

# Leave of Absence Procedures

## 1. Governing policy

These procedures relate to the *Terms and Conditions of Enrolment*. They describe how staff will enact the terms and conditions in respect to the steps taken for students to apply for a leave of absence from their studies at the Institution. A leave of absence is a temporary break in studies, where a student's studies are put on hold until he/she returns to complete their studies. A leave of absence will not normally exceed 12 months.

## 2. Scope

These procedures apply to students seeking approval to take a leave of absence from their studies, subject to the conditions in these procedures, and staff involved in approving the requests. These procedures do not apply to prospective students seeking to defer the commencement of their course (refer to the Deferral Procedures). The Leave of Absence Procedures are aligned with applicable Australian Government legislation including the *National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training of Overseas Students 2018* (National Code), Standard 9.

## 3. Procedures

3.1. These procedures set out the five key processes involved in assessing a student's request to take a leave of absence from the Institution as per Table 1 below:

### 1. Submit request

Once a student has commenced their studies (on or after the course commencement date) at the Institution, they must seek approval for any leave of absence. The approved period of leave will not normally exceed a total of 12 months.

### 2. Leave of absence request assessment and outcome

The leave of absence request is assessed as per the guidelines explained in these procedures. Requests for a leave of absence from an international student can

only be approved for compassionate or compelling circumstances as per National Code, Standard 9, with supporting documentary evidence.

### *3. Appealing the outcome*

Students have the right to lodge a complaint about decision that resulted in their request for a leave of absence being refused.

### *4. Recording/reporting*

Leave of absence requests are recorded accordingly and reported on PRISMS (international students).

### *5. Recommencing studies*

The Institution confirms with students they are recommencing in the given study period, and allows the student to pre-enrol. Students recommencing after a period of leave of absence will be subject to the course requirements in operation at the time of resumption. Students who were not enrolled in subjects after Census Date have their enrolment cancelled and international students are reported to Department of Home Affairs (DHA).

**Table 1**

Process	Responsibilities	Timeframe
Step 1 Submit request		

<p>1.1 Students requesting a short break in their studies, less than two weeks in duration, where the break will not impact their studies are required to discuss their intentions with their lecturer and may not be required to submit a leave of absence application.</p> <p>1.2 Students considering taking a leave of absence longer than two weeks should first discuss their intentions with Student Services, before submitting a leave of absence application.</p> <p>1.3 Student completes the <a href="#">online form</a> by Census Date in each study period, together with supporting documentary evidence. Financial penalties may apply, refer to the <i>Refund of Fees Policy - Domestic Student</i> and <i>Refund of Fees Policy - International Student</i>. Applications may be accepted after Census Date on a case by case basis, at the discretion of the Institution.</p> <p>1.4 International students are only permitted to apply for a leave of absence with supporting evidence of compassionate or compelling circumstances including (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. serious illness or injury affecting a student's ability to study;</li> <li>b. witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime;</li> <li>c. bereavement of close family members, such as parents or grandparents;</li> <li>d. major political upheaval or natural disaster in a student's home country; or</li> <li>e. traumatic upheaval.</li> </ul> <p>1.5 The supporting documentary evidence may include (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. medical certificate/letter;</li> <li>b. death certificate;</li> <li>c. police report; and/or</li> <li>d. Other supporting documentation, including return air tickets to home country, as applicable.</li> </ul> <p>1.6 Supporting documentary evidence if not issued in English must be translated by an official translator. Translators in Australia must be certified by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI).</p>	Student	Form submitted by Census Date in each study period
Step 2 Leave of absence request assessment and outcome		

