

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 MacEwan University (the “University”) is committed to providing students with the opportunity to pursue their educational goals. The University understands that situations may arise during a student’s academic career, which may impact their ability to maintain continuous enrolment. The University will offer a supportive student-centered response to those who may be facing extenuating or exceptional circumstances, as appropriate.

2.0 PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to outline the opportunity available for students to request a Leave of Absence from their program. This allows Faculties and Schools to appropriately plan for interruptions in enrolment and support a student to take a leave without the requirement to requalify for admission to their program.

3.0 APPLICABILITY

- 3.1 In accordance with the Admissions Policy, students who experience an absence of 12 or more consecutive months will be discontinued from their program of study. Therefore, they would be required to reapply, pay an application fee, and meet current admission requirements to return to the University.
- 3.2 Students who are absent for 12 consecutive months or less remain active in their program of study. Approval is not required for students to take advantage of this 12-month period of non-enrolment, with the exception of International Students as per 5.1.2.1.
- 3.3 Students who anticipate a break in their studies for a period greater than 12 consecutive months, due to extenuating or exceptional circumstances, may apply for an approved Leave of Absence.
- 3.4 A Leave of Absence request will be considered for students who have completed a minimum of 18 credits toward their program.
- 3.5 Although all requests will be considered, the granting of a leave will be dependent on several factors, including those outlined in 5.1.4.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

Active Student

A student who is enrolled or eligible to enroll in an undergraduate program, or a student enrolled in a continuing education class.

Current Student

A student who is currently enrolled in an undergraduate program or a continuing education class.

Discontinued Student

A student who is no longer active in a program and therefore is not eligible to enrol.

International Student

A person who requires a Study Permit to study in Canada or who is authorized to study in Canada on another temporary status or permit.

Last Enrolled Term

The last term in which a student has an enrolment record with assigned grades. Withdrawal grades “W” are considered enrolment.

Leave of Absence

An approved period of non-enrolment up to a maximum of 28 months (7 terms), in which the student remains active in their program.

Requirement Term

Identifies the academic year which governs the program of study and institutional regulations required for graduation from a Ministry-approved Program. Refer to Graduation Policy for more information.

5.0 POLICY ELEMENTS

5.1 Leave of Absence Request

- 5.1.1 Requests for a Leave of Absence should be initiated as early as possible.
- 5.1.2 Students are required to first discuss the anticipated leave with an Academic Advisor. Implications such as course sequencing, practicum opportunities and program time limits (as defined in the Program Time Limits Policy) should be discussed. Formal requests are to be submitted using the Leave of Absence Request Form available from the Office of the University Registrar. The request must outline the anticipated timeframe for the leave and the extenuating or exceptional circumstances. Supporting documentation may be required.
 - 5.1.2.1 International Students must also meet with an International Student Specialist at MacEwan International to discuss the potential immigration implications of a Leave of Absence. Any break from continuous study would require an authorized leave approved by MacEwan International for immigration purposes. Refer to Authorized Leave for International Students Procedure for more information.
- 5.1.3 Completed forms are to be submitted to the applicable Dean (or delegate) for consideration.
- 5.1.4 The Dean (or delegate) holds the authority to approve or deny requests as they deem appropriate. The Department Chair, Academic Advisor, and applicable Faculty Members may be consulted. Many factors will be considered in the adjudication, including but not limited to: the student’s extenuating or exceptional circumstances and academic history, program suitability, enrolment management, program status, anticipated curriculum changes, program time limits, work-integrated learning/practicum components, accreditation. The Dean’s decision will be final.
- 5.1.5 If the request for a Leave of Absence is approved, the Dean will inform the Office of the University Registrar of the leave arrangement and anticipated return date.
 - 5.1.5.1 The Office of the University Registrar is responsible for updating the student record.
 - 5.1.5.2 An approved Leave of Absence granted for International Students does not guarantee an authorized leave for immigration purposes will be approved. International Students must seek additional approval as per the Authorized Leave for International Students Procedure.

