution of the initial behavioral problem, including compliance with any conditions that may have been set for re-entry.
3. A student may apply for re-entry to the University, a college and/or a college residence hall no more than one time per term.
4. In assessing an application for re-entry, the Chief Student Affairs Officer or designee shall: (i) in cases in which he or she determines that an additional mental health assessment is necessary, refer the student for assessment to a qualified, licensed mental health professional, at the College's expense; (ii) receive, investigate, and examine appropriate relevant documentation, including assessments made by college-referred mental health professionals, and, if applicable, licensed treating mental health professionals; (iii) consult with the Health Review Committee, in cases in which the student's withdrawal was adjudicated by such a Committee; (iv) contact the student's parents or legal guardians as permissible by law, if appropriate; (v) provide an opportunity for the student to meet with the Chief Student Affairs Officer or designee to discuss re-entry.
5. If the Chief Student Affairs Officer or designee determines, based on the evidence presented, that there is not a significant risk that the behavior that required withdrawal will be repeated, he or she shall approve the student's application for re-entry. In such cases, the Chief Student Affairs Officer or designee shall initiate the re-entry

process, provide the student with written conditions for continued attendance, and inform any relevant administrators of the student's re-entry.

6. If the Chief Student Affairs Officer or designee determines that the application for re-entry should be denied, he or she shall provide the student with a written explanation of the reasons for the denial and specify when the next request for re-entry may be considered.
7. A student may appeal the Chief Student Affairs Officer or designee's denial of re-entry to the college President or designee within thirty calendar days after the delivery of the decision denying re-entry. The President or designee shall make his or her determination on the appeal within thirty calendar days from receipt of the appeal. The President's decision may be appealed to the Chancellor of the University or his or her designee within thirty calendar days after the delivery of the President's decision on appeal. The Chancellor or designee's decision shall be made within thirty calendar days from receipt of the appeal. The Chancellor (or designee's) decision shall be final. The basis for overturning a decision on appeal at either level shall be limited to a determination that the decision on re-entry was clearly erroneous.

#### G. Effect on Academic Status

In the event of a withdrawal pursuant to this policy, a notation of withdrawal shall appear on the student's transcript for all classes taken during that semester. The Chief Student Affairs Officer at a student's home college may grant a student request that, in lieu of withdrawal, a notation of incomplete shall appear on his or her transcript for classes taken during that semester if and only if there is a reasonable prospect that the student will eventually complete such classes, subject to faculty approval for each such class. Regardless of the notation that appears on a student's transcript, the Chief Student Affairs Officer of the student's home college shall inform the Vice Chancellor for Student Development of the student's withdrawal in order to effectuate a hold by the University Application Processing Center on the student's ability to transfer or otherwise seek admission to another college of CUNY.

#### H. Effect on Housing Status

If the student has been living in a college residence hall and will not be permitted to continue to do so, the student's contract will be canceled and fees refunded on a prorated basis.

#### I. Confidentiality

The results of examinations by mental health professionals to whom students are referred for assessment at any stage in the withdrawal or readmission process shall be confidential student records, except that if the results indicate that the student presents an imminent, severe, and direct threat of harm to him or herself or others, those results may be shared with the appropriate individuals in order to attempt to prevent the occurrence of such harm. The results of these examinations shall be admissible in involuntary



withdrawal hearings but shall not be admissible in disciplinary hearings, unless the student places his or her health, including mental health, at issue in a disciplinary hearing.

J. Board Review

During the fall 2009 semester, the Chancellery shall conduct a review of the experience of the colleges with these procedures and shall report the results of that review to the Board of Trustees, along with any recommended changes.