

## **1.0 ASSOCIATED POLICY**

- Student Leave of Absence Policy

## **2.0 DEFINITIONS**

### **Authorized Leave**

A temporary leave approved by the university for an international student on a study permit to be absent from studies during a regularly scheduled term for immigration and study permit compliance purposes. The authorized leave should not exceed 150 days from the date the leave commenced and must be authorized by the university.

### **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.

### **Study Permit Conditions**

International students must remain enrolled at a Designated Learning Institutions during all regularly scheduled terms until they complete their studies as per subsection 220.1(1) of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations, SOR/2002-227 (IRPR)*, and must adhere to the conditions imposed on their study permit.

### **Visitor Record**

A document that is issued to extend or restrict a foreign national's stay in Canada when they do not meet the regular requirements of a temporary resident. If an international student needs to take a leave from studies for more than 150 days, they must apply for a visitor record or depart Canada.

### **Co-op Work Permit**

A document that may be issued to an international student on a study permit if mandatory work-integrated learning is part of their program of study. A co-op work permit must be obtained before the start of the international student's work-integrated learning component, regardless of whether it is paid or unpaid.

### **Regularly Scheduled Term**

A term that students would normally be enrolled in if following the standard program sequencing as published in the Academic Calendar for undergraduate and preparatory programs or published program sequence details for School of Continuing Education programs. The Fall and Winter terms are regularly scheduled terms for all programs. Some programs have a regularly scheduled term during the Spring/Summer term in each or in specified years.

### **Regularly Scheduled Break**

A break between regular study terms in a particular program; it must be part of the university's academic schedule (e.g. winter break, Reading Week, possibly Spring/Summer Term). Each regularly scheduled break cannot be longer than 150 days. International students must consult with their program to determine if and when their program has regularly scheduled breaks.

### **Supporting Documentation**

Documented proof regarding the reason for submitting an Authorized Leave Request.

### **3.0 PROCEDURE ELEMENTS**

- 3.1 An International Student may make an Authorized Leave Request to the Manager of International Student Services to take a break from studies during a regularly scheduled term for their program due to certain extenuating circumstances.
- 3.2 Extenuating Circumstances or Reasons for which an Authorized Leave may be granted are:
  - 3.2.1 medical illness or injury;
  - 3.2.2 pregnancy;
  - 3.2.3 family emergency;
  - 3.2.4 death or serious illness of a family member; or
  - 3.2.5 change in program of study at the university, outside a regularly scheduled break, where there is no access to enrolment in a minimum of 3 credits or one course towards the future program of study.
  - 3.2.6 Extenuating Circumstances or Reasons referred to in section 3.2 are subject to change by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Authorized Leaves may only be approved for Reasons recognized by the IRCC at the time the request is submitted.
- 3.3 Prior to submitting an Authorized Leave Request, an International Student must speak with an International Student Specialist in MacEwan International. The International Student Specialist will explain:
  - 3.3.1 the relevant documentation needed based on the reason for the Authorized Leave request;
  - 3.3.2 the requirement to meet with an Academic Advisor to plan for when they will be able to return to full-time studies based on program of study and course offerings and to include relevant documentation from the program in the Authorized Leave request;
  - 3.3.3 that IRCC makes all decisions on immigration matters, including assessing study permit compliance and future immigration program eligibility;
  - 3.3.4 current IRCC program delivery instructions regarding Authorized Leave when assessing study permit compliance and post-graduation work permit program eligibility;
  - 3.3.5 the International Student's immigration obligations while on an Authorized Leave, including not being authorized to work while on an Authorized Leave; and
  - 3.3.6 the student's obligation to return to studies, leave Canada, or apply for a Visitor Record within 150 days of the approval of the Authorized Leave.