5.2 Effect of an Approved Leave of Absence

- 5.2.1 An approved leave will have an effective start date equal to the end of the student's last enrolled term. Total leave must not exceed 28 months (7 terms), inclusive of the 12 months outlined in 3.2.
- 5.2.2 The Dean has the authority to assign conditions to a Leave of Absence agreement.
- 5.2.3 Program time limits will continue to apply to the student's graduation requirements and are not subject to extension based on the approved leave of absence. See Program Time Limits Policy for more information.
- 5.2.4 There are no associated tuition or term fees assessed during a period of non-enrolment.
- 5.2.5 During any approved period of non-enrolment, a student is not eligible to access services or benefits provided by the University to Current Students, apart from student email and portal access.
- 5.2.6 Recipients of previous student funding will not be eligible for continued funding during a Leave of Absence, and student loans may enter repayment status.
- 5.2.7 Letter of Permission to enrol at another institution will not normally be approved during a Leave of Absence. See 5.4.5.

5.3 Exclusions

- 5.3.1 A Leave of Absence will not be considered for students who have been required to withdraw by the institution.
- 5.3.2 A subsequent Leave of Absence will not be considered for students who have already taken an approved leave within the same program.

5.4 Returning From a Leave of Absence

- 5.4.1 A student's return must coincide with a term start date. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Office of the University Registrar prior to their return to request term activation. The student should follow up prior to the enrolment open date for the applicable term, but no later than the add/drop deadline.
- 5.4.2 Upon request, the Office of the University Registrar will activate the student record for the applicable returning and upcoming terms.
 - 5.4.2.1 The student's Requirement Term will remain as recorded on their last enrolled term, when applicable. See Graduation Policy for more information.
 - 5.4.2.2 If the program has undergone curriculum changes since the student was last enrolled, the requirement term may be adjusted, and the student may be required to repeat courses or complete additional courses.
- 5.4.3 The student is responsible to self-enrol in courses for the returning and upcoming terms. Enrolment in preferred or required course selection is not guaranteed.

- 5.4.4 Upon return, the student is responsible for meeting with an Academic Advisor for program reorientation. Each program may define additional returning requirements as applicable.
- 5.4.5 Enrolling in courses at another institution does not equate enrolment at MacEwan University and does not constitute a return from a Leave of Absence.
- 5.4.6 If a student fails to return by the agreed upon date, the student's program record will be discontinued. If the student wishes to enrol at the University for a future term, they will be required to apply for admission; application fee and current admission requirements will apply.

6.0 ASSOCIATED PROCEDURES

- Authorized Leave for International Students

7.0 RELATED POLICIES, FORMS, AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

- Admissions
- Academic Standing
- Graduation
- Program Time Limits
- Leave of Absence Request Form

8.0 ACCOUNTABILITY

Policy Sponsor

Provost & Vice President, Academic

Responsible Office

Office of the University Registrar

9.0 HISTORY

Relevant Dates

Approved: **22.06.17**

Effective: **22.07.01**

Next Review: **27.06**

Modification History

22.06.17 New policy to reflect best practice in the event a student experiencing extenuating circumstances requests an absence of more than twelve consecutive months. Approved by General Faculties Council Motion #GFC-06-17-06-2022.

An approved Student Leave of Absence (SLOA) will have an effective start date equal to the end date of the student's last enrolled term. Total leave time must not exceed 7 terms (28 months)

Last Enrolled	12 months (3 terms) SLOA not required	Return by	28 months (+4 terms, max) SLOA required	Return by
Fall	Dec 31-Dec 31 Winter-Spring-Fall	Winter term	Dec 31 – Apr 30 + Winter-Spring-Fall-Winter	Spring term
Winter	Apr 30-Apr 30 Spring-Fall-Winter	Spring term	Apr 30 – Aug 31 + Spring-Fall-Winter-Spring	Fall term
Spring/ Summer	Aug 31-Aug 31 Fall-Winter-Spring	Fall term	Aug 31 – Dec 31 + Fall-Winter-Spring-Fall	Winter term