

**Guide for Taking a Leave of Absence
Duke Kunshan University
AY 2026-2027**

Leave of Absence

Students who wish to take time away from their studies temporarily for personal, medical, or military-service reasons, but intend to return to Duke Kunshan University are advised to take a Leave of Absence if possible. After finishing the first semester of the first year, students in good standing may request leave of absence for one or two semesters by completing a leave of absence request form and submitting it to the Leave of Absence and Return team prior to the first day of classes of the term in which the leave is granted.

- **A personal leave of absence** starts after one semester ends and before another semester begins. Students requesting a personal leave of absence must be in good academic standing. A personal leave of absence is not granted for a term in which classes have begun, except in extreme cases such as family death or recent diagnosis of terminal illness.
- **A medical leave of absence** with proper documentation may be granted at any time but with one restriction. Students requesting a medical leave of absence during a current session must file the completed leave of absence forms and all supporting documentation with the Leave of Absence and Return team prior to the end of the last day of classes of that session.
- **Students called to a military service** can request a leave of absence as early as the first term in the freshmen year. If the leave of absence starts from the first term in their freshmen year, students should first complete all the new student registration procedures before applying for a leave of absence.

Return is contingent upon approval of a Return from Leave of Absence application. The University reserves the right to request appropriate documentation, determined on a case-by-case basis, to confirm that the student is qualified and/or ready for return.

A student may receive transfer credit for no more than **two courses (a maximum of 8 credits)** taken at another accredited four-year institution in the US or similarly accredited institution abroad and with a liberal arts and general education curriculum while on leave of absence for personal or medical reasons.

This guide is crafted in accordance with the Leave of Absence policy on page 61 in the [UG Bulletin](#) to help students go through the application process smoothly in a step-by-step manner.

Time Limit for Completing Undergraduate Degree

Undergraduates at Duke Kunshan University are expected to complete the bachelor's degree in eight terms of enrollment. While some students may require additional time due to legitimate academic or personal circumstances, **the maximum length should not exceed six years, including the time taken for leave of absence or on suspension**. Students who fail to complete their degree requirements within this six-year timeframe will be administratively withdrawn from the program. For students who are taking a leave of absence due to military service or the pursuit of entrepreneurial projects, the maximum length could be further extended by two years.

VISA/Residence Permit Reminder for International Students

For international students, please note that during your Leave of Absence, you should not remain in China under a residence permit sponsored by Duke Kunshan University. If you plan to stay in China during your leave, you will need to ensure that you have the appropriate immigration status independent of DKU.

Application

1. Consult with your family or guardian and get their approval and support;
2. Download the Leave of Absence application form at <https://newstatic.dukekunshan.edu.cn/registrar/2026/08/Leave-of-Absence-application.pdf>, fill in the basic student info, and ask your academic advisor to sign the application form. Discuss your plan for a leave of absence with your academic advisor, including but not limited to reviewing an updated four-year plan with your advisor to **determine how a personal or medical leave of absence may affect your progress toward graduation (very important)**;
 - You should NOT assume that you will be allowed to overload in a later session to make up credits. A Leave of Absence might result in a delayed graduation date.
 - If you take a leave of absence for medical reasons that begins during the last 2 weeks of a session, you may consult your course instructors and your academic advisor on whether to take a “W” or an “I” grade for each course. (See “Medical Withdrawal from a Course” on page 45, and “Incomplete Coursework and Excused Absence from Final Exams” on page 52 in Part 6 of the [UG Bulletin](#)). Note that if you choose to take an “I” grade, you must resolve the incomplete by the specified deadline. The “I” may not be converted to a “W”. You should only take the “I” grade option if you are up-to-date with the coursework and are certain you can complete the course by the specified deadline. If the “I” is not completed by the deadline, it will convert to an “F”.
3. If you have a Signature Work mentor, please determine the effect a leave of absence would have on your signature work by checking with the your Signature Work mentor and ask him/her to sign the application form;
4. Determine the effect a leave of absence would have on financial aid by checking with the Financial Aid Office and asking them to sign the application form;
 - If you are a Chinese student, contact china-finaid@dukekunshan.edu.cn.
 - If you are an international student, contact international-finaid@dukekunshan.edu.cn.
5. Consult with Student Experience;
 - Meet with Residence Life residencelife@dukekunshan.edu.cn regarding moving and checkout.
 - If you are an international student, work with International Student Services DKU-ISS@dukekunshan.edu.cn about your visa and Chinese residence permit. For international students, please note that during your Leave of Absence, you should not remain in China under a residence permit sponsored by Duke Kunshan University. If you plan to stay in China during your leave, you will need to ensure that you have the appropriate immigration status independent of DKU.
 - If you have any student conduct issues, please make sure that you work with the Office of Student Conduct studentconduct@dukekunshan.edu.cn to ensure proper resolution.

