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## 1. Introduction

These guidelines relate to undergraduate and postgraduate students studying in the UK or at one of the University's UK partner institutions. Please see separate section regarding students studying overseas (Transnational Education - TNE) and Research students.

### Key points

- A Leave of Absence is normally taken for multiples of whole Semesters
- Where students want to take Leave of Absence mid-Semester, they cannot return until the start of a Semester.
- Leave of Absence requests cannot be made to cover resit periods only.
- Retrospective Leave of Absence is not permitted.
- Students are liable for any fees due dependant on the date that they officially apply for Leave of Absence, in accordance with the [University's fee liability policy](#)
- Taking Leave of Absence may have financial implications and it is the responsibility of the student to be aware of these before applying for a Leave of Absence. Upon approval of the Leave of Absence and where a student has applied for funding from the Student Loans Company (SLC), the SLC will be notified.
- Requests for Leave of Absence need to be formally submitted and approved.
- Short term requests (i.e. requests for less than one semester) will not normally be approved. Students requiring less than one semester should apply for "Extenuating Circumstances and Extensions"
- A Leave of Absence for assessment/examination periods alone will not be granted. In such cases students should refer to the guidance for "Extenuating Circumstances and Extensions".
- Students who take any form of leave due to Statutory Childcare can take this Leave in addition to the 2 years permitted for other reasons.

[University guidelines on Extenuating Circumstances](#)

[University guidelines on Extensions](#)

## 2. Definition

### What is a Leave of Absence?

'A Leave of Absence" (LOA) is defined as a period of time when a student declares that they are not undertaking any study activities; it is effectively a "Temporary Withdrawal from Studies".

Students are not entitled to attend University premises and are effectively taking a complete break from their studies, with the intention of resuming at a future date'

### Reference to regulations:-

References to Leave of Absence can be found in [Section C](#) and [Section D](#) of the Academic Regulations:

C.2.6 A student whose Leave of Absence has been approved for the whole or part of the year will remain registered for their course but will not be enrolled with the University for the purposes of study.

C.4.8 Students may apply to take leave of absence from their course for up to a total of four semesters, or two academic years. In this event, the maximum registration period will be extended for the same period. Periods of leave undertaken due to statutory childcare (including maternity leave, paternity leave, shared parental leave and adoptive leave) will not be counted towards the maximum total of four semesters, or two academic years, although the maximum registration period will be extended. Students may be required to fulfil specified conditions before resumption of their studies. The University cannot guarantee continuation on the same course and/or modules

D.5.1 Where a student takes a leave of absence during a University academic year before completing a module, any summative assessment submitted will be carried forward and will contribute to the students assessment result for that module when the student returns from leave of absence, provided the same assessment requirements remain.

D.5.2 Where a student takes a leave of absence and has not passed any summative assessment, the student will be required to recommence the module without penalty.

D.5.3 If a student takes a leave of absence because of extenuating circumstances when they return to study they will deem themselves fit to study and the circumstances which affected their ability to study previously will not be considered a valid cause of poor performance again. The University will, however, exceptionally consider sudden or unexpected worsening of a disability and / or medical condition for a student registered with the University's Student Enabling Centre and where medical evidence is provided to confirm the condition.

## Related guidelines

[University guidelines on Extenuating Circumstances](#)

[University guidelines on Extensions](#)

### 3. Implications

#### a) Financial

- Taking a Leave of Absence does not exempt students from tuition fee liability unless approved prior to the start of an academic year.
- Taking a Leave of Absence may have other financial implications for support from the Student Loans Company and welfare agencies, who are likely to re-assess eligibility for assistance.
- Students are strongly advised to speak to the Students' Union Advice and Support Centre about the impact of benefit entitlement.
- The Council Tax exemption granted by the Local Authority does not apply to students on a LOA

Students are liable for a proportion of the year's tuition fee depending on the point at which they take a Leave of Absence

For a full-time undergraduate student, this means that tuition fees are due as follows:

- Attendance in Term 1 = 25% of the tuition fee is due
- Attendance in Term 2 = 50% of the tuition fee is due
- Attendance in Term 3 = 100% of the tuition fee is due

Examples:-

1. A full time undergraduate student who takes LOA from their course on the second day of an academic year is liable for 25% of the tuition fee.  
If they return from LOA at the start of the following academic year to and are in attendance for the whole year then the full tuition fee for that year is due.
2. A full time undergraduate student who takes LOA from their course on the second day of an academic year is liable for 25% of the tuition fee.  
If the student returns from LOA in semester 2 of the same academic year, the remaining 75% of the tuition fee for the year is due as they have also been in attendance during terms 2 and 3.

3. A student who takes LOA from their course on the second day of an academic year is liable for 25% of the tuition fee.  
If they return from a LOA in Term 3 of the same academic year they will be liable for an additional 50% of the tuition fee, making 75% in total.

For part time students fee liability is dependent on the number of modules registered in any period.

