

LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY

A leave of absence is a temporary break in a student's attendance during which s/he is considered to be continuously enrolled. If an institution chooses to have an enrollment policy that permits a leave of absence, the policy must be published in the institution's catalog and must comply with the following requirements:

1. A student must request the leave of absence in writing in advance of the beginning date of the leave of absence, unless unforeseen circumstances prevent the student from doing so. If a student does not request a leave of absence within a timeframe consistent with the institution's consecutive absence policy, he or she must be withdrawn.
2. Except under the circumstances identified in #3 below, the leave of absence is limited to 180 calendar days in any 12-month period or one-half the published program length, whichever is shorter. Multiple leaves of absence may be permitted provided the total of the leaves does not exceed this limit.
- ~~3. A student enrolled under a F-1 or M-1 visa may be granted multiple leaves of absence for a maximum total period in accordance with: (a) the written leave of absence policy of the institution; (b) the regulations of the Department of Homeland Security; and (c) sound educational and professional practice.~~
3. A student enrolled under a F-1 or M-1 visa may be granted leaves of absence or vacations in accordance with the regulations of the Department of Homeland Security and the following guidelines: (a) in emergency situations such as a serious illness or a death in the immediate family. Unless otherwise stipulated and documented, it is not to extend beyond 50% of the length of period for which the student applied; (b) a vacation policy that allows students to accumulate vacation over an extended period of study. Length and frequency of vacations must not impede student progress and must be reasonable within the context of the institution's curriculum; (c) extended absences whether it be for a leave of absence or vacation (beyond four weeks) may require retesting upon reentry into the program.
4. The student must sign and date the leave of absence request and specify a reason for the leave. The reason must be specified in order for the institution to have a reasonable expectation of the student's return within the timeframe of the leave of absence as requested.
5. The student must attest to understanding the procedures and implications for returning or failing to return to his/her course of study.
6. The institution must document its approval of the leave of absence request in accordance with its published policy.
7. The institution may not assess the student any additional charges as a result of the leave of absence.
8. An approved leave of absence may be extended for an additional period of time provided that the extension request meets all of the above requirements, and the total length of the leave of absence does not exceed the specified limit, as noted in item # 2 or # 3.

An institution may need to apply pertinent state requirements as well as those listed above. An institution that participates in the Title IV programs must establish a leave of absence policy that

is in compliance with federal regulations. Federal or state regulations may differ from ACCET policy, and if stricter, take precedence.