

LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY: POSTGRADUATE

General Principles

1. Postgraduates may request to withdraw temporarily from the University – this is known as a ‘Leave of Absence’ (LoA).
2. Postgraduates must discuss their decision of taking an LoA with their relevant Programme Director before applying to Registry Services for an LoA from study for up to two semesters.
3. US students in receipt of Federal Loans must discuss their request for an LoA with the university’s Associate Dean: Financial Aid before applying to Registry Services for an LoA.
4. Postgraduate students can have a maximum of two semesters for an LoA. However, they may apply for an extension up to a maximum of three semesters if they only have their final dissertation/thesis to submit in order to fulfil their graduation requirements. Postgraduate students must write to Registry Services at least 4 weeks before their LoA is due to expire if they want an extension to their LoA.
5. An approved LoA provides postgraduate students with the right to return to the University and to register for a future semester or summer session without applying for readmission.
6. The University is obliged to report to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) about any student who is in the UK on a student visa but who is not attending classes, and this obligation also applies to students who are taking an approved LoA from their studies.
7. Students who are on a student visa and take an LoA will have their visa curtailed and should make plans to leave the UK. They will need to apply to the University for a new CAS, from outside the UK to make a new student visa application, before they can return to study. Students should contact the UKVI Compliance team to obtain a CAS about three months before they plan to return.
8. Students in receipt of US financial aid considering an absence of more than six months (ie one semester) should seek advice from the Assistant Dean for Financial Aid and Scholarships before making an application for LoA.
9. Students registered for and attending classes are not permitted to apply for an LoA retrospectively; the LoA must be applied for and approved by the Academic Registrar in advance of the semester in which it is to be taken.
10. On returning from a leave of absence, students continue under the same degree requirements that were in force when they began their leave. Those granted a LoA for medical reasons may be required to provide confirmation from their health-care provider that they are medically fit to resume their studies.

11. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the University when their LoA is due to expire to confirm their return before the semester starts. Postgraduate students must contact their Programme Director who will provide the student with academic advice and will inform Registry Services of the student's return.
12. Students failing to return to the University following an authorized LoA will be unofficially withdrawn from the University and must apply for re-admission, should they wish to return to studies. On re-admission they are governed by the degree requirements in effect at the time of re-admission.
13. Students who have left the University without being granted an LoA and who later wish to return to the University to complete requirements must apply for readmission.

VERSION MANAGEMENT

Responsible Department: Registry Services			
Approving body: Academic Board			
Version no.	Key Changes	Date of approval	Date of effect
001		23 July 2021	27 August 2021
002	Added US Federal Loans information.	August 2022	01 Sept 2022
003	Added information on visa and CAS	June 2024	01 Sept 2024
		Restricted access? <i>Tick as appropriate</i> ☐ Yes ☒ No	