NB: Where no modules have been registered, fees liability will be based on the minimum number of credits a part-time student may register as set out in section C2.3 of the academic regulations, this will be 20 credits.

Please see this [link](#) for further details on fee liability.

If students have any concerns or queries regarding their fee liability, they should log an e:Vision helpdesk call or visit your local Student Centre.

The Students' Union Advice and Support Centre also offers independent help and advice around taking LOA – visit [www.wolvesunion.org/adviceandsupport](http://www.wolvesunion.org/adviceandsupport) for ways in which you can contact the service.

### **b) Academic (including impact on Registration periods)**

- A Leave of Absence enables a student to take a substantial break (up to 4 semesters, excluding parental leave) from their studies if they are not in a position to study.
- It 'stops the clock' on a student's registration period and does not count towards a student's maximum registration period.

A student who takes a Leave of Absence will have 'LA' (from 2013/4 onwards) or 'WD' recorded against any registered modules for that period affected. When the student returns to study those modules will be re-registered against a student's record.

If a student takes a Leave of Absence during a University academic year before completing their module, any summative assessment submitted will be carried forward and will contribute to their assessment result for that module when they return from leave of absence, provided the same assessment requirements remain.

### **c) International Students**

- International students studying in the UK may be asked to return to their home country whilst they are on Leave of Absence.
- International students on a Tier 4 student visa who take a Leave of Absence **must** return to their home country and will have their change in circumstances reported to the Home Office. They will have to apply for a new visa before returning to the UK.

International students should be advised to seek guidance from the International Student Support team in MX Student Centre and/or the Students' Union in MD Building before applying for a Leave of Absence as this will affect their immigration status.

For students holding a Tier 4 student visa, the University is obliged to report to the UKVI any change to their circumstances, including any break in studies, as part of its sponsorship duties. Students must return home whilst on a Leave of Absence and provide the Visa & Immigration Support Officer with evidence of their flight details and their home address. The UKVI will curtail (cancel) the Tier 4 visa so students will need to apply for a new one in order to return to the UK to resume their studies.

The fee liability also differs to Home Students as they pay a non-refundable deposit so their liability points are at the start of the first term and third term (remainder of fee). It is advised that students seek guidance on this from the International Student Support team in MX Student Centre.

#### **d) Students studying overseas (Transnational/TNE Students)**

The Leave of Absence procedure for transnational students follows the same general principles as those students studying in the UK.

Students cannot apply for retrospective Leave of Absence and cannot return until the start of the next entry point. In the calculation of maximum Leave of Absence periods, any part months will be counted as whole months.

#### **e) Research Students**

##### **PhD students**

PhD students have multiple entry points and do not study standard modules.

Research regulations state the following

##### **9. Leave of absence**

9.1 A Research Student may apply for a leave of absence, where they declare that they are unfit to conduct their research for a period of time.

9.2 No single period of Leave of Absence will be granted for a period in excess of 12 months. The total period of Leave of Absence allowable is 24 months. Students cannot take concurrent periods of Leave of Absence for longer than 12 months and must re-engage with their research studies for a minimum of 3 months after taking the

maximum 12 months allowable. Any request for leave of absence shall be referred to the Dean of Research or nominee and reported to the University Research Awards Subcommittee and, as appropriate, the Professional Doctorate

### **Progression and Award Board.**

9.3 Periods of leave undertaken due to statutory childcare (including maternity leave, paternity leave, shared parental leave and adoptive leave) will not be counted towards the maximum total period of 24 months, although the maximum registration period will be amended accordingly.

9.4 Whilst on a leave of absence, a Student will not be entitled to use University facilities, nor have access to their Supervisor in respect of their research work, but will be encouraged to keep in touch with their Supervisor for pastoral support

9.5 A leave of absence will be granted in month-long blocks, and the added to the registration period.

9.6 Leave of absence will not be granted retrospectively.

9.7 Students on a Tier 4 visa taking Leave of absence will be required to return to their home country.

9.8 Students on Leave of absence are not entitled to any bursary payments whilst on Leave of Absence.

9.9 In very exceptional circumstances, a Director of Studies may ask for a student's maximum registration period to be extended in accordance with section 10.

### **Professional Doctorate Students**

As Professional Doctorate students study both taught modules and for a Thesis, then the rules around Leave of Absence for these students depend on what stage of the course that they are currently studying.

When a student is studying taught modules only then periods of Leave of Absence should fit into the start and end dates of a module. When a student is studying their Thesis only, then a Leave of Absence can be sought in month-long periods. If a student is studying both taught modules and towards their thesis, then the period of Leave of Absence is determined on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the course leader. It is not possible to be on Leave of Absence for part of a course.

## **f) Students courses recognised by a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body**

Students who are studying for a course that may be accredited or recognised by a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) should be aware that they may have additional requirements or responsibilities relating to their attendance. Students are advised to check their course materials or contact their Student Centre prior to submitting a Leave of Absence request.

