



Policy Title:

Authorized Leave for Undergraduate International Students Policy

University Classification & Policy Number:
S-001-24

Approval Body:
Senate

Responsible Designate:
The Provost and Vice-President, Academic is responsible for the development, administration, and review of this Policy.

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Not applicable

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Not applicable

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1.0 Policy Purpose

- 1.01 For International Students to take an official, Authorized Leave of absence from their studies at The University of Winnipeg (“University”), this Policy describes the process for complying with the conditions of their Study Permit pertaining to their status in Canada and their eligibility for a post-graduation work permit.
- 1.02 This Policy provides students with the necessary support they need during difficult times or unforeseen circumstances that disrupt their studies; ensures that the University facilitates student compliance with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) regulations; and outlines how to process Authorized Leaves for undergraduate students.

2.0 Definitions

The following definitions apply to terms as they are used in this Policy:

- 2.01 **Academic Term:** Designated Learning Institutions (DLIs) specify the number of hours and credits toward a degree, diploma, or certificate that are required for a student to hold full-time status. To be compliant with Study Permit conditions at the University, undergraduate International Students must enroll in Fall and Winter Academic Terms. (Spring term is optional.) Registration in the University’s Fall and Winter Academic Terms can be used to demonstrate that a student is actively pursuing their course of study (IRPR 220.1.1).
- 2.02 **Authorized Leave:** a temporary absence from studies for undergraduate International Students on Study Permits granted to allow International Students to take a leave during a regular Academic Term (i.e., outside of a Scheduled Break). In order to comply with the conditions of their Study Permit, IRCC permits students to provide evidence that their DLI has granted them an official leave from a regular term of their program due to extenuating

circumstances: officially called an “Authorized Leave.” An Authorized Leave must end within 150 days from its commencement and requires approval from the University.

- 2.03 **Change of Status:** the process of altering the legal status in Canada with IRCC. This may involve a change from being a student to becoming a visitor or a change from being a student to obtaining a temporary work permit in Canada. If students were to decide to switch to a visitor or work permit during a break, they can resume their studies if their Study Permit remains valid.
- 2.04 **Compliance with Study Permit Conditions:** Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulation (IRPR) 220.1 outlines the conditions for a Study Permit holder. IRPR 220.1.1 stipulates that “The holder of a Study Permit in Canada is subject to the following conditions:
- a) they shall enroll at a designated learning institution and remain enrolled at a designated learning institution until they complete their studies; and
 - b) they shall actively pursue their course or program of study.”
- IRPR 220.1, subsection 4 addresses evidence of compliance with conditions:
- “The holder of Study Permit must provide evidence to an officer of their compliance with the conditions.”
- 2.05 **Designated Learning Institutions (DLIs):** a post-secondary Learning Institution located in a province that is designated by the province for the purposes of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations on the basis that the Institution meets provincial requirements in respect of the delivery of education and has entered into an agreement or arrangement with the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration in respect of post-secondary Learning Institutions in Canada that host International students; or, a Learning Institution that is administered by a federal department or agency; or any primary or secondary level Learning Institution in a province.
- 2.06 **Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC):** the Canadian federal government department responsible for immigration, refugees, and Canadian citizenship. IRCC provides permits and visas for individuals who intend to temporarily stay in Canada; this includes students, workers, and visitors.
- 2.07 **International Student(s):** a person who requires a Study Permit from IRCC to pursue studies in Canada until the Study Permit’s expiry date and those who have temporary status or another permit that grants them permission to study in Canada for a shorter period.
- 2.08 **Scheduled Break:** a designated time within a study program where students have the choice to take a temporary break from their studies. Each DLI sets its own Scheduled Breaks. Examples of Scheduled Breaks include reading week, the spring/summer term, and the winter holiday break.
- 2.09 **Study Permit:** a document issued by IRCC that allows people from other countries to study at DLIs in Canada for the duration of the program of study.
- 2.10 **Supporting Documentation:** adequate documentation to support the justification behind filing an Authorized Leave request.

