

Leave of Absence (LOA) Guidelines

For Graduate Research – Students and Supervisors

UTS: Graduate Research School grs@uts.edu.au

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Whilst on leave of absence - Students

- Students on leave of absence (LoA) are considered as not enrolled for the duration of the LoA.
- Students remain admitted to the program of study and do not need to re-enrol upon return from LoA.
- All student communication will be sent to the student email account.
- Access to UTS facilities is limited to online Library access for the approved leave period (up to 1 year). When accessing online resources, students must follow relevant policies and procedures.
- Students whilst on LoA are encouraged to touch base with their supervisor closer to the end of LoA to confirm the date of return; if an extension for the LoA is required, this should be agreed with the supervisor and applied for through the normal LoA extension process.
- Students are required to submit a Review of Progress if it falls due during the period of LoA.
- It is accepted that the Review of Progress will have the minimum information covering the date of return from leave of absence. Failure to submit a review of progress may result in an unsatisfactory outcome.
- Students are encouraged to update their contact details via [My Student Admin \(MSA\)](#) and periodically check their student email account.
- **International Students** - will need to check their visa conditions which may require them to remain enrolled for the duration of the candidature. If so, students may be required to leave the country for the duration of LoA. Students are advised to contact the Department of Home Affairs for advice on how an LOA may affect their visa.

Whilst on leave of absence – Supervisors

- In the absence of communication from the student, supervisors are encouraged to contact the student to seek confirmation of their return from LoA.
- Follow up with the student on Review of Progress if it falls within the LoA timeframe. If a student on LoA fails to submit a review of progress, supervisors are encouraged to inform the student of this requirement as per the Procedures.
- If relevant ensure students apply for LoA in a timely manner in order to avoid penalties around census dates.
- Supervisors of international students should advise students to check their visa conditions to ensure they are not being breached if students take LoA.
- If supervisors are going to be on extended leave such as long service leave or PEP they communicate these changes with the student via email and ensure an alternate supervisory arrangement is in place in the form of a co-supervisor.
- In the instances where the full supervisory panel may be changed due to resignation or other unforeseen circumstances, changes should be communicated to the student and a new supervisor panel must be in place prior to the student's return from LoA.
- Supervisors are encouraged to respond to their student's general communication however; while the student is on LOA, it is expected that they are not working on their research and therefore may not have access to research guidance from their supervisors

Instructions on LoA application

- General information about the LOA process is available in the [Graduate Research Candidature Management, Thesis Preparation and Submission Procedures](#) and please also see [Student Rules 11.9](#).
- The LOA request must be submitted no later than 2 weeks after to the requested leave start date.
- If your LOA dates do not cover the whole session (*ie. Research Session 1: from 01 January to 30 June or Research Session 2: from 01 July to 31 December*), you will be liable for Student Services and Amenities Fees (SSAF) and tuitions fees (if you do not hold an active tuition scholarship) for your periods of enrolment in those sessions.

- **Students WITH coursework subjects:** are encouraged to submit their LOA request before the **coursework census date** of the request session and also submit a Variation of Program (VOP) form to move any currently enrolled subjects to a new session.
 - If applications are received after the coursework census date and approved, students will have to be automatically withdrawn from enrolled subjects and allotted a “fail” grade for those subjects.
- **Students WITHOUT coursework subjects:** must submit their LOA request one month before the **research census date** of the request session.
 - Any LoA requests submitted after the one month prior to the research census date deadline, must be for the following session (*ie. earliest start date is the first day of the following session*).
- Please see the [census date webpage](#) to ensure you are aware of the application deadlines.
- Any supporting documents must also be provided to the student’s [faculty research office](#). These documents and the completed LOA application form on [My Student Admin \(MSA\)](#) must be submitted by the appropriate LOA application deadline stated above to be considered for that session.
- We will not be able to process your LOA application if it is considered incomplete and we do not receive the requested information or we do not receive an outcome from your faculty within 4 weeks of your LOA application submission.
- If the leave of absence request is endorsed by the faculty, the request will be submitted to GRS for processing and the Expected Work Submission (EWS) date will be extended to match the period of leave.
- GRS will communicate the outcome of the request to the student in writing via the UTS Student Email.
- Students with scholarship that includes additional paid sick leave benefit or maternity leave provision, can apply by completing and submitting the [additional paid benefits form](#) to your faculty research office for consideration.

Eligibility to apply for LoA

- Graduate research students must have completed six months of their candidature.
- The minimum period of leave of absence that can be taken at any point is 8 weeks (56 days).
- Leave of absence must not exceed a total period of one year for the entire candidature (regardless of their study rate).
- In exceptional and documented special circumstances a student may request variations to these requirements for leave.
- Graduate research students are not eligible to take a leave of absence in your approved extension period. In exceptional circumstances, if graduate research students require leave during an extension of candidature period, they must speak to their Faculty RAO immediately.
- Graduate research students who are receiving support in the form of tuition fee scholarship and/or living stipend from an external sponsor must provide written approval from the sponsor for the leave dates that are being requested.
- Graduate research students who are undertaking a collaborative degree must provide written approval from their home/collaborative institution for the leave dates that are being requested.
- Industry Doctorate Program (IDP) student must provide written approval from their industry partner for the leave dates that are being requested.