



Student Leave of Absence Policy

Classification:

Responsible Authority:	Registrar
Executive Sponsor:	Academic Vice-President and Provost
Approval Authority:	University Senate
Date First Approved:	2023-05-09 (date of original policy)
Date Last Reviewed:	YYYY-MM-DD (date last reviewed and approved by PEC)
Mandatory Review Date:	YYYY-MM-DD (5 years for existing policies & 1 year for new policies)

PURPOSE

This policy describes the circumstances under which a student may request and be granted a Leave of Absence and the effect of that Leave of Absence. A Leave of Absence is defined as an approved period during which a student ceases to work towards their program at St Francis Xavier University (StFX).

SCOPE

This policy applies to undergraduate students, with the exception of students in Bachelor of Education programs.

DEFINITIONS

Word/Term	Definition
Leave of Absence	An approved period during which a student ceases to work towards their program.

POLICY

Eligibility and Application

1. A Leave of Absence may be granted when a student is unable to work on their program because of serious constraints such as a family emergency, personal or family medical requirements, parental or care-giving responsibilities, or required military service. Work, holiday, or travel during a single term is not justification for a Leave of Absence.

2. A student may make application to their Dean for a Leave of Absence from the program in which they are enrolled. The application is available through the [Registrar's Office Service Catalog](#). Responsibility for approving or denying a Leave of Absence rests with the Dean.
3. Students should apply for a Leave of Absence before the starting date of the anticipated leave, or as soon as possible after the event necessitating the Leave occurs. Leaves of Absence are not granted retroactively beyond the beginning of the current term nor to students who have withdrawn or are deemed to be withdrawn from their program.
4. When applying for a Leave of Absence, students are responsible for ensuring they understand the implications a leave may have in relation to residence, the health plan, and student loans.
5. In the case of students in limited-enrolment, cohort-based or professional programs the Dean may consult with the Chair/Co-ordinator/Director of the program before making their decision. Professional programs may impose constraints to application of the undergraduate Leave of Absence policy due to accreditation requirements or placement limitations. In such cases the Dean may request supporting documentation before approving the Leave of Absence

Course Registration and Transcript Notation

6. During the period of a Leave of Absence a domestic student is not considered to be registered as a student at StFX, with the exception that they will not be required to reapply to resume studies as long as the student has not withdrawn or been withdrawn from StFX.
7. Students who are granted such a Leave will have "Leave of Absence", including start and end dates, recorded on their transcript as a note on their academic summary or be registered in a "Leave of Absence" course.
8. Students approved for a Leave of Absence will have their course registration adjusted by the Registrar to drop them from any in-progress courses and any courses in which they are registered for future terms. The date courses are dropped will be determined based on the timing of the Leave and when it was approved. Standard deadline dates, as outlined in the Academic Calendar of Events, will be in effect. Tuition fees will be assessed in the normal fashion for any terms in the program before or after the Leave period. Regular refund rules will be applicable.

- a. If the course drop occurs before the last day to add/drop courses for the term, the courses will not appear on a student's transcript.
 - b. Courses dropped after the first week of classes but before the last day to drop courses for the term will appear on the student's transcript with the notation of DC for Dropped Course.
 - c. If the Leave of Absence begins after the drop deadline, the courses will appear with the notation DP (Dropped with Permission) and fees will be assessed for these courses.
 - d. Courses in future terms will be dropped without penalty and removed from the student's record.
9. A Leave of Absence will be granted for a single term unless otherwise specified by the Dean. Students who wish to request an extension of their Leave of Absence must seek approval from their Dean prior to the end of their current Leave. The Registrar will apply "withdrawn" status after one year of an approved Leave of Absence if the student has not returned to the University. Students who have withdrawn will be required to reapply for entry to StFX.
10. Time spent on Leave of Absence is not counted as part of the allowed time to complete a degree.

Limitations and Access to Services

11. While on a Leave of Absence, students are not permitted to undertake any formal academic or research work related to the program from which they have taken leave. For the period of a Leave of Absence no Letters of Permission to study towards their program elsewhere will be granted and all existing Letters of Permission will be canceled.
12. While students may not be required to pay tuition or fees during an approved Leave of Absence, they are not exempt from other financial obligations (i.e. interest charges on outstanding balance, standard collections processes, etc.). Students will be charged a one-time fee of \$100 to cover the costs of maintaining access to select services during their Leave of Absence.
13. University services are only available to students currently enrolled in a program of study. During a Leave of Absence, access to StFX services will be restricted to maintaining an active student ID card, access to StFX e-mail and use of the Library. Students will maintain the ability to access campus services that will help them transition back into their studies, including Academic Advising and Financial Aid.

