

# Leave of Absence (LoA) Guidelines

## Eligibility to apply for Leave of Absence (LoA)

A leave of Absence ([Student Rules 11.9](#)) allows you to take an authorised break from your studies for personal reasons such as health problems, family emergencies, personal reasons, or professional opportunities.

You are eligible to apply for Leave of Absence if you meet the following criteria:

1. You have completed six months of your candidature.
2. You request a period of minimum 8 weeks (56 days).
3. You are in your standard candidature period (i.e. not in candidature extension period)
4. Your request does not exceed an accumulated total period of one year for the entire standard candidature period (regardless of your study rate) inclusive of transfer period.
5. If receiving financial and/or academic support from an external institution and/or industry, written approval from the external institution/organisation for the requested LoA period should be included.

## Additional considerations

- The provision for LoA is not to be used to extend the maximum expected work submission date, you should apply for an extension of candidature instead.
- If you wish to take leave for a shorter period than the minimum requested (8 weeks/56 days) you can take up to four weeks of annual leave (20 working days per year). Annual leave is arranged in consultation with the supervisor/s and no formal application is required. Annual Leave does not suspend the candidature and you will remain enrolled during this time.
- In exceptional and documented special circumstances you may request variations to the listed criteria for leave.
- For any request of Leave of Absence outside standard eligibility criteria, include information in the request to demonstrate the student's capacity to undertake the agreed research project and/or to meet progress milestones as per [Student Rule 11.15](#). Discussion of the request requirements prior to submission with Graduate Research School is encouraged.

## International Students

- International students will need to check their visa conditions which may require them to remain enrolled for the duration of the candidature. If so, students may be required to leave the country for the duration of the Leave of Absence (LoA). Students are advised to contact the [Department of Home Affairs](#) and [UTS International](#) for advice on how a Leave of Absence (LoA) may affect their visa.

## Instructions on Leave of Absence (LoA) Application

- Information about the Leave of Absence (LoA) process is available in the [Graduate Research Candidature Management, Thesis Preparation and Submission Procedures](#) and [Student Rules 11.9](#).
- Before applying for Leave of Absence (LoA), you are encouraged to seek course advice from your faculty to understand the impact a break in studies may have on your progression
- Submit your Leave of Absence (LoA) request at least 3 weeks prior to the requested leave end date and before the session's deadline. To ensure you are aware of the application deadlines please see the [census date webpage](#).
- If the approved Leave of Absence (LoA) dates do not cover the whole session (*i.e. Research Session 1: from 01 January to 30 June or Research Session 2: from 01 July to 31 December*), Student Services and Amenities Fees (SSAF) and tuitions fees (if you do not hold an active tuition fee offset or international tuition fee scholarship) will be applied for the periods of enrolment in those sessions.
- **If you are enrolled in coursework subjects:** you should submit the Leave of Absence (LoA) request before the coursework census date of the request session and also submit a Variation of Program (VOP) form (via Research Master) to move any currently enrolled subjects to a new session. Failure to do so will incur a FAIL grade for that subject.
- **If you are NOT enrolled in coursework subjects:** you can submit the Leave of Absence (LoA) request up to one month before the research census date of the request session. Any Leave of Absence (LoA) request submitted after one month prior to the research census date deadline, must be for the following session (*i.e. the earliest start date is the first day of the following session*).
- Upload any supporting documents to the Leave of Absence (LoA) application form on [ResearchMaster \(RM\)](#). The supporting documents and the completed Leave of Absence (LoA) application form on ResearchMaster (RM) are to be submitted by the appropriate LoA application census deadline.
- Incomplete and/or submission without Faculty approval within 6 weeks of the Leave of Absence (LoA) application submission will not be processed.
- If the Leave of Absence request is endorsed by the faculty, the request will be submitted to Graduate Research School (GRS) for processing and the Expected Work Submission (EWS) date will be extended to match the period of leave.
- A notification email will be sent to advise the student that the final outcome of the Leave of Absence (LoA) application will be available in Research Master (RM).
- Students with scholarship that includes additional paid sick leave benefit or maternity leave provision, can apply by completing and submitting the [additional paid benefits form](#) to their faculty research office for consideration.

## Leave of Absence (LoA) – Supervisors

- Supervisors should ensure students apply for LoA in a timely manner in order to avoid penalties around census dates.
- Supervisors of international students should advise students to check their visa conditions prior to requesting LoA to ensure they are not breaching the conditions of their visa.
- If supervisors are going to be on extended leave such as long service leave or PEP they communicate these changes with the student via email and ensure an alternate supervisory arrangement is in place.
- Supervisors are encouraged to contact the student to seek confirmation of their return from LoA.

## Whilst on Leave of Absence (LoA) - Students

- You will remain admitted to the program of study and your enrolment status will be “Leave of Absence”. You do not need to re-enrol upon return from LoA.
- If you are recipient of a living stipend scholarship support this will be suspended for the duration of the LoA. If approved for additional paid benefits, the benefits will be paid during this time as per the approval advice.
- Please update your contact details via [My Student Admin \(MSA\)](#) and periodically check your UTS student email account for all student communication.
- Access to University facilities and resources will be restricted and limited to online Library access. Your supervisors are not obliged to provide research guidance.
- Please inform your supervisor/s closer to the end of LoA to confirm the date of return; or if an extension for the LoA is required, this should be agreed with the supervisor/s and applied for through the normal LoA request process.