

THE MENSTRUAL LEAVE POLICY, 2023

MENSTRUAL LEAVE POLICY GROUP NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad

(A student-led initiative)

to provide menstrual leave for menstruating students and certain facilities to menstruating individuals at the university and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

1. Short title, extent and commencement:

1. This Policy may be called the Menstrual Leave Policy, 2023.
2. It shall come into force on such date, as the University Administration and Student Bar Council may, by notification through the official website of NALSAR.
3. It applies to every student identifying as a menstruating individual, enrolled in the courses of LLB, LLM, IPM and MBA.

2. Statement of Purpose:

Menstrual cramps and dysmenorrhea, which include lower abdominal pain, constipation, and diarrhea affect almost 50% of the campus population, according to the student body surveys conducted by the Menstrual Leave Policy Group (“MLPG”).

Period pain is said to be, in common parlance, "as bad as having a heart attack". Students have also reported to have been experiencing active symptoms of menstrual disorders like the Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (“PCOS”) or Polycystic Ovarian Disease (“PCOD”), which requires awareness, promoting a healthy lifestyle, and special accommodation in education. Menstruating students, professors, and workers are recognized as equal stakeholders in the functioning of NALSAR. Yet, it remains a taboo in India, including in the educational spaces. Menstruating individuals are expected to carry on their daily tasks without any amenities or accommodation for their reproductive health.

NALSAR University of Law, which is recognized as one of the first law universities to have gender neutral washrooms, gender neutral residence spaces, accessibility labs and infrastructure for Persons with Disabilities (“PWD”), a menstrual leave policy amounts to another step forward in this direction.

MLPG was formed with the purpose of primarily framing a menstrual leave policy for NALSAR University of Law, but also creating an aware and educated environment regarding menstruation. The MLPG is, thus, trying to promote period friendly spaces within the University. The MLPG also aims to ensure availability of targeted medical facilities for menstruation and sanitary napkin dispensers to be used by faculty, students, and staff members. The policy is targeted towards all menstruating individuals by creating a system resembling medical leaves which would allow the menstruators to cater to their reproductive health without jeopardizing their access to their education.

3. **Definitions:**

In this Policy, unless the context otherwise requires, —

1. **Administration:** The Administration refers to the Vice Chancellor, Registrar, University Academic Committee, University Exam Committee and any other relevant body.
2. **Attendance Requirements:** Attendance Requirements refer to the criteria laid down for attendance under the Academic Regulations of the University for various courses.
3. **Beneficiary:** All the menstruating individuals, from the five-year LLB course, one-year LLM programme, two-year MBA programme and five-year IPM programme who are the residents of the Girls Hostel and existing or future gender neutral spaces are thereby entitled to claim the benefits outlined in this Policy.
4. **Drafting Committee:** The drafting committee refers to the Menstrual Policy Group as constituted by the NALSAR Student Bar Council whose tenure shall end once the Policy is notified by the Administration. The Menstrual Policy Group can be reconstituted by the Student Bar Council to amend or modify the Policy when deemed necessary.

5. **Menstrual Leave:** Menstrual Leave refers to the exemption that the beneficiaries of the Policy can avail of with only requiring a self-certification.
6. **Menstrual Leave Committee:** The Menstrual Leave Committee refers to the body that shall be constituted from within the NALSAR Student Bar Council to address and aid in addressing any issues in the implementation of, or arising from the policy, after the expiry of the Drafting Committee's tenure.
7. **Student Bar Council:** The Student Bar Council refers to the elected representatives of the student body as defined in the SBC Constitution.

4. **Menstrual Leave:**

Every beneficiary of this Policy can claim Menstrual Leave, that is, one day in every month, in an academic semester in the University.

Provided that for the even and odd semester, the maximum number of leave days that may be availed are four and five days respectively.

Provided that for every trimester, the maximum number of leave days that may be availed is 3 days.

Provided that in no case will the total attendance requirement be less than 67%, inclusive of any medical leave that may be claimed by the beneficiary in the same academic semester.

Provided that there is no requirement of medical proof, or any other proof whatsoever, apart from self-certification, to claim the Menstrual Leave.

5. **Procedure to Claim Menstrual Leave:**

The Menstrual leave provided to all the beneficiary can hereby be claimed directly through the exam office. The leave shall be claimed in the following manner:

1. A new menstrual leave slip will be issued to the student body and a copy of it will be kept in the exam office at all times along with the medical leave pink slip.
2. This slip can be directly filed by the beneficiary with the specific day they are claiming the leave under this policy.
3. The menstrual leave slip will have to be physically filled and submitted to the exam office as and when the leave is claimed within a period of 7 working days from the date of leave.

6. Constitution of the Menstrual Leave Committee:

The Student Bar Council shall aid in and take measures to constitute the Menstrual Leave Committee, which is to consist of members to be selected or nominated in the following manner:

1. One member to be nominated from the five-year LLB course, one-year LLM programme, two-year MBA programme and five-year IPM programme each. These applicants shall be requested to send in an anonymized Statement of Purpose, which is to be evaluated by an external evaluator as facilitated by the Student Bar Council.
2. The General Secretary (Female) is to be an ex-officio member.
3. One member to be nominated from the Student Bar Council's Academic Committee, Social Responsibility and Student Welfare Committee and Hostel and Campus Welfare Committee.

Provided that the Convenor of all the aforementioned Student Bar Council Committees shall have the discretion to nominate the representative to the Menstrual Leave Committee.

Provided that the term of the Committee shall be one academic year.

7. Objectives of the Menstrual Leave Committee:

It is decided that the committee constituted, The Menstrual Leave Committee, would meet the following objectives:

1. To take note of conflicts including those related to attendance, procurement and submission of menstrual leave forms, identifying beneficiaries, preventing misuse, etc.
2. To make recommendations to the SBC and the University for amending any rules or policies to make it more conducive to menstruating individuals.
3. To carry out sensitization programs on menstrual health and hygiene for students, administration, faculty, staff, and all other relevant stakeholders.
4. To carry out all activities that promote reproductive health and hygiene for menstruating individuals in the University.
5. To ensure the availability of medical supplies including sanitary pads and napkins, antispasmodic medicine for period cramp relief including Meftal Spas, Drotin, Mobizox, and any other relevant medicines, hot water bags, pain relief gels and ointments at the University Health Centre and the Medical Kits for menstruating students, faculty, staff members, and workers on campus.
6. To make available functional pad dispensers and incinerators in the washroom facilities in the Academic Block, Administrative Block, Girls Hostels, Library, and the Gender Neutral Washroom.
7. To ensure weekly Obstetrician and Gynecologist visits for consultation in the University Health Center.
8. To promote holistic wellness for menstruating individuals.
9. To carry out all other activities for proper implementation of this Policy.

8. Amendments:

In case of further modification or amendments thereto, steps shall be taken to form a Menstrual Policy Group, which shall give effect to such modifications in consensus with the University Administration.

