

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

Section 1 – Undergraduate Students

You need to consult with an Immigration Adviser and inform the US Loans team (usaloans@abdn.ac.uk) before taking a leave of absence / suspending your studies.

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If you take a leave of absence, you will be considered as having withdrawn for Direct Loan purposes. A return of funds calculation may be necessary, and you will be presumed (for loan repayment purposes) to have withdrawn from your programme of study. There may be funds to pay back to the US Department of Education from the most recent disbursement, alongside any outstanding tuition fees, accommodation fees or other institutional charges to the University of Aberdeen.

Section 2 – Postgraduate Students

You need to consult with an Immigration Adviser and inform the US Loans team 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.

Normally, 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 pushed back by the length of the interruption.

If the student does not return within the allowable 180 day period, they will be considered to have withdrawn for Direct Loan and repayment purposes. A return of funds calculation may be necessary. There may be funds to pay back to the US Department of Education from the most recent disbursement, alongside payment of any outstanding tuition fees, accommodation fees or other institutional charges to the University of Aberdeen. The expiration of the loan grace period may 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Unless you are a PhD student on a leave of absence of less than 180 days, you will be considered to have withdrawn for Direct Loan and repayment purposes.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. There may be funds to pay back to the US Department of Education from the most recent disbursement, alongside

payment of any outstanding tuition fees, accommodation fees or other institutional charges 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 in a student's programme of study. It refers to the specific time period during a programme when a student is not in attendance. This is a temporary period of time which the student has requested with the intention to return and complete their programme. Students returning from a Suspension of Studies are not required to re-apply for admission. Students must resume their studies at the point they suspended. A suspension of studies form must be approved and submitted and include the reason for the suspension request.

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

The combined length of any leave of absences 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 in their programme of study. It refers to the specific time period during a programme when a student is not in attendance. This is a temporary period of time which the student has requested with the intention to return and complete their programme. Students returning from a Suspension of Studies are required to re-apply for admission. Students must resume their studies at the point they suspended. A suspension of studies form and application for readmission form must be submitted. The reason for a suspension request must be included on the suspension of studies form for approval.

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