Leave of Absence and Suspension of Studies Procedure

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Procedure specifies the provisions for students who apply to take a break from study at the University in accordance with the Enrolment Policy.

Scope

(2) This Procedure applies to all:

a. domestic students;
b. international students;
c. undergraduate students;
d. postgraduate students;
e. Macquarie University College (The College) students admitted to a coursework award, standard or intensive foundation programs;
f. Bachelor of Philosophy students; and
g. Master of Research (first year for international students who have or would ordinarily require a student visa).

(3) Provisions for Leave of Absence and Suspension of Study do not apply to non-award students, cross-institutional students, Open Universities Australia students, exchange students, or students in study abroad courses.

(4) Leave of absence provisions for Higher Degree Research candidates are not in scope. These provisions are documented in the Graduate Research Variations to Candidature Policy.

(5) This Procedure also applies to the activities of staff involved in the administration of student enrolment.

Section 2 - Policy

(6) Refer to the Enrolment Policy.

Section 3 - Procedures

Part A - Leave of Absence (Domestic Students)

(7) For the purpose of clauses 8 to 14, domestic student refers to domestic students and international students who would not ordinarily require a Student Visa.

(8) Before applying for leave of absence, students are encouraged to seek course advice from their faculty to understand the impact a break in studies may have upon their progression (see Course Advisers).

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(9) Taking a leave of absence is subject to the total leave allowed as specified in the Enrolment Policy.

(10) Applications will be assessed by Student Administration in accordance with the Policy and Procedure in force at the time of application submission.

(11) Students must apply for leave of absence via the online enrolment system (eStudent) prior to the relevant Census Date in the standard study period in which they wish to take leave.

(12) A student may apply to take leave of absence:

a. as a single 12-month period (or two standard study periods) of leave; or
b. as two separate 6-month periods (one standard study period each) of leave.

(13) A student who has applied for or has had leave of absence approved, and then changes their mind, must notify the University via the Service Connect portal as soon as possible. A reversal of an approval is not guaranteed.

(14) If a student wishes to return early from a leave of absence, they must apply in writing via the Service Connect portal prior to the last date to enrol for a study period (see Calendar of Dates).

Part B - Suspension of study (International students)

(15) For the purpose of clauses 16 to 25, International Student refers to international students who have, or would ordinarily require a Student Visa.

(16) International students are advised to read and understand the suspension of study information before applying (see Student Visa Support).

(17) As specified in the Enrolment Policy, international students may apply to temporarily suspend their studies for up to a total of twelve (12) months or two (2) Standard Study Periods (whichever is longer) over the duration of the course, subject to approval and any course specific requirements. The Study Periods do not need to be consecutive.

(18) International students who are granted suspension of study must contact the Department of Home Affairs about the status of their visa.

(19) Students who are not eligible for suspension of study may withdraw from their studies and apply for readmission into the newest version of their course should they wish to return to their studies at a later time.

(20) Applications will only be considered where there are compassionate or compelling circumstances and must be supported by documentary evidence of these circumstances.

(21) Compassionate or compelling circumstances are those beyond the control of the international student and which have an impact upon the international student's course progress or wellbeing.

(22) Students applying for a suspension of study must use the suspension of studies form available through the Service Connect portal.

(23) Students must supply evidence to support their application for suspension of studies. Examples of what may be considered compassionate or compelling circumstances could include, but are not limited to:

a. serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the international student was unable to attend classes;
b. bereavement due to death of close family members such as parents, siblings, children or grandparents (where possible a death certificate should be provided);

c. major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country requiring emergency travel and this has impacted on the international student's studies;
d. traumatic experience, which could include:
    i. involvement in, or witnessing of a serious accident; or
    ii. witnessing or being the victim of a serious crime; and this has impacted on the international student (these cases should be supported by police or psychologists' reports;
e. where there are no units available for the student to study for one standard study period (the University is unable to offer a prerequisite unit, or the international student has failed a prerequisite unit and therefore faces a shortage of relevant units for which they are eligible to enrol).

(24) Medical certificates and any other health related documentation used to support a suspension of study application must be from a health professional registered with a National Board of the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Authority (see National Boards), or appropriate international agency.

(25) International students whose circumstances require more than twelve (12) months away from their studies should contact the University through the Service Connect portal in the first instance.

Part C - Course Withdrawal

(26) Before applying to withdraw from a course, students are encouraged to first seek course advice from their faculty (see Course Advisers).

(27) Students can withdraw from their course before the Census Date by withdrawing from all units they are enrolled in and have through the University's online enrolment system (eStudent).

(28) After the Census Date, students who wishes to withdraw from their course will be required to submit a request via the Service Connect portal to be withdrawn from any enrolled units and may incur an academic penalty, which will appear on their transcript.

(29) Students may be liable for the full amount of any fees, including the student services and amenities fee.

(30) Students in receipt of the Commonwealth Prac Payment will be required to return the payment to the University equivalent to the period of placement not undertaken.

(31) International students must apply for course withdrawal via the student withdrawal and release form which is available through the Service Connect portal.

(32) International students who have studied with the University for more than six (6) calendar months are able to stop their studies by notifying the University using the Withdrawal form via the Service Connect portal.

(33) If the international student has studied less than six (6) calendar months, they must;

a. request permission via the Service Connect portal; or
b. visit the Service Connect desk (18 Wally's Walk) in order to be released from their studies.

Part D - Student Appeals and Complaints

(34) A student may appeal a University decision in relation to Leave of Absence or Suspension of Studies in accordance with the Appeals Policy.

Section 4 - Guidelines

(35) Nil.

Section 5 - Definitions

(36) Definitions specific to this Procedure are contained in the Enrolment Policy.

Status and Details

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Responsible Executive	Rorden Wilkinson Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
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