



Leave of Absence Policy	
Responsible for Policy	Director of Students
Relevant to	All Staff, All students
Approved by	SEC
Date Approved/Last Approval	25 April 2025
Next review date	June 2028
Relevant Documents	
Related Policies and Documents	
Return of Title IV Aid policy	

# **Leave of Absence Policy**

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 LIPA allows students to take a temporary break from their studies for personal, medical, or financial reasons. This is known as a Leave of Absence (LOA). Approval is not automatic and is decided on a case-by-case basis by the Programme Leader.

## **2 Requesting a leave of absence**

- 2.1 Students considering an LOA should consult their Programme Leader and Student Wellbeing.
- 2.2 Academic staff may also suggest an LOA if they believe it would benefit the student.
- 2.3 LOAs must start at an appropriate time in the academic calendar and are typically granted for up to 12 months.
- 2.4 The start date can be backdated in exceptional cases (e.g., critical illness).
- 2.5 Students must propose a return date when applying. Any extension beyond 12 months requires a new application.
- 2.6 A maximum of two consecutive LOAs may be granted only in exceptional circumstances.
- 2.7 Applications for a leave of absence should be submitted online and will be processed by the Registry.

## **3. While on Leave of Absence**

- 3.1 Students cannot participate in academic activities or assessments.
- 3.2 Support services such as Student Wellbeing and IT Services remain accessible.
- 3.3 One month before resumption, students will receive registration details.
- 3.4 Some programmes may require students to meet additional criteria before returning.
- 3.5 Failure to return as agreed may result in withdrawal from the programme.

#### **4. International Students**

- 4.1 Students on a Student visa must return home during their LOA. The institute will inform UKVI of the LOA and withdraw sponsorship. (The Student visa is void and they must leave the UK during their LOA once sponsorship is withdrawn.)
- 4.2 A new visa is required before returning to LIPA to resume studies, this will incur a cost, and this must be paid for by the student.
- 4.3 International Students must provide the International Team with evidence they intend to or have left the UK (Tickets, Boarding cards etc.) This is a UKVI requirement. Failure to do so may result in delays/issues with their new visa application.

#### **5. Important Considerations**

- 5.1 LOAs cannot be granted after the last teaching week of an academic session.
- 5.2 Marks obtained before an LOA are retained unless a deferral is approved.
- 5.3 LOAs are not a way to avoid academic failure.
- 5.4 Programme/module changes may affect the ability to carry forward marks.
- 5.5 Reduced workload upon return may be considered in certain cases.
- 5.6 Students must meet with their Programme Leader before resuming studies.
- 5.7 If a programme is closed to new entries, a LOA may not be possible.
- 5.8 Students will receive written confirmation of their LOA status.
- 5.9 The Institute reserves the right to take disciplinary action for breaches of conduct during an LOA.

#### **6. Appeals**

- 6.1 Students can appeal a rejected LOA if:
  - There was a material administrative error.
  - A procedural irregularity occurred.
  - The decision was unreasonable in the circumstances.

- 6.2 Disagreement with the decision alone is not grounds for appeal.
- 6.3 Appeals must be submitted within 10 working days of the decision.
- 6.4 If upheld, the Programme Leader will reconsider the application.
- 6.5 Appeals guidance and forms are available online via OneLIPA.

## **7. Leave of Absence – US Federal Funding**

- 7.1 Students in receipt of US Federal Funding should be aware that LOA requirements are imposed by the U.S. Federal Government, and LIPA is obligated to comply with these regulations, even if they differ from LIPA's standard LOA policy. These requirements dictate specific conditions regarding the length of an approved LOA, the point at which a student is considered withdrawn, and the calculation of financial aid returns. As a result, students receiving US Federal Funding may have different obligations and restrictions compared to other students taking an LOA. It is essential that such students consult the International Team to ensure they fully understand the impact of any LOA on their financial aid and loan repayment status.
- 7.2 A Leave of Absence (LOA) is a temporary break from studies. Students receiving US Federal Funding must contact the Student Finance Team via the online enquiry form to determine their loan status.
- 7.3 If a student returns at the exact point they left, an Approved LOA can last up to 180 days without affecting loan repayment.
- 7.4 If a student does not return within 180 days, their last date of attendance will be used to calculate the loan amount earned, and they will enter repayment.
- 7.5 Under U.S. loan rules, students are considered withdrawn for loan purposes if they do not resume studies within 180 days.
- 7.6 If a student fails to return, the Institute must calculate and return any unearned federal aid.
- 7.7 If a student takes an unofficial LOA without meeting the criteria, they will be considered withdrawn, and a Return to Title IV Funds calculation will be based on their last date of attendance.

*For further details, refer to the Return of Title IV Aid policy.*

## **8. UK Student Funding**

- 8.1 Students funded by the Student Loans Company must inform the relevant Student Finance agency when they take a leave of absence. Usually the

provider will stop student finance payments and ask students to repay any student finance they are not entitled to.

- 8.2 The student finance provider will reassess the Maintenance Loan based on the number of days students attended the course. If there is an overpayment, students will be required to pay this back directly or reduce the amount of maintenance loan they receive when they return to study.
- 8.3 If students suspend studies, they will still usually take out all/part of Tuition Fee loan and need to pay this back through usual repayment means once they start earning over the threshold amount. The amount of Tuition Fee loan for repayment will depend on which term they suspend their studies
- 8.4 There may be some circumstances where UK students may still be able to get some student finance (for example, illness or serious personal reason).
- 8.5 UK Students are recommended to check out the following weblink  
<https://www.gov.uk/student-finance-if-you-suspend-or-leave>