

LEAVE OF ABSENCE GUIDELINES

Leave of absence provides a mechanism for all HDR candidates to respond to various external circumstances that may affect their capacity to undertake their research. It is also the mechanism by which international HDR candidates can record short term leave (less than 20 days) or overseas fieldwork in order to meet ESOS Act requirements. Higher Degree Research candidates are encouraged to take leave of absence when circumstances arise where they will exceed their Leave entitlements (see below). Examples of such circumstances include extended sick leave, bereavement, family circumstances or other extenuating personal circumstances.

Except for international short term leave or overseas fieldwork, candidates are required to provide supporting documentation or evidence of their need to take a leave of absence. Such documentation can be obtained by consulting a medical practitioner, psychologist, student counsellor, or disability services.

Except for international short term leave or overseas fieldwork, candidature milestones will normally be extended by the period of leave if approved.

DOMESTIC STUDENTS

Leave entitlements and how to apply

All HDR students are entitled to up to 20 days of recreation leave and ten days of sick leave for each year of their candidature. These leave entitlements may be accrued over the life of the course but will be forfeited when the course is completed or terminated. These leave entitlements can be taken at any time within your candidature by agreement with your supervisor and do not require Research Degrees Committee (RDC) approval or notification. This kind of leave should be taken, keeping in mind that your Doctorate or Masters milestone dates will not be adjusted and satisfactory progress must be maintained. All leave must be managed so that it has no adverse impact on the satisfactory completion of your PhD milestones.

Periods of leave greater than 20 days must be applied for, in advance, to the RDC using the [online Leave of Absence form in HiQ](#). Please note that periods of leave prior to Stage 2 are not normally approved and no more than 12 months of leave is normally approved throughout the entire duration of candidature for a full-time student.

Taking leave while in receipt of a scholarship

Some scholarship schemes have provision for paid periods of leave of absence (i.e. sick leave, maternity leave). If you are in receipt of a scholarship you should refer to your scholarship's rules or guidelines so to fully consider the implications of your proposed leave on your stipend. You are encouraged to apply for leave early so that overpayment of your scholarship does not occur.

If you have any questions about how your planned period of leave might affect your scholarship, please [contact the Research Students Centre's Scholarships Team](#).

When to apply

You must apply for leave at least 4 weeks prior to ensure that you are advised of approval prior to taking the proposed leave. Late and retrospective leave applications will be considered but must include advice explaining the reasons for the late application. Retrospective leave applications will also have potential enrolment and scholarship implications e.g. repayment of scholarship may be necessary.

Tuition Fees and Refunds

All domestic HDR students, with the exception of those enrolled in the Doctor of Business Administration (BS25), have their tuition fees subsidized by the Commonwealth Government's Research Training Program (RTP) and therefore will not experience any tuition fee implications of taking a leave of absence.

Doctor of Business Administration students are required to pay fees and therefore must consider the implications on their tuition fees when requesting a leave of absence; please refer to [QUT's Refunds website](#) for more information.

Returning from Leave

Only research students in receipt of a scholarship and on an approved period of unpaid leave of absence must [notify the Research Students Centre's Scholarships Team](#) to confirm their return to research. The RSC's Scholarships Team requires **no less than 2 weeks' notice** in order to reinstate your scholarship payments. *For example, if you are planning to return from leave on 1 July, you must email the RSC Scholarships Team no later than 17 June (14 days prior).* Failure to do so may result in late payment of your scholarship and therefore a lack of resources and support for your candidature.

Domestic Research Students Checklist

- I have discussed my leave plans with my supervisory team.
- I have, if required, forwarded relevant documentation in support of my leave application to the Research Students Centre (e.g. medical certificates, workers compensation papers, industry partner letter, etc.)
- Scholarship recipients only: I hold a scholarship and have consulted my scholarship's rules and am clear on the implications that my planned leave will have on my scholarship.

Information regarding parental leave and the implications of taking leave can be found on Page 4-5.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

You are an international student if you are not a citizen of Australia or New Zealand, or have not been granted permanent residency or a permanent humanitarian visa in Australia. As per the conditions of your offer letter you are required to advise the Manager, Admissions, immediately in writing, if you gain Australian Permanent Resident status, New Zealand citizenship or an Australian Permanent Protection visa. If you hold temporary resident status you are regarded as an international student and depending on the conditions of your visa you may be able to study part time or full time. For further information please contact [QUT's International Compliance team](#).

