



Royal College of Art Leave of Absence Policy

Introduction

1. During their period of study, students may experience circumstances that affect their ability to continue their programme of study. In some situations, the best course of action may be to take a temporary break from study, known as a leave of absence.
2. Leave of absence is an authorised break from studies, but not an automatic entitlement, so may be refused depending on the circumstances and evidence provided. Leave of absence requests are considered appropriate when the student will reasonably be in a position to complete the Programme on their return. Until a Leave of absence is authorised by the student's Head of Programme, the student is still continuing their programme of study as normal. All agreed leaves of absence should be reported to ABCD.

Definition

3. Leave of absence is an authorised break from the student's programme of study, where there is no academic engagement during the course of the break, including access to the College and use of its resources. A student on a leave of absence will remain registered to their Programme but will not be enrolled. They will not be liable for any fee while on a leave of absence and will not have access to College facilities or tuition sessions.
4. Leave of absence should not be used as a short-term solution where an alternative option would be more beneficial to the academic progress of the student (for instance – extenuating circumstances, referral, etc.)
5. leave of absence will normally be given for a specific requested period of time not exceeding twelve calendar months. A student's re-entry point into their programme of study will be usually be the beginning of the next available term or academic year, as appropriate.
6. A student may apply for leave of absence at any point during the academic year, at the time that the circumstances arise that are adversely affecting their ability to study.

During Leave of Absence

7. During leave of absence, the student's enrolment status will be amended accordingly for the duration of their absence
8. The student shall not be liable for any tuition fee for the period for which they are on a leave of absence. Where tuition fees are owed for period of study taking place before the beginning

of the leave of absence, the College may require payment in full before the student's enrolment is reactivated.

9. Funding or scholarships may be affected by the approval of a leave of absence. In some cases the student may render themselves ineligible for the continuation of funding by taking a leave of absence. It is the responsibility of the student to confirm the rules and regulations of individual studentships or other sources of funding prior to taking a leave of absence and taking any appropriate action.

Application for Leave of Absence

10. The authorised approver for leave of absence requests is the student's Head of Programme.
11. Leave of absence requests must be approved by the Head of Programme before the Senior Registry Administrator (for taught students) or the Research Officer (for postgraduate research students) are notified. No Leave of absence shall begin before the Senior Registry Administrator / Research Office are informed.
12. The student will be notified of approval of their leave of absence request by the Registry and will be given guidance about their return to study.

Return from Leave of Absence

13. At the end of the agreed period of Leave of Absence, it is the responsibility of the student to notify Registry and their Head of Programme of their intention to return to their programme of study.
14. The student may be invited to meet with their Head of Programme and relevant members of staff, where they will be asked about any further support they may need in order to return to study.
15. Where leave of absence was granted on medical grounds, the student's return to study is subject to approval by Imperial College's Occupational Health Service.
16. Access to facilities will be reactivated on receipt and processing of the student's notification of return to study.
17. A registered student will be deemed to have withdrawn from their programme of study if they do not return to study following the end date of their leave of absence without notification of an intention to extend the leave of absence.

Refused Leave of Absence

18. In the case that a request for leave of absence is not approved, the student is expected to continue their programme of study in accordance with the College's academic regulations.

19. Where a request for leave of absence has been refused, a student has the opportunity to appeal the decision. A student may appeal a decision if there is evidence of one or more of the following: i) an error in the assessment, based on the leave of absence criteria as defined in the regulations ii) additional evidence relating to the assessment that could not be/were not made known when the original decision was made.
20. Intention to appeal should be submitted to the Registrar, and further information or evidence can be submitted alongside the appeal. All appeal requests will be considered, but the decision of the Registrar on any appeal is final.

Extension to Leave of Absence

21. Normally, leave of absence is approved for a maximum of twelve months. In the event that a student is unable to return to studies at the end of the Leave of Absence, they will need to apply for an extension. A further application should be made with updated supporting evidence. Students may not extend a leave of absence beyond two years; at that point the student shall be deemed to have withdrawn from their programme of study.

Senate

June 2018