

# Leave of Absence

Temporary interruptions in the student's program due to medical or serious personal reasons may be allowed through the process of a Leave of Absence. The U.S. Department of Education (DOE) has imposed strict regulations (34 C.F.R. 668.d) which limit leaves of absences to less than 180 calendar days during any one twelve-month period. The allowable time frame for an approved Leave of Absence may range from 2 weeks to six months (180 calendar days).

Students must submit a Leave of Absence Request Form that includes a dated request for a leave of absence and the reason for the request, prior to the leave of absence, to be approved by BU Academic Leadership, unless an emergency prohibits submission of the form.\* The University will respond to a submitted LOA request form within 3 business days.

Examples of circumstances that may qualify a student for LOA include but are not limited to: military duty; serious injury or illness of a student that prevents the student from attending school; serious injury or illness of a family member that prevents the student from attending school; death in the immediate family; maternity; jury duty; or extenuating circumstances as approved by BU Academic Leadership.

As per Department of Education requirements, if a student does not resume attendance at or before the end of a leave of absence the student will be considered as a withdrawal and enact cancellation.

An Approved LOA must meet the following guidelines:

- The student has completed their first term.
- The LOA cannot be granted for academic reasons (i.e., to keep a student from failing).
- There must be a reasonable expectation that the student will return from LOA.
- A student returning from a LOA must resume classes at the same point in the academic program that he or she began the LOA.
- If an LOA occurs anytime during a term or course in progress, students will be required to retake those courses in their entirety. Students will receive a W grade for such courses. (Not applicable to military students.)
- If a student is a Title IV recipient, the student must consult with the institution about the requirements and regulations of his/her financial aid status (grace period, repayment, etc.) prior to being granted an LOA. The information that will be provided will include the financial consequences if the student fails to return from LOA.
- If a student who has received Title IV loans fails to return from a LOA, the Federal loan grace period begins retroactively from the date the leave began. (If students do not return following the LOA period, the University must apply its refund policy in accordance with state and federal guidelines.)
- Upon return from LOA, the institution may not assess the student any additional institutional charges. Therefore, the student is not eligible for any additional federal student aid (Title IV funds).
- Students will not be eligible for any financial aid while on LOA and may be required to complete additional financial aid documents.
- Students making tuition payments to the University remain under that obligation during a LOA.
- Students who fail to return from LOA on the scheduled date will be dismissed from the program. This may impact a student's loan repayment obligations. (Not applicable to military students.)

Students granted an LOA will be classified as being on an "Approved LOA" as defined by the Department of Education. Bryan University Registrar's Office may, at its discretion, extend or shorten the LOA to coincide with the nearest class start date, not to exceed 180 days total. A student's approved LOA will be sent to the registrar via email with the appropriate signatures. Other key BU entities will also be notified that the student has been granted an LOA.

An additional LOA or LOA extension, not to exceed 180 days, may be granted in limited, appropriately documented cases, due to unforeseen circumstances. The additional days of LOA cannot exceed the total of 180 days of LOA in a 12-month period. In the event that a student has already taken a leave of absence of 180 days and is then faced with another emergency, federal regulations require that the student officially terminate from school.

The student will be contacted by a BU representative throughout the LOA to work with the student to return according to the approved timeframe for the LOA.