14. Students who are living in residence will not be permitted to remain in residence while they are on Leave of Absence.
15. Prior to resuming their studies, students must inform the Assistant Vice-President Academic Affairs and their Dean of their intent to return from a Leave of Absence.

Financial Aid, Bursaries, and Scholarships

16. Students on Leave of Absence are not eligible to receive internal awards or scholarships from StFX for the duration of their leave.
 - i. Students who have a leave of absence approved prior to the start of the academic year will forfeit their annual scholarship dispersal for that year.
 - ii. Students who have a leave of absence approved at the end of a semester but prior to the start of the next semester will have forfeit their funding for the upcoming semester but no repayment will be required for the previous semester.
 - iii. Students who have a leave of absence approved mid-semester will forfeit their scholarship for the upcoming semester . The number of credit hours completed within the current semester will be used to determine what portion of the current semester scholarship will be forfeited. The forfeiture may result in additional funds being owed to the university.
17. Students who are eligible for internal scholarship renewal will not have scholarship monies transferred to their account while they are on Leave of Absence but will maintain eligibility for renewal upon registration in subsequent terms. The Leave of Absence period is not included in the time for award tenure.

How scholarships will be administered due to the leave of absence will depend on the type of scholarship held:

- i. A student may retain their National Entrance Scholarship upon their return to full-time studies at StFX provided they have not complete any undergraduate studies during their time away from StFX.
- ii. A student may retain their renewable Major scholarship upon their return to full-time studies at StFX so long as the leave of absence did not exceed 12 months in duration, and the student did not complete any undergraduate studies during their time away from StFX.
- iii. A student may retain their In-Course scholarship (earned based on academic performance in the previous school year) upon their return to full-time studies at StFX provided they have not completed any undergraduate studies during their time away from StFX.

18. For students with external funding, including Indigenous Band funding, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the proposed Leave is compatible with the regulations of any external granting agency from which funding would normally be received during the Leave period, and that such agencies are informed of the proposed Leave.
19. Students on Leave of Absence are not eligible to receive needs-based support through StFX's General, Limited, Emergency, or Support bursary programs.
20. Students will also not be considered for bursary renewals and will not have bursary monies transferred to their account during a Leave of Absence.
21. Eligibility for renewable bursaries that a student held in a previous year of study is not guaranteed and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis upon the student's return to study. Students are responsible for understanding the impact of a potential leave of absence on bursary-related financial matters. Decisions regarding such matters shall be made by the University's Financial Aid Office, based on the terms of reference and cashflow related to the bursary in question.
22. Recipients of government student aid funding (i.e., student loans) are responsible for understanding the consequences that such a Leave (including the cancellation of Letters of Permission that were previously approved) will have on their funding eligibility and repayment status.
23. Approved Leaves of Absence will be reported to government aid programs as withdrawals from study as per the policies of those programs. This may result in the assessment of over awards, the conversion of grants to loan funding, and restrictions or penalties being applied to the borrower's account with their aid program. It is the student's responsibility to consult with their aid program regarding these matters. Members of the StFX Financial Aid Office are available to help students navigate these programs but cannot provide an updated assessment in place of the aid programs.

Authorized Leave of Absence for International Students at StFX

24. International students with a valid study permit who are studying at StFX are required by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) to be actively pursuing their studies. A temporary leave from StFX may be requested by an international student on a study permit to be absent from studies during a regularly scheduled term. By having an authorized Leave of Absence, an international student may satisfy IRCC requirements for students who are taking a break from studies.

25. An authorized Leave cannot exceed 150 days from the date that the request is approved by StFX. International students who have questions about the authorized Leave of Absence process should consult with the International Student Advisor.
26. Only students who have completed at least one academic term and who are active in the program are eligible to request an authorized Leave of Absence. Leaves of Absence will not be granted for newly admitted students.
- IRCC defines an [authorized leave](#) as:
- medical reasons or pregnancy
 - family emergency
 - death or serious illness of a family member
 - any other type of leave authorized by StFX
27. Prior to submitting a request for an authorized Leave of Absence, international students must meet with the International Student Advisor and obtain an understanding of the consequences of taking an authorized leave. Taking time away from studies could affect:
- student status in Canada
 - future eligibility for the Post-Graduation Work Permit
28. International students are not eligible to work on or off campus during an authorized Leave of Absence.
29. International students who are granted an authorized Leave of Absence from StFX do not need to inform IRCC. International students must request and retain a letter confirming their authorized Leave of Absence when proof is requested by IRCC.

RELATED POLICIES

Academic Calendar

RELATED MATERIALS