

Leave of Absence FAQ's

1. What is a Leave of Absence?

A Leave of Absence (LOA) is a **temporary** interruption in a student's program of study. LOA refers to the specific time period during an academic program when a student is not in attendance.

2. What is the difference between a Leave of Absence and a "break in attendance"?

A Leave of Absence (LOA) is planned in advance and approved as time not in attendance. A "break in attendance" is simply time spent not sitting in class, in which a student is considered withdrawn. If an approved LOA is in place, the student is still considered enrolled full time versus a "break in attendance", which may have implications to a student's financial aid package and the repayment of prior student loans (if applicable).

3. When do I have to apply for a Leave of Absence?

A student must contact their respective Academic Counselor to initiate the Leave of Absence (LOA) process. The counselor will then contact the Financial Aid Office to schedule an appointment with the student to complete the LOA counseling and to complete the required paperwork. The LOA process must be completed prior to any breaks in attendance.

NOTE: A LOA cannot be approved if a student requests it after their last night of attendance. **See Question 5 regarding Unforeseen Circumstances.**

4. How do I get an approved Leave of Absence?

In order for the student's Leave of Absence to be approved, the student must complete all of the necessary paperwork with their Academic Counselor (AC) (i.e. new Degree Plan, Course Schedule Change (CSC) form, etc.). The confirmed paperwork is sent to the Financial Aid Office where the student's Financial Aid Counselor (FAC) will put together the LOA paperwork and send it to the student. Once the student has signed the LOA form and returned it to their FAC, they must meet with the FAC for LOA counseling to go over the details of returning to the student's program of study, and review all of the financial aid implications regarding the LOA. Once that is complete, the FAC will sign the form and give it to the Student Services department to complete the process.

NOTE: All of this must be taken care of before the last night of attendance, so it is highly advised to start the LOA process at least 3 to 5 business days prior to the last night of attendance.

continued on reverse side...

Leave of Absence FAQ's cont...

5. What if I have unexpected circumstances come up? Can I still have an approved Leave of Absence (LOA)?

Possibly. We understand that unexpected circumstances can prevent a student from making their LOA request prior to their last night of attendance. This is called an Unforeseen LOA. Depending on the circumstances, some unexpected situations may not qualify for an Unforeseen LOA. Unforeseen circumstances may include, but are not limited to, medical and immediate family emergencies, college course cancellation and/or facility closure, and natural disasters. The student is urged to contact their Academic Counselor or Financial Aid Counselor immediately to begin the Unforeseen LOA process.

6. What happens if I cannot attend class on my scheduled return date from my Leave of Absence (LOA)?

If a student does not return as scheduled and physically sit back in class on their scheduled return date, the LOA is essentially null and void and turns into a "break in attendance" and the student is considered withdrawn (see question 2). The Financial Aid Office is then required to complete a Return of Funds calculation, dating back to the last day of attendance before the LOA began. Whatever amount of funds the student did not earn based on that withdrawal date has to be returned to the lender until the student physically sits back in class, at which point the funds can be requested back from the lender.

If you have questions or need to schedule your required LOA appointment with your Financial Aid Counselor, please contact Jessica Couser in the Financial Aid Office at 503.517.1564.