Leave entitlements and how to apply

Leave should be applied for at least 4 weeks prior to ensure that you are advised of approval prior to taking the proposed leave. Retrospective leave applications are not normally considered, unless you demonstrate the grounds which prevented you from applying for the leave prior to the commencement of requested leave period. Retrospective leave may jeopardize your enrolment and scholarship/sponsorship entitlements.

International students MUST apply for leave using the [online Leave of Absence form in HiQ](#) irrespective of the type of leave requested and whether or not they are leaving Australia.

⇒ Short Leave

All HDR students are entitled to up to 20 days of recreation leave and ten days of sick leave for each year of their candidature. These leave entitlements may be accrued over the life of the course but will be forfeited when the course is completed or terminated. These leave entitlements can be taken at any time within your candidature by agreement with your supervisor and do not require Research Degrees Committee (RDC) approval or notification. You will still need to submit the online Leave of Absence form to record this leave. This kind of leave should be taken, keeping in mind that your Doctorate or Masters milestone dates will not be adjusted and satisfactory progress must be maintained. All leave must be managed so that it has no adverse impact on the satisfactory completion of your PhD milestones.

⇒ Overseas Fieldwork

International students who undertake research-related fieldwork overseas must apply for this using the [online Leave of Absence form in HiQ](#). An official record of overseas fieldwork is kept and may be provided to relevant parties, e.g. sponsors, upon request.

⇒ **Leave of Absence (LOA)**

In exceptional circumstances you may apply for up to six months Leave of Absence (LOA) using the [online Leave of Absence form in HiQ](#). Further LOA will not be considered where it exceeds one year, when combined with earlier approved LOA periods. This applies whether you remain in Australia or return to your home country.

ESOS legislation prescribes that international students are strictly limited in the circumstances in which they can apply for leave of absence. LOA will only be considered on the grounds of extenuating circumstances (compassionate or compelling) and substantiated with evidence which demonstrate the circumstances were beyond your control and prevented you from continuing your studies during the requested leave period. Supporting documentation needs to be supplied to the Research Students Centre in conjunction with your online leave request.

The following examples are **not** grounds for LOA under ESOS legislation:

- Financial or study difficulties,
- Family obligations,
- Employment opportunities.

Taking leave while in receipt of a scholarship

Some scholarship schemes have provision for paid periods of leave of absence (i.e. sick leave, maternity leave). If you are in receipt of a scholarship you should refer to your scholarship's rules or guidelines so to fully consider the implications of your proposed leave on your stipend. You are encouraged to apply for leave early so that overpayment of your scholarship does not occur.

If you have any questions about how your planned period of leave might affect your scholarship, please contact the Research Students Centre's Scholarships Team (research.scholarships@qut.edu.au). Current Australia Awards students should contact QUT – Australia Awards Scholarships (ISS) (aas@qut.edu.au) team before applying for leave.

Tuition Fees and Refunds

International fee paying students must consider the implications that taking leave may have on their tuition fees and/or their ability to obtain a refund for tuition fees already paid.

As Leave of Absence requires withdrawal from a thesis or coursework unit/s, please consider the University's deadlines for unit withdrawal which are published at www.student.qut.edu.au/about/key-dates-and-academic-calendar/key-dates and <http://www.student.qut.edu.au/enrolment-and-orientation/enrolment/managing-your-enrolment/withdrawing-from-units>.

If you are eligible for a refund of your tuition fees, you may choose to leave the funds against your account for use in upon your return from LOA, or you can request a refund via the Application for Refund of International Tuition Fees Form (IR Form) which is available from the [QUT Refunds webpage](#).

For OSHC refunds, please contact your OSHC provider.

Returning from Leave

An absence from study may affect the status of your eCOE and/or your student visa. It is your responsibility to ensure that you contact QUT and apply for your student visa in sufficient time to enable you to return to your studies.

You **must contact** [QUT's International Compliance team](#) prior to your return to ensure that you have an active eCOE for your study. We also recommend that you contact the [Australian Government's Department of Immigration and Border Protection](#) to determine your visa status *before* returning to Australia. Note that visa processing timelines for countries may vary. You will need to provide evidence of Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) for the duration of your new student visa.