The Students' Union Advice and Support Centre also offers independent help and advice around taking a Leave of Absence – visit [www.wolvesunion.org/adviceandsupport](http://www.wolvesunion.org/adviceandsupport) for ways in which you can contact the service.

## **g) Access to University facilities**

Students on a Leave of Absence have restricted access to University services and facilities. Students on a Leave of Absence are not entitled to attend any classroom activity, engage (other than pastorally) with academic staff or participate in any assessment whether it is formative or summative.

Students in Halls of Residence should contact Residential Services for advice on how this affects their occupancy of University accommodation.

## **4. Categories**

### **What is the minimum period that a Leave of Absence can be taken?**

For taught programmes, this is normally a Semester. For the thesis element of Doctorate courses, then this is a minimum of a month.

Please refer to the University's Extenuating Circumstances and Extensions guidance for details on short term absences.

[University guidelines on Extenuating Circumstances](#)

[University guidelines on Extensions](#)



## What is the maximum period that a Leave of Absence can be taken?

This is 2 years or 4 semesters for taught programmes. (However a student may only apply initially for a maximum of one academic year's leave of absence. If after one year a student is unable to return to study then they may apply to extend their leave of absence by a maximum of one further academic year). However please note that claims for absence related to parental leave are counted in addition to this 2 year period.

## 5. How to apply

### When does a student apply to go on Leave of Absence?

A student must apply to go on Leave of Absence at the start of or prior to their period of absence. Failure to do this prior to the start of an academic year may lead to the student being liable for Tuition Fees.

### How does a student apply to go on Leave of Absence?

A student can only apply for Leave of Absence via their e: Vision account. If they cannot access their e: Vision account for any reason then they need to contact their Student Centre in writing. A student is only deemed to be on Leave of Absence when this has been confirmed by the relevant Student Centre.

### Does a Leave of Absence need to be approved by the University?

Yes.

### Are there any circumstances when a Leave of Absence would not be allowed?

Leave of Absences will **not** be approved in the following cases:

Where the request is to cover the resit period only

Where the student can come back mid-Semester

Where the period requested exceeds 2 years or 4 semesters

Where a course is being discontinued

Where a request for a short term leave of absence would be better served through the University's Extenuating Circumstances and Extensions process

Where the request specifically covers an assessment period. Students should be referred instead, to the University's Extenuating Circumstances and Extensions process.

## **Are there any circumstances when a student must take a Leave of Absence?**

If a student has an outstanding debt to the University that they cannot clear before the enrolment deadline date, then they must take a Leave of Absence.

Whilst on a Leave of Absence, any outstanding debt remains due and may be referred to a Debt Collection Agency. Any outstanding debt must be cleared in order for a student to re-enrol.

Students who are unable to study for a short period should consider applying for Extenuating Circumstances. Full details of the guidelines for this can be found at the following link:-

[University guidelines on Extenuating Circumstances](#)

Students may also consider transferring modes of study (e.g. from full time to part time) if this would help address their personal circumstances, but may need to seek advice on any financial implications this may have from the Student Financial Support Unit or Students Union Advice and Support Centre - visit [www.wolvesunion.org/adviceandsupport](http://www.wolvesunion.org/adviceandsupport).

Students may wish to liaise with the Student Enabling Centre or the University's Counselling Service to ensure that the University are aware of their circumstances and be able to provide any support, if necessary.

## **Do I need to provide evidence to support my request for Leave of Absence?**

Although the University reserves the right to ask for evidence to support a request for Leave of Absence, it would not normally do so. However when a request is made that would take the total period of Leave of Absence to over 2 years (because of the parental leave clause), then evidence will be sought confirming that the student is eligible for parental leave.

## **6. Retrospective Leave of Absence**

Claims for retrospective Leave of Absence (that is a Leave of Absence that starts before the claim date) will not be considered.

## **7. Returning from a Leave of Absence**

Students are expected to notify the University at the end of their leave of absence that they wish to return to their studies. Alternatively, at this time, they may request an extension to their Leave of Absence provided it does not extend the period beyond 2 academic years or four semesters.

International students are advised to contact the Visa & Immigration Support Officer for advice about their visa before returning to their studies.

Students returning from a period of Leave of Absence may wish to liaise with the Student Enabling Centre or the University's Counselling Service to ensure that the University is aware of any relevant circumstances for which they may be able to provide support.

## **8. Failure to return from a Leave of Absence**

If a student fails to return from a Leave of Absence and enrol within 14 calendar days of their expected date of return they will be considered to have withdrawn and will be de-registered from their course.

## **9. Further help and advice**

If a student requires any advice or information regarding a Leave of Absence then then they should contact their Student Centre or the Student's Union at [www.wolvesunion.org/adviceandsupport](http://www.wolvesunion.org/adviceandsupport)

International Students should also contact the International Student Support team (based in MX Building, City Campus).