

Reviewed: June 2023

MACC Leave of Absence Policy

The Commission will consider approving a leave of absence or interruption from studies on a case-by-case basis and in exceptional circumstances. The Scholar should speak to the Secretariat team before completing the process of applying for a leave of absence or interruption of studies through their university.

Definition

A leave of absence refers to an authorised break in a Scholars' studies for a defined period, typically from 1-12 months. Scholars who suspend their studies for longer periods will likely return home to the USA and then return to the UK to resume their course at a date agreed by their university.

Approval Process

The Scholar is responsible for speaking to their university about the process for applying for a leave of absence, and the Secretariat can provide support if required. After speaking to the Secretariat and confirming the process with the university, the Scholar should demonstrate in writing to the Commission the reason for the leave of absence or interruption, provide details provided by the university on any necessary requirements and outline the proposed return date. Scholars should also include details of any impact on their course (i.e. repeat modules or delayed end date) or if there would be any additional costs. Depending on the situation, the Secretariat team might request further meetings to find out more information.

Terms and Conditions

The Scholars' award and stipend will be suspended on the date that the Scholar leaves the UK or the date that the leave of absence comes into effect, whichever is sooner. If the Scholar has already received their stipend for the period after this date, they may be required to return the outstanding funds. It is the responsibility of the Scholar to speak with the university, the sponsor of their visa, about any visa implications and to speak with their accommodation provider about any consequences from breaking their contract, if relevant. The Secretariat can provide support and help to signpost the Scholar if requested.

If the Scholar does not return from their Leave of Absence or finish their current course, then they would not meet the requirements of the award and would not be eligible to continue to the second year. The award would be terminated, and the Scholar would be expected to return in outstanding MACC-related funds (i.e. housing deposits).

During the leave of absence, the Scholar's enrolment on their current course would be suspended for the duration of the absence. It is the responsibility of the Scholar to complete any necessary steps provided by the university to ensure their return from the leave of absence, including re-enrolment and requesting a new CAS, if relevant. The Scholar should keep the Secretariat team up-to-date with their progress.

If the Scholar wishes to extend the Leave of Absence beyond what has been approved, the Scholar will need to seek approval from the Commission.