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**AUTHORIZED LEAVE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS PROCEDURE**

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- 3.4 An International Student must make a request for Authorized Leave in writing or through their MyMacEwan email account to the Manager of International Student Services using the General Request Form available from the Office of the University Registrar. An International Student must include all relevant documentation and details of their plans to return to studies made in consultation with an academic advisor.
- 3.4.1 A request for an Authorized Leave must be made as soon as an International Student becomes aware of their inability to study or continue studying in a regularly scheduled term for their program. While it is preferable that International Students make Authorized Leave Requests before the Add/Drop Deadline of the term they require a break in studies, a request can be made any time during the term until the Withdrawal Deadline for the courses in which they are enrolled.
- 3.5 If the Authorized Leave Request is for medical reasons, an International Student must provide relevant documentation which:
- 3.5.1 is completed by a licensed professional with specific training and expertise in the diagnosis and/or description of physical or mental health; and
- 3.5.2 confirms that the International Student has been assessed by the health professional and the health professional recommends the International Student take a break from studies for a specified length of time.
- 3.6 If the Authorized Leave Request is for non-medical reasons, an International Student must provide relevant documentation to support the reason or extenuating circumstance. The Manager of International Student Services may reasonably request additional relevant documentation from the student.
- 3.7 Upon receiving an Authorized Leave Request, the Manager of International Student Services will, within 5 business days, review all relevant documentation and make a final decision.
- 3.7.1 The Manager may consult with an International Student Specialist and/or an Academic Advisor in the international student's program, if required. The Manager may request additional relevant documentation from the International Student, if necessary to make a decision.
- 3.7.2 If approved, an Authorized Leave will be considered approved on the date the Manager of International Student Services makes a final decision and provides an Authorized Leave letter to the International Student.
- 3.7.2.1 Authorized Leaves cannot be backdated or approved retroactively. Authorized Leave for immigration purposes is a forward-looking study permit compliance measure.
- 3.7.2.2 An Authorized Leave can only be approved for reasons recognized by the IRCC at the time the request is made, as outlined in 3.2.
- 3.7.2.3 Authorized Leave letters are retained on a student's record in MacEwan International and in the Office of the University Registrar.
- 3.7.2.4 An approved Authorized Leave for immigration purposes does not guarantee an approved Leave of Absence from a program of study. International Students who expect to be away for more than 12 months should also seek approval for a Leave of Absence from their Dean, as per the Student Leave of Absence Policy.

## **AUTHORIZED LEAVE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS PROCEDURE**

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3.7.2.5 International Students are responsible for their enrolment and planning for return to studies or consulting with an International Student Specialist if they will not be able to return to studies as originally planned.

3.7.3 If denied, the Manager of International Student Services will inform the International Student of the decision via email to their MyMacEwan email account with reasons for the denial.

3.7.3.1 The decision on an Authorized Leave Request is final and cannot be appealed. However, if the reason for a denial is due to insufficient relevant documentation, an International Student may resubmit an Authorized Leave request with additional relevant documentation for consideration. Deadlines to submit a new request remain as outlined in subsections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2.

### **3.8 Roles and Responsibilities**

3.8.1 International Students are responsible for following all published deadlines, policies, and procedures of the university and immigration laws as they may relate to a break in studies. International Students are responsible for consulting relevant publications or consulting with relevant departments for assistance in understanding academic and immigration rules.

3.8.2 The Manager of International Student Services is responsible for assessing Authorized Leave Requests and only approving requests made for reasons recognized by the IRCC at the time the request is made.

3.8.3 The Director of MacEwan International or an Associate Registrar may act as a decision maker under this procedure where the Manager of International Student Services is not available.

## **4.0 RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, FORMS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS**

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

## **5.0 ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Responsible Office**  
MacEwan International

**6.0 HISTORY**

**Relevant Dates**

Approved: **22.06.06**

Effective: **22.07.01**

Next Review: **27.06**

**Modification History**

**22.06.06** New procedure pertaining to authorized leaves for international students created to accompany the new Student Leave of Absence policy. Approved by General Faculties Council Executive Committee Motion #GFC-EC-06-06-2022.