<p>2.1 The Student Centre Manager (or delegate) assesses and makes a decision on the request for a leave of absence based on the conditions of these procedures and approves or rejects the application.</p> <p>2.2 Applications will be rejected where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The Institution determines there are no compassionate or compelling circumstances to support the application (international students);</li> <li>b. Insufficient evidence has been submitted; or</li> <li>c. The leave of absence request is for more than 12 months, in which case a student must withdraw from studies and reapply for admission.</li> </ul> <p>2.3 The Institution retains the right to approve or reject a request on a case by case basis.</p> <p>2.4 A student is notified via email of the outcome within 10 working days of submission.</p> <p>2.5 If the leave of absence request is <b>approved</b>, the notification will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Approved period of leave;</li> <li>b. Advice to contact the DHA to determine how the leave of absence may affect their student visa (international students);</li> </ul> <p>2.6 If the leave of absence request is <b>rejected</b>, the notification will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Reasons for rejection;</li> <li>b. Their right to lodge a complaint about the decision within 20 working days as per the <i>Complaints and Appeals Policy</i> and <i>Complaints and Appeals Procedures</i>.</li> </ul>	Student Centre Manager	10 working days
<b>Step 3 Appealing the outcome</b>		
<p>3.1 The student submits a complaint about the decision as per the <i>Complaints and Appeals Procedures</i>.</p> <p>3.2 Student Services is notified of the outcome of the review of the decision.</p> <p>3.3 If the refusal decision is upheld, no further action is required from Student Services.</p> <p>3.4 If the outcome is to grant the leave of absence request, Student Services <b>proceeds to Step 2.3</b> to notify the student of the approval.</p>		
<b>Step 4 Recording/reporting</b>		
<p>4.1 The leave of absence outcome is recorded on the student management system and related program.</p> <p>4.2 An international student's COE is reported on PRISMS within 31 days of the leave of absence (suspension) date and a new COE is issued for the intended return to study date, and sent to the student.</p> <p>4.3 The leave of absence documentation is saved in the student management system.</p>	Student Services	
<b>Step 5 Recommencing studies</b>		

<p>5.1 In Week 8 (approximately) of each study period, Student Services sends an email to all students who are on an approved leave of absence and are due to return in the following study period advising them that their enrolment will be reactivated in the following study period. Should they wish to apply to extend their leave of absence, they are required to submit a new leave of absence request.</p> <p>5.2 Upon confirmation from the student of recommencing their studies, Student Services updates the enrolment status to allow the student to pre-enrol in the subsequent study period, once pre-enrolment is open.</p> <p>5.3 After Census Date of the subsequent study period, Student Services checks the list of recommencing students, against the student management system to determine which students did not enrol in subjects.</p> <p>5.4 Individual student enrolment records in the student management system are updated to reflect the student's abandonment of studies, and their enrolment at the Institution is cancelled.</p> <p>5.5 Using the list of students who did not return to their studies, the Institution is obliged to report each international student to DHA via PRISMS.</p> <p>5.6 The report via PRISMS must be completed <b>within:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>14 days</b> after Census Date (termination of studies date) for students <b>under 18 years</b> of age; or</li> <li>b. <b>31 days</b> after Census Date (termination of studies date) for students <b>above 18 years</b> of age.</li> </ul> <p>5.7 The COE for each student must be reported on by performing a Student Course Variation (SCV), and selecting the reporting option <b>termination of studies prior to completing the course</b> and reason type <b>student notified cessation of studies</b> which cancels the COE.</p> <p>5.8 Students are notified via email of the cancellation of their COE and being reported to DHA for cessation of studies.</p>	Student/Student Services	Week 8 After Census Date
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#### 4. Roles and responsibilities

The Registrar is responsible for overseeing the leave of absence procedures and the required legislative reporting requirements.

#### 5. Compliance and monitoring

These procedures are written in accordance with Standard 9 of the *National Code* and *HESF*.

#### 6. Records management

As detailed in Table 1 above, release requests are recorded in the Institution's database and the required reporting is performed in PRISMS and records of the leave of absence request are filed and saved for two years.

#### 7. Related documents

*Terms and Conditions of Enrolment*

**Approved by EMG 9 June 2023.**