You are expected to return to QUT by the end of the specified Leave of Absence period and to enroll in full-time study. If you do not intend to return from Leave of Absence at the previously approved date you must inform [QUT's International Compliance team](#). Please note that QUT is obliged by law to report your student status to DIBP. If you have withdrawn from studies, when you wish to return to study, you will be required to make an application for re-admission. Please contact your Faculty to initiate this process.

International Research Student Checklist

- I am aware of the fee and visa implications for international students intending to take Leave of Absence.
- I am aware that I need to seek approval if I am planning to undertake overseas fieldwork as it may have fee or visa implications.
- I have included with my application certified medical certificates and official supporting documentation.
- I am aware that confidential advice and Counselling is available and that all international students are encouraged to speak to an International Student Advisor/Counsellor from International Student Services for confidential advice before making a final decision to apply for Leave of Absence (p h 3138 2019 or email issadvice@qut.edu.au).
- I am aware that I should discuss my Student Visa situation with DIBP to determine whether I can stay in Australia during my approved leave period.
- Scholarship recipients only: I have consulted my scholarship's rules / my sponsor to ensure my entitlement for leave and am clear on the implications that my planned leave will have on my scholarship.

Information regarding parental leave and the implications of taking leave can be found on Page 4-5.

SUPERVISOR ADVICE REGARDING INTERNATIONAL STUDENT LEAVE

Thank you for your support of international candidates and acknowledgement of the special conditions that apply to their undertaking study in Australia because of Federal Government regulations (i.e. DIBPC, CRICOS and ESOS).

Please note that:

- your student should advise the University using the appropriate online leave form in HiQ, or by email, immediately if their circumstances change;
- your student must request approval from the University for any leave taken, though short periods of leave (less than 20 working days) only require approval from you as outlined above– always encourage your student to use the [Leave of Absence](#) form as a means of officially recording short term leave;
- if there are any concerns or questions about the students eligibility for leave, visa regulations, or fee entitlements please contact qut.intcompliance@qut.edu.au as they can answer or refer your enquiry to ensure timely and accurate resolution.

PARENTAL LEAVE

Candidates are entitled to receive up to twelve months parental (maternity/paternity/adoption) leave. The Research Degrees Committee must be notified and supplied with a medical certificate (and in the case of paternity leave a marriage certificate or statutory declaration showing the candidate's relationship to the mother), and the written endorsement of relevant faculty. Periods of parental leave will not be included as part of the leave of absence maximum.

LEAVE IMPLICATIONS

Candidates should be aware of the implications of taking leave. Where leave is approved, a place in the HDR course will be held for the student for an approved period of time. During this time, the candidate is not an enrolled student of the university. As a general rule, university resources usually available to enrolled candidates will not be available for those on Leave of Absence. Resources that may not be available include but are not limited to [insurance](#), access to buildings/rooms/laboratories, library access, IT services, access to supervisory team and other faculty staff. Candidates on leave are usually not paid a scholarship (dependent upon scholarship rules).

RELEVANT QUT POLICY

- QUT Manual of Policies & Procedures (MOPP) Section D/5.3 – HDR Candidates
http://www.mopp.qut.edu.au/D/D_05_03.jsp
- [PhD Course Regulations](#)
- QUT International Fee and Refund Policy (<http://www.student.qut.edu.au/fees-and-finances/withdrawing-from-courses-and-units/international-fee-and-refund-policy>)

Approval & modification history

| DATE | AUTHORITY | DETAILS |
|----------------|---|--|
| August 2016 | Research Students Centre (with executive approval of the RDC Chair) | Inclusion of note highlighting where information on parental leave and implications of taking leave can be found |
| 06 June 2016 | QUT Research Degrees Committee | Inclusion of information for Australia Award students under scholarship section and updated links |
| September 2014 | Research Students Centre (with executive approval of the RDC Chair) | Inclusion of Parental Leave (removed from PhD Course Regs), implications of leave and introductory section. |
| August 2012 | QUT Research Degrees Committee | Reviewed to conform with changes to MOPP D/5.3 and establishment of PhD Course Regulations (approved by UAB 27/7/12) |

Responsible Officer: Secretary, Research Degrees Committee