3.0 Scope

- 3.01 This Policy applies to undergraduate students in all Faculties who are classified as International Students and require a Study Permit to take courses at the University.

4.0 Policy Elements

4.01 Procedures

- 4.01.01 International Student Services (ISS) will consider requests from international undergraduate students for an Authorized Leave from their studies, due to extenuating circumstances.
- 4.01.02 If approved, a letter will be issued by ISS to the student, confirming their Authorized Leave and pertinent details such as the time period for the leave.

4.02 Types of Leaves and Required Supporting Documentation

- a) medical (physician's report);
- b) parental (proof of pregnancy/birth/adoption or physician's report);
- c) compassionate (written explanation; additional documentation may be requested based on circumstances);
- d) course availability – a course not offered that students require in their final term to graduate (confirmation by an academic advisor is required);
- e) suspension (confirmed by academic advisor); or
- f) other leaves that may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

4.03 Process

- 4.03.01 The student should promptly connect with International Student Services (ISS) regarding their request as soon as they are aware of the extenuating circumstances requiring a leave.
- 4.03.02 The student must seek advice from both an International Academic Advisor and an Immigration Student Advisor because the leave may have an impact on both areas.
- 4.03.03 Following discussions with the advisors, the student must provide:
- a) a Request for Authorized Leave form;
 - b) appropriate documentation for the type of leave; and
 - c) a copy of a valid Study Permit and passport.
- 4.03.04 An ad hoc Authorized Leave committee consisting of one academic advisor, one immigration advisor, and one department manager (who is a coordinator or director) will evaluate the request.
- 4.03.05 In accordance with IRCC guidelines, the Authorized Leave can be approved for a maximum duration of 150 days.
- 4.03.06 Upon approval, ISS will issue a letter confirming that the Authorized Leave has been granted.

4.04 Third Party Authorization

- 4.04.01 If the student is incapacitated and unable to meet with an advisor, the authorized individual listed in the student's record can submit the necessary documentation to the office.

- 4.04.02 Any documents provided will be treated with confidentiality in accordance with the University's Privacy Policy and associated legislation. All communications will be conducted using the University's webmail system.
- 4.04.03 A student can authorize a designated third party to be added to the student's file as someone permitted to act on their behalf, following the established University procedures.

4.05 Add / Drop Course Deadline, Tuition Refunds, and Other Policies

- 4.05.01 The Authorized Leave for Undergraduate International Students Policy is for immigration purposes only. It will not replace existing University academic policies (such as the Student Financial Appeal Policy), withdrawal regulations, fee and refund schedules, or other deadlines.
- 4.05.02 In the event that a student is unable to continue a term due to extenuating circumstances, they must withdraw from all of their currently enrolled courses before the add/drop deadline to prevent any negative academic consequences.
- 4.05.03 If the decision to withdraw is made after the add/drop deadline, the student must still withdraw from all courses before the voluntary withdrawal date to avoid receiving failing grades on their transcript.
- 4.05.04 This Policy does not support students in appealing their grades or receiving a tuition refund if they fail to inform or take action within the specified deadlines or follow the academic policies and regulations.

4.06 IRCC Decision and Compliance

- 4.06.01 An Authorized Leave does not guarantee approval of a Visa/Study Permit application by IRCC. The IRCC retains the authority to determine whether a student's Visa/Study Permit application is approved. The letter in support of an Authorized Leave serves as additional documentation to support evidence of compliance.
- 4.06.02 While on Authorized Leave, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that their Study Permit remains valid and that they are compliant with all conditions, including refraining from work while not studying.
- 4.06.03 It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they have adequate medical insurance during their Authorized Leave.

5.0 Relevant Legislation

- [Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations](#)

6.0 Related Policies, Procedures and Institutional Documents

- [International Student Health Care Coverage Policy](#)
- [Privacy Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Respectful Working and Learning Environment Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Student Financial Appeal Policy](#)