

Leave of Absence Policy (LOA) for Students in Receipt of US Federal Financial Aid (Title IV Aid)

Section 1 – Undergraduate Students

Before taking a leave of absence or suspending your studies, you must consult a University Immigration Adviser (student.international@abdn.ac.uk) and the US Loans Team (usaloans@abdn.ac.uk).

USA Federal regulations prevent any leave of absence you may take as an undergraduate student at the University of Aberdeen from being 'approved' by the U.S. Department of Education.

If you take a leave of absence, you will be treated as a withdrawal for Direct Loan purposes. A return of funds calculation may be necessary, and for loan repayment purposes, you will be considered withdrawn from your programme of study. Consequently, funds may need to be repaid to the US Department of Education from the most recent disbursement, alongside the payment of any outstanding tuition fees, accommodation fees, or other charges owed to the University of Aberdeen.

Section 2 – Postgraduate Students

You must consult a University Immigration Adviser (student.international@abdn.ac.uk) and the US Loans Team (usaloans@abdn.ac.uk) before taking a leave of absence.

Section 2.1 - Leaves of absence less than 180 days (PGR Student only)

You will not be able to receive any Direct Loan funds while on a leave of absence which has been approved by the U.S. Department of Education.

Typically, if an interruption is less than 180 days, your next scheduled disbursement will be pushed back by the length of the interruption. Your next financial aid assessment will also be postponed by the same duration.

If you do not return within the allowable 180-day period, you will be considered withdrawn for Direct Loan and repayment purposes. A return of funds calculation may be necessary. Consequently, funds may need to be repaid to the US Department of Education from the most recent disbursement, alongside the payment of any outstanding tuition fees, accommodation fees, or other charges owed to the University of Aberdeen.

The expiration of your loan grace period may also be impacted.

Section 2.2 - Any PGT student absences, or PGR student absences over 180 days

Unless you are a PhD student on a leave of absence of less than 180 days, you will be considered to have withdrawn for Direct Loan and repayment purposes. A return of funds calculation may be necessary. Consequently, funds may need to be repaid to the US Department of Education from the most recent disbursement, alongside the payment of any outstanding tuition fees, accommodation fees, or other charges owed to the University of Aberdeen.

Appendix 1 - Definitions

Approved Leave of Absence for PGR Suspension of studies (PGR only)

A Leave of Absence/Suspension of Studies is a temporary withdrawal from a student's programme of study. It refers to the specific period when a student is not in attendance. This period is requested by the student with the intention to return to complete their programme. Students returning from a Suspension of Studies are not required to reapply for admission and must resume their studies at the point where they suspended. A suspension of studies form, including the reason for the request, must be submitted and approved.

After a leave of absence, the student is permitted to resume studies at the same point in the academic programme where the leave began.

The combined length of any leave of absence cannot exceed 180 days within a 12-month period.

Official Suspension of Studies (UG and PGT only)

A "Suspension of studies" refers to a student's intent to take a temporary withdrawal from their programme of study. This term designates a specific period when the student has requested to not be in attendance and intends to return to complete their programme.

Students returning from a Suspension of Studies are required to reapply for admission and must resume their studies at the point they suspended. A suspension of studies form and an application for readmission form must be submitted for approval and include the reason for the suspension.

Official Withdrawal

A "withdrawal" refers to a student's intent to permanently terminate studies at the University with no expectation of return. A withdrawal from studies form must be submitted.

Unofficial Withdrawal

An unofficial withdrawal is where the University has not received notice from the student that they have ceased or will cease attending the University. Notification of the unofficial withdrawal would come from lecturers or tutors through the University monitoring procedures.