6. In a Word document, prepare a statement of your reasons for requesting a leave of absence at this time and explain how you plan to utilize the time, and submit it along with the application form.
7. Please make sure that you have returned the assets (such as books, IT equipment, musical instrument, etc.) that you borrowed from the university to the corresponding asset coordinator/custodian.
8. If you are requesting a medical leave: for physical health reasons, you must provide a diagnosis from Duke Kunshan University Campus Health Services or from a Level II hospital or above; for mental health reasons, you must provide a recommendation form from CAPS, or provide a recommendation form from a licensed mental health provider.

- *For physical health reasons:*

- If the student has received treatment at the DKU Campus Clinic, the attending physician should complete and sign the [DKU MLOA Outgoing Recommendation From.pdf](#) for the student to submit, along with his/her LOA application form, to leave_of_absence_and_return@dukekunshan.edu.cn.
- If the student has been seen by an external physician at a Level II hospital or above, the student should ask for diagnosis and relevant medical records or assist the attending doctor to fill in [DKU MLOA health care providers recommendation form external provider.pdf](#) for submission to DKU via campushealth@dukekunshan.edu.cn, and copy leave_of_absence_and_return@dukekunshan.edu.cn; and give DKU Campus Clinic and the reinstatement committee the permission to review the materials.

- *For mental health reasons:*

- If the student has received treatment at DKU CAPS, the attending therapist will should complete and sign the [DKU MLOA Outgoing Recommendation Form.pdf](#) for the student to submit, along with his/her LOA application form, to leave_of_absence_and_return@dukekunshan.edu.cn.
- If the student has been seen by an external mental health provider, the student should ask for diagnosis and relevant medical records or assist the attending therapist to fill in [DKU MLOA health care providers recommendation form external provider.pdf](#) for submission to DKU via caws@dukekunshan.edu.cn, and copy leave_of_absence_and_return@dukekunshan.edu.cn; and give DKU CAWS and LOA and Return team the permission to review the materials.

**Please note that you will be asked to provide additional medical documentation for application of re-admissions.*

9. Sign and submit the application form along with the statement of LOA reasons, and medical form and supporting documentation, if any, in person at Administration

Building 1103 Office or electronically via leave_of_absence_and_return@dukekunshan.edu.cn, and meet with the Registrar and Dean of Academic Services or her designee Rebecca Liu (xueshuang.liu@dukekunshan.edu.cn), Assistant Director of UG Academic Affairs, who will complete the date of return eligibility, consulting with the Dean of Undergraduate Academic Services and/or the Dean of Student Experience, as appropriate on a case-by-case basis;

10. Upon review and approval of the application, UG Program will issue the official LOA confirmation letter to the student and copy relevant offices to process the student's information and status in the systems accordingly. If you have any questions or encounter any problems during the process, please feel free to email leave_of_absence_and_return@dukekunshan.edu.cn.

Refund

When students take a leave of absence, withdraw from the University, or are withdrawn by the University, an adjustment to tuition may occur, depending on the date and the reason for the withdrawal or leave of absence.

If the tuition adjustment results in a credit balance, the student or parent may elect to have the balance refunded or carried forward for future terms.

The University Tuition Withdrawal Adjustment policy is compliant with Jiangsu Education Department's regulations. The tuition withdrawal adjustment is calculated on a semester basis as the tuition charging and will be processed with all the other refundable charges. The tuition withdrawal adjustments of students who take a leave of absence, withdraw or are withdrawn from the University shall follow the following guidelines:

Withdraw Date	Refund % **
Before the class begins	100%
Weeks 1-2*	80%
Weeks 3-5	60%
Weeks 6-12	50%
After Week 12	0%

*From the class begin date and calculated in the Student Information System.

** The refund percentage here refers to the percentage that will be refunded out of the net tuition of the semester students shall withdraw.

- a. For students who cannot pass the physical examination within three months after the program begins, the University will refund full tuition to students.
- b. For students who voluntarily withdraw or take a leave of absence from the University, the University will refund according to the above schedule.
- c. For students who are suspended or dismissed from the University due to violation of University policies and regulations, no refund will be granted to students.
- d. For students who take a leave of absence from the University due to a medical condition, the University will refund according to the above schedule.
- e. The University will not charge the students during the suspension or leave period. Students need to pay for the tuition of the term when they return to the University.
- f. Students who voluntarily withdraw or take a leave of absence from the University will received a pro-rated refund of their housing fee, calculated based on the nightly rates.
- g. In the event of death, a full tuition refund is granted.