

## Leave of Absence Policy

[Version 1.11]

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<b>Policy Approver</b>	QAC	<b>Effective Date</b>	16/02/2018		

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 The Institute for Education expects its course participants to maintain continuous registration in an academic programme. However, it is sometimes necessary or desirable for a course participant to take a leave from enrolment for a period of time. Such leaves will be handled in accordance with the Leave of Absence Policy.

## 2. Policy

2.1 The IfE recognises that situations may arise when a course participant may want to voluntarily interrupt their academic studies.

2.2 The IfE is committed to handling reasonable requests for leaves in a responsible manner.

2.3 This policy may not be used in lieu of disciplinary action to address any violations of IfE rules, regulations, policies, or practices.

2.4 A course participant who is granted a voluntary leave while on academic and/or disciplinary status will return to that same status.

## 3. Basis for Leave

3.1 Leave of absence may be requested for serious illness, or for personal reasons. A course participant who is granted leave of absence is still required to complete all course requirements. An approved leave of absence extends the specific period for obtaining a qualification.

3.2 Course Participants applying for leave of absence during the dissertation module must do so at least two months before the final deadline of submission.

3.3 Requests for leave of absence, submitted by probationary Course Participants, will be granted at the discretion of the Student Affairs Committee and in line with the [policies and procedures](#) of the IfE

#### 4. Timeliness and Duration of Leave

- 4.1 It is not possible to take leave of absence during the first semester of studies (16<sup>th</sup> September – 14<sup>th</sup> February).
- 4.2 The duration of the leave generally will be a minimum of a four (4) month period, to a maximum of twelve (12) months. An extension or reduction of the leave period may be granted for good cause.
- 4.3 The duration of studies, inclusive of any granted period of leave, should not exceed the maximum period of studies as defined in the [Extension to Duration of Studies Policy](#).

#### 5. Procedures

- 5.1 The course participant informs the Course Coordinator of the intention to temporarily suspend their academic studies. The Course Coordinator notifies the Manager Student Affairs accordingly.
- 5.2 The Manager Student Affairs contacts the course participant and makes a recommendation based on the needs presented by the said participant. The course participant is to be advised on the terms and conditions binding such absence before deciding to apply for Leave of Absence. The terms and conditions include but are not limited to;
- The maximum duration of studies for completion of qualification as outlined in the [Extension to duration of Studies Policy](#);
  - The possibility of re-structuring of programme. The course participant will be obliged to follow new modules not covered during the previous academic year;
  - The risk of not having the stream being offered during the following academic year. In such case the course participant will be re-enrolled once the stream is re-offered;
  - Re-enrolment is subject to an available position on the programme during the following academic year;
  - Modules which would have been followed but for which assessment has not been submitted, must be followed in their entirety the following academic year;
  - In the case where such absence will impact the Teaching Practice module, the course participant is to make the necessary arrangements to ensure that this module is carried out the following academic year in addition to other modules which are to be followed during the same academic year;
  - During the absence period, the course participant will not have access to any of the IFE resources and services.

- 5.3 The course participant will complete the [Leave of Absence Form](#) and provide supporting documentation (where applicable) via email on [ife.admissions@ilearn.edu.mt](mailto:ife.admissions@ilearn.edu.mt).
- 5.4 The request and information provided by the course participant will be considered by the Student Affairs Committee. The Student Affairs Committee will decide whether or not the course participant has established sufficient grounds for Leave of Absence. The course participant should normally receive a response from the Student Affairs Committee in writing of the approval or denial of the request for Leave of Absence within ten (10) business days (excluding weekends and public holidays). If the request is approved, the terms and conditions of the leave shall be set forth in the approval letter.
- 5.5 The Course Coordinator will be responsible for notifying the appropriate lecturers of the approval of the leave.

## **6. Return from a Voluntary Leave/Re-enrolment**

- 6.1 Six (6) weeks prior to the expiration of the approved leave of absence, the course participant must notify the IfE in writing, of the intention to return or otherwise. Course participants must take responsibility for their re-enrolment process by contacting their Course Coordinator and confirm their intentions within the stipulated timeframe.
- 6.2 A course participant who does not confirm their intention to resume studies within the stipulated timeframe must apply for readmission.
- 6.3 Failure to contact the Course Coordinator within the designated time period may result in the denial of re-enrolment.
- 6.4 Anyone who suspends the year and does not submit the assessment for modules he/she participated in, must re-follow the module/s in their entirety in order to be given the opportunity to submit an assessment at the first possible opportunity offered by the IfE following his/ her reinstatement in the course. The applicable course fees will apply accordingly.

## 7. Appeal of Decision Denying Re-enrolment:

- 7.1 A course participant may appeal a decision denying re-enrolment to the Appeals Board by completing the [Appeals Form](#) within ten (10) business days (excluding weekends and public holidays) of receiving the decision.
- 7.2 The Appeals Board shall review the record and any additional information submitted by the course participant and render a decision in line with the [Appeals Policy and Procedures](#)
- 7.3 The Appeals Board decision shall be final.
- 7.4 The Appeals Board may extend the time limits set forth above as necessary.

## 8. Confidentiality

- 8.1 The IfE will maintain the confidentiality of all information regarding Leaves of Absence in accordance with the law, and to the greatest extent consistent with the goal of processing such leaves.
- 8.2 All records concerning Leaves of Absence are confidential and the official copy of such records shall be retained by the IfE in which the course participant was enrolled at the time of the Leave and in accordance with the [Records Retention Schedule](#).
- 8.3 Access to these records is limited by appropriate law.

## 9. Relevant Documents

- [Appeals Form](#)
- [Appeals Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Extension to Duration of Studies Policy](#)
- [Leave of Absence Form](#)
- [Records' Retention Schedule](#)

## Version history

Originator	Version	Date	Changes Done
QA Dept.	1.0	16/02/2018	Initial Release
QA Dept.	1.1	08/10/2019	Updated procedures and re-enrolment article
Admissions Dept.	1.2	16/04/2020	Updated Return from a Voluntary Leave/Re-enrolment article
Admissions Dept.	1.3	05/01/2021	Updated Basis for Leave Updated email address under Procedures
Admissions Dept.	1.4	26/01/2021	Updated Basis for Leave
Admissions Dept.	1.5	14/01/2022	Updated Timeliness and Duration of Leave
Admissions Dept.	1.6	02/03/2022	Updated link to Leave of Absence Form
Admissions Dept.	1.7	01/06/2022	Updated procedures article
Admissions Dept.	1.8	04/05/2023	Updated Return from a Voluntary Leave/Re-enrolment article
QA Dept.	1.9	26/04/2024	Updated links
Admissions Dept.	1.10	30/05/2024	Updated Basis for Leave Updated Timeliness and Duration of Leave
QA Dept.	1.11	25/01/2025	Updated in line with re-branding guidelines