

# LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE



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## 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This policy and procedure meets legislative requirements, quality assurance standards, establishes a process for students to apply for a leave of absence from study, and provides an effective process for managing applications.

## 2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy and procedure applies to all students who are undertaking formal award studies and are applying for a period of leave from their studies. It does not apply to students who are undertaking ELICOS or other non-award studies. It does not include students who are applying for Deferment of Commencement of Studies.

## 3 POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 The University recognises that students may require a leave of absence in certain circumstances. This policy and procedure sets out the circumstances in which continuing students may be eligible to apply for leave of absence (excludes ELICOS and other non-award studies). A leave of absence is an authorised break from study.
- 3.2 A student may notify the University of their intention to discontinue their enrolment for a maximum of 12 calendar months by requesting a leave of absence, indicating an intention to return to studies at the end of the approved leave period.

## 4 PROCEDURE

- 4.1 These procedures apply to all continuing students who are applying for leave of absence from all postgraduate and undergraduate programs of CQUniversity.

## Domestic higher education students

### Granting a leave of absence

- 4.2 The University may allow leave of absence for a student who:
- has been enrolled for at least one study period, and, has successfully completed/passed units in the course, and, are meeting course requirements in accordance with University policies and procedures, and
  - is enrolled in a course that allows approved leave of absence.

### Documentation required

Domestic students (including distance/online) requesting a leave of absence must make their request by following the instructions on the CQUniversity [website](#).

### Duration of leave of absence

- 4.3 A leave of absence can only be granted for a maximum of 12 months during the total duration of the student's course. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor completion of their degree within the maximum allowed timeframe.

### Absent without leave (AWOL)

- 4.4 If a student fails to enrol in two consecutive study periods in their course, the student will be placed on automated leave for a period of 12 months.
- 4.5 Written advice will be issued to all students placed on automated leave.
- 4.6 If a student fails to return to studies from automated leave they will be withdrawn from their course. Any student wishing to return after this time will need to apply for re-admission.

## International higher education students

### Granting a leave of absence

- 4.7 The University may allow a leave of absence for a student who:
- has been enrolled for at least one study period, and, has successfully completed/passed units in the course, and, is meeting course requirements in accordance with University policies and procedures, and
  - is able to demonstrate documented grounds as listed under 4.8 (no other grounds will be accepted).

### Documentation required

- 4.8 International students requesting a leave of absence must make the request on the [Leave Of Absence Request Form](#). Completed forms are to be submitted (where possible) in person to Student Services at the student's enrolment campus. Where it is not possible for the form to be submitted in person, international (including distance/online) students should email the form to [internationalsupport@cqu.edu.au](mailto:internationalsupport@cqu.edu.au). Original or certified copies of supporting documents must also be submitted. Documentation must provide details of the medical grounds or exceptional compassionate circumstances. For example:
- medical certificate or supporting documentation from a registered psychologist/medical practitioner (including their provider number)
  - death certificate
  - police or psychologist's report
  - copy of airline departure tickets/boarding passes, or
  - other documentation supporting compassionate or compelling circumstances.

Students may also be subject to an interview process with Student Experience staff on their nominated campus prior to a leave of absence being granted.

### **Duration of leave of absence**

- 4.9 A leave of absence can only be granted for one study period at a time and up to a maximum of 12 months during the total duration of the student's course. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure their course is completed within the timeframe specified on the Confirmation of Enrolment (COE).
- 4.10 International students who fail to return to studies at the commencement of the agreed study period will be withdrawn from their course, and a report made to the [Department of Home Affairs](#).

### **Application submission dates – all students**

- 4.11 An application for leave of absence for continuing domestic and international students must be made and/or submitted no later than census date of the applicable study period.
- 4.12 Applications received after census date in the applicable study period will not be considered. Students applying for leave after census date will need to submit an application for [Withdrawal Without Academic Penalty](#) and/or [Removal of Financial Liability](#) to Student Governance by emailing [sgc@cqu.edu.au](mailto:sgc@cqu.edu.au).
- 4.13 Any students who have a deferred or supplementary examination scheduled to be held during the period of approved leave of absence will not be eligible to have their deferred/supplementary examination postponed to a later date.

### **Notice to students**

- 4.14 All students are to be notified in writing of the outcome of their leave of absence request (or appeal).
- 4.15 Legislation requires that all international students applying for leave of absence are advised in writing that undertaking a period of leave may affect their student visa. Information concerning the period of leave will be reported to [Department of Home Affairs](#) who may make enquiries concerning the reasons for the period of leave and to determine that the student has left Australia. The University must advise students to check with the Embassy in their home country regarding the status of their student visa before attempting to return to Australia.

### **Appeals**

- 4.16 All students have the right to appeal in the case of an unfavourable decision, providing:
- the student can submit new or different grounds and additional documentation to that already provided and considered by the original decision-maker, or
  - the student is able to demonstrate that the University has not followed due process.
- 4.17 All international student appeal applications (including distance/online) are to be submitted to the Student Services Coordinator at the relevant campus, or email to [internationalsupport@cqu.edu.au](mailto:internationalsupport@cqu.edu.au). Domestic students (including distance/online) are to submit their appeal application to [studentsuccess@cqu.edu.au](mailto:studentsuccess@cqu.edu.au). The Director, Student Experience will assign a new decision-maker to consider the appeal application.
- 4.18 Applications for appeal must be submitted within 10 working days of the receipt of official notification from the University of the decision they wish to appeal and include all relevant supporting documentation.
- 4.19 The notification of the appeal outcome will include the reasons for the decision and advise the student of further external appeal mechanisms available to the student if the appeal was denied.

## **5 RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Compliance, monitoring and review**

- 5.1 The Director, Student Experience and Director, Governance have responsibility for the overall implementation of this policy and procedure.

### **Reporting**

- 5.2 Student Governance, Student Services and the International Compliance team are responsible for ongoing monitoring and audits.
- 5.3 All international students who have been approved for a leave of absence (including students with approved Withdrawal Without Academic Penalty) will be reported to the [Department of Home Affairs](#) via PRISMS.

## Records management

- 5.4 Student Governance and Student Services are responsible for ensuring all relevant documentation (applications and all incoming/outgoing correspondence) is maintained in a recognised University recordkeeping system.

## 6 DEFINITIONS

- 6.1 Terms not defined in this document may be in the University [glossary](#).

## 7 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

[Education Services for Overseas Students \(ESOS\) Act 2000](#)

[Higher Education Support Act 2003](#)

[National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#)

## 8 FEEDBACK

- 8.1 University staff and students may provide feedback about this document by emailing [policy@cqu.edu.au](mailto:policy@cqu.edu.au).

## 9 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
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Advisory Committee to Approval Authority	Learning and Teaching Committee
Administrator	Director, Student Experience
Next Review Date	27/09/2020

Approval and Amendment History	Details
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Notes	This document replaces the Leave of Absence – International Students Policy and Procedure.