



Leave of Absence Policy: Education and Counselling

Title: Leave of Absence Policy
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Policy overview

Morling College recognises that students' circumstances may change over the course of their period of study and that there may be times when a Leave of Absence from their study may be required.

Morling College encourages students to effectively communicate their needs and altered circumstances with College staff in a timely manner in order to assist students when making decisions about their academic goals and expected outcomes. While advice may be given, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to manage their course enrolment and course completion within the expected timeframes.

Policy objectives

The objectives of this Policy are:

- To define a Leave of Absence (LOA)
- To define the scope of a Leave of Absence
- To define the guidelines when applying for a Leave of Absence

Definition of a Leave of Absence (LOA)

A LOA is a period of non-enrolment where the student has the intention to return to their studies at the end of the authorised period.

Policy scope

Inclusions:

This Policy is applicable to Counselling and Education students of Morling College. Theology students are required to comply with ACT policies governing Leave of Absence.

Exclusions:

Students who have not successfully completed at least one unit of study in the first Semester in the course from which they are applying for a Leave of Absence.

Students who have outstanding fees or fines may be excluded from taking a LOA until outstanding monies are paid.

Restrictions: All international students who are enrolled at Morling College. Restrictions apply as per the National Code 2007.

Policy guidelines

When applying for a LOA, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that they have enough time to complete the course of study before its time limit is reached.

The LOA is counted towards the maximum time required to complete the course. It does not allow for additional time to complete the course. For example, if a student takes two consecutive semesters of LOA, which is in effect one year's leave of absence, and the award is to be completed within a maximum of five years, then the student will have reduced the time to complete the award to four years.

1. General:

1.1. Leave of Absence (LOA) from a course of study at Morling College is only available to students who have successfully completed at least one unit of study in the first semester in their chosen course.

1.2. A single LOA is for a maximum of one semester during the course of study.

Students normally may apply for a maximum of four LOAs during their course of study providing that:

a) the periods of absence do not exceed two consecutive semesters, and

b) the student can complete the course requirements within the stated course time limits. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they understand the time constraints for course completion.

*Note: Semester 3 for Education students is an optional semester and therefore does not require a LOA if a student chooses not to enrol in that semester.

1.3. If a student anticipates that they will be requiring numerous LOA periods over the course of their studies then they should consider the following options:

Education students: may need to consider a *Variation to Enrolment* or a *Withdrawal* from the course; or application for *Special Leave*.

Counselling students: have the option of a *Suspension of Candidature*, *Withdrawal* or *Variation to Enrolment*.

1.4. LOA for a course of study must be made by the administration date prior to the commencement of the Semester for which the leave of absence is sought. LOAs do not attract a fee.

- 1.5. A student ceases to have rights to the Library and other Morling resources for the duration of their LOA.
 - 1.6. After a LOA period, a student must re-commence their studies through re-enrolment, withdrawal from the course or application for a suspension of candidature (Note: Suspension of Candidature only applies for Counselling students).
 - 1.7. If a student fails to reenrol in a unit in the course following two consecutive Semesters of LOA, they will be deemed to have withdrawn from the course.
 - 1.8. If a student fails to reenrol in a unit in the course following the completion of a fourth LOA they will be deemed to have withdrawn from the course.
 - 1.9. LOA is not an option for students at the time of the offer of a place in a course of study. Students need to refer to the *Deferral Policy*.
 - 1.10. LOA is not an option for a student mid-Semester. Students must refer to the *Deferral Policy*, *Suspension of Candidature Policy*, *Compassionate Withdrawal Policy* or the *Variation of Enrolment* options in order to understand the best option for them.
2. Re-commencement of studies:
 - 2.1. A student returning from a LOA re-enrols by following the normal re-enrolment process.
 - 2.2. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that their unit selections are appropriate within the Award's regulations, and that they have enough Semesters left in which to complete the Award before its time limit is reached. If the student is going to run out of time then they need to consider a *Suspension of Candidature* or *Withdrawal* from the course.

Notification of a Leave of Absence

1. Student Process

- The student needs to notify their respective Dean in writing that they wish to take a LOA.
- Notification may be emailed to:
 - The Dean of Education or Counselling
either: education@morling.edu.au or counselling@morling.edu.au
- The Dean will communicate with the student in order to understand the student's circumstances and to ensure the student understands the guidelines and consequences linked to the LOA.
- Towards the end of the approved LOA period, the student will either need to re-enrol, apply for an extension to the LOA period (if possible), withdraw from the course or apply for a suspension of candidature (only available for Counselling

students).

2. Administrative Process

- The Dean will notify the Registrar's office of a student's LOA notification.
- Registrar's Office will process the notification as it relates to administrative considerations. Student information will be updated on EduPoint to show the student's LOA status.
- Updating of EduPoint will trigger the Library system to suspend the student's borrowing rights and library access for the duration of the LOA period.
- Access to Moodle will be suspended for the duration of the LOA period.