



COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Undergraduate Leave of Absence Policy

Policy Number [X-XX]

Commonwealth University of Pennsylvania

Approved by University Senate, [Date of Approval]

Revised [Date of Revision]

Responsible Office: Office of the Registrar

1. Purpose

Students must sometimes interrupt their studies for a variety of reasons. Applying for a Leave of Absence communicates to the University that the student will not be enrolling at the University for the current or upcoming semester due to a serious life event outside the control of the student. A student applying for a Leave of Absence intends to continue their studies in the near future. A student whose Leave of Absence request has been approved will receive the following benefits (if not in conflict with other policies):

- Will not be required to apply for re-admission
- Will retain access to their student record
- Will have ongoing academic advising services
- Will retain any merit scholarship awarded to them as of the time of their departure

2. Scope

- 2.1. When a student submits a Leave of Absence, they must select a reason for the leave. Although multiple factors may contribute to the need to take a leave of absence, students are asked to select one option as the primary reason for the leave.
- 2.2. The University has identified the following reasons for a student leave of absence, which is defined as a serious life event outside the control of the student. Documentation is required.
 - 2.2.1. Health Related: A Leave of Absence for a health reason may be appropriate when a student requires time away from school for treatment of a physical or mental health condition that impairs their ability to function safely and successfully as a student.
 - 2.2.2. Personal/Family: A Leave of Absence for a personal/family reason is related to a situation that requires the student to pause their education to handle a personal or family crisis. Situations that are considered personal or family leave include: caring



COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

for a seriously ill family member or a personal financial hardship (impacting student aid beyond the control of the student).

2.2.3. Military Service: A Leave of Absence for military service includes being called to active duty for any branch of the U.S. military forces, or mandatory conscription service as a citizen of another country. Additional resources through the University Military and Veterans Services Office are available for military activation that may occur after registration deadlines for a given term.

3. Definitions, Roles and Responsibilities

3.1. Definitions

3.1.1. University Withdrawal: A university withdrawal occurs when a student withdraws from all classes within a current and any future (if applicable) semester because they do not plan to return to the University or do not have an approved Leave of Absence

3.1.2. Leave of Absence: A student may request permission to temporarily leave the university with an established date of return.

3.1.3. Non-matriculated students: Students who are not matriculated do not qualify for a Leave of Absence.

3.1.4. Undergraduate students: Only matriculated students who are enrolled in a bachelors or associate degree program qualify for a Leave of Absence.

3.1.5. Graduate students: Students in Graduate programs do not qualify for a Leave of Absence.

3.2. Roles and Responsibilities

3.2.1. Division of Academic Affairs - Registrar's Office

Responsible for changing status of student upon implementation of the Leave of Absence Plan and upon return as well as appropriate notification to offices.

3.2.2. Division of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs– Office of the Dean of Students

Responsible for communication with students, approval of status, application of the Leave of Absence hold and adjustment of status.

4. Policy

- 4.1. A Leave of Absence is a temporary leave from the University. An undergraduate student who is currently enrolled in courses may interrupt continuous enrollment by electing to take a Leave of Absence from the University of not more than two consecutive semesters (Fall/Spring, Spring/Fall) .



COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

- 4.2. Students will retain their admission to the university. A Leave of Absence for up to two academic semesters will protect students against changes in academic requirements upon return. After the Leave of Absence period, the student must reapply to the university.
- 4.3. Students who do not return after the specified leave of absence period will be withdrawn, and the last day of attendance will be considered to be the date the leave of absence began. Students who are withdrawn are required to reapply in order to return.
- 4.4. Students must be in good academic standing to be eligible for a Leave of Absence. Students on Academic Warning may apply for an exemption with additional documentation of their circumstances.
- 4.5. Students on a Leave of Absence may not transfer credits back to Commonwealth University that occur during the leave unless circumstances warrant otherwise as determined by the student's academic advisor or department chair.
- 4.6. A Leave of Absence is not necessary for summer and winter sessions.
- 4.7. A Leave of Absence does not override financial aid requirements. It is the student responsibility to confirm their financial aid status with the Financial Aid Office as part of the application process.
- 4.8. Students should review all possible ramifications of taking a Leave of Absence and are encouraged to check with their academic advisor, Financial Aid, Student Billing, Housing and Residence Life, and other student service offices to determine how taking a Leave of Absence impacts their status.
- 4.9. Retroactive leave requests are not permitted and will not be considered.
- 4.10. A Leave of Absence does not affect outstanding requirements or balances, such as: holds, financial balances, academic standing and/or student conduct outcomes.

5. Procedures, Standards, and Guidelines

- 5.1. Current undergraduate students may apply for a Leave of Absence by filing a Leave of Absence Form. It is important to note that leave may impact the availability of academic programs upon return.
 - 5.1.1. Complete the steps to take to declare a leave of absence:
 - Contact your academic advisor(s) and/or department chairperson.
 - Contact Financial Aid & the Student Billing Office.
 - Students who receive Financial Aid should review their awards with the Office of Financial Aid before deciding on a Leave of Absence. It is the student's responsibility to review the financial implications of the Leave of Absence.



COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

- File a Leave of Absence Form.
- Students should notify appropriate offices (Housing and Residence Life, Parking, Campus Dining, and other student service offices). The Registrar's Office will provide notification to offices following formal approval.
- International students in F-1/J-1 visa status must contact the Center for Global Engagement prior to submitting the Leave of Absence. The Center for Global Engagement will advise students on the implications to their immigration status, the departure timeline once their Leave of Absence is in effect.

5.1.2. Effective Date:

- 5.1.2.1. Leaves during the academic semester will take effect as of the date submitted by student. For the purposes of leave eligibility, any Leave of Absence that commences during an academic semester will be counted as one of the two permissible semesters of leave.
- 5.1.2.2. After the Leave of Absence form is received and processed by the Registrar's Office, it will be reviewed for the appropriate tuition refunds by the Office of Student Billing.
- 5.1.2.3. The recording of student courses and grades for taking a leave during a semester follows the deadlines established by drop/add and the withdrawal policy. Courses and grades will be recorded in accordance with those policies:
 - 5.1.2.3.1. On or before the university deadline to drop classes: all courses or grades are dropped according to the drop/add policy.
 - 5.1.2.3.2. After the university deadline to drop classes but before the withdrawal deadline: W (withdrawal) grades are assigned according to the withdrawal policy. This indicates the student withdrew from the courses, but does not impact their GPA.
 - 5.1.2.3.3. After the withdrawal deadline: Permanent grades assigned by the instructor will be recorded.
- 5.1.3. While on leave, a student maintains their admitted student status for a maximum of two semesters. However, students on leave are NOT registered and, therefore do not have all the rights and privileges of a registered student. After 2 semesters of leave a student will need to reapply through the Office of Admissions.
- 5.1.4. Campus Services: Students on leave are not permitted to live in university housing, attend classes or maintain employment as students at the University while their leave is in effect. A student on leave will not have access to any campus



COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

or university service including Student Health Center, Recreation Centers, computer labs, etc.

5.1.5. Contact Information: Students will be able to maintain their University email accounts while on leave. Students should update their contact information with any changes to email, addresses and phone information while on leave.

5.1.6. Students will have a Leave of Absence hold on their account while the leave is active, which will prevent course registration.

5.2. Returning to the University:

Students should apply to return from a Leave of Absence with a minimum of 30 days notification by filing a Request to Return from a Leave of Absence to the Office of the Dean of Students to reinstate their student status to active. Students maintain their previous academic standing upon return.

Students are required to meet the program requirements indicated in their course of study upon return. Some academic programs may no longer be available upon return. Some competitive or capped (limited seats) academic programs may have additional requirements to return to the program. Students should confirm the requirements of the return to the academic program with their dept chair or Dean of the College.

6 Compliance and Enforcement

- 6.1 Every University policy will undergo a regular review on a five-year cycle, with approximately 20% of the total policies inventory being reviewed each year.
- 6.2 All policy reviews will be conducted by the responsible Senate Committee to assure that the policy remains relevant and aligns with applicable federal and state laws and regulations, PASSHE Board of Governors policies, and other University policies, procedures, standards, or guidelines.

7. Additional Information

7.1 Supporting Documents

- 7.1.1 Leave of Absence Form
- 7.1.2 Request to Return from a Leave of Absence Form
- 7.1.3 Withdraw Form

7.2 History

Commented [GR1]: Not live until this is an active Policy, this would use the same method as the withdraw survey in CU Succeed

Commented [GR2]: Not live until this is an active Policy, this would use Banner Automated Forms to manage the workflow

Commented [GR3]: Available through CU Succeed



COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

- 7.2.1 [Indicate whether the policy is a new policy, or whether it supersedes an existing policy. Include the effective date of the original policy as well as the date(s) of any subsequent amendments (if known).]
- 7.2.2 Effective Date – [Date Approved by the University Senate or Issued by the Office of the President as an Interim Policy]
- 7.2.3 Revised - [Date of Revision]
- 7.2.4 Next Review Date - [Date of Revision]

- 7.3 **Related Policies -** [Reference related policies]
- 7.3.1 Withdrawal Policy – [Interim Academic Policies](#)
- 7.3.2 Course W/D – [Interim Academic Policies](#)
- 7.3.3 [PRP 3463 - Graduate Admissions, Withdrawal, Course Repeat, Transfers, and Graduation Requirements](#)
- 7.3.4 **Include the policy that contains the definition of Matriculated Students**

- 7.4 **Contacts for Additional Information and Reporting**
[Name of Office/Division, Commonwealth University, Attn: [Name of person to serve as contact, email address of contact hyperlinked, office phone of contact in format of XXX.XXX.XXXX]