

Leave of Absence (LoA)

What is a Leave of Absence?

A Leave of Absence (LoA) is a period during which a student is granted permission by the University to temporarily suspend their studies for a semester or up to one academic year. Leave of Absence is considered only in specific circumstances and must be formally approved by the Faculty. See Rule G16 in [Handbook 3](#) and General Faculty Rule FGU7 in [Handbook 8a](#).

A Leave of Absence may be approved for the following reasons:

- Medical grounds
- Compassionate grounds
- Maternity leave
- External study opportunities (other than a formal exchange programme)

Before You Apply

Before submitting an application, students should carefully consider the academic, financial, and progression implications of taking leave.

Please note:

- Leave of Absence is not automatic and requires approval.
- Supporting documentation must be submitted with every application.
- Applications submitted without the required supporting documents cannot be processed.
- Leave of Absence is not normally approved for two consecutive years unless specifically recommended by the Fit for Study Panel

How to Apply

Step 1: Complete the Application Form

Download and complete the Leave of Absence Application Form (ACA37/38):

<https://forms.uct.ac.za/studentforms.htm>

Step 2: Upload Your Application

Submit the completed application form and all supporting documents through the PeopleSoft Self-Service portal.

Step 3: Faculty Review

Your application will be reviewed by the Faculty Manager: Academic Administration.

Please note that only the Faculty Manager may approve a Leave of Absence application in accordance with University policy.

Step 4: Outcome

You will receive written confirmation of the outcome of your application and any conditions relating to your return to study.

Required Supporting Documents

Medical Leave of Absence

Submit:

- Completed ACA37/38 application form
- Supporting documentation from your treating healthcare practitioner(s)

If your medical leave is approved, you will be provided with information regarding the Return from Leave of Absence process, which may include assessment by the Fit for Study Panel before you are permitted to resume your studies.

Compassionate Leave

Submit:

- Completed ACA37/38 application form
- Death certificate of a close relative, or
- Other relevant supporting documentation demonstrating the circumstances requiring leave

Students returning from compassionate leave are not normally required to undergo a Fit for Study assessment. They must notify the Faculty Office of their intention to return.

Maternity Leave

Submit:

- Completed ACA37/38 application form
- Confirmation of professional medical care during the pregnancy
- A letter from the healthcare practitioner confirming:
 - Expected delivery date
 - Delivery plan

Students returning from maternity leave are not normally required to undergo a Fit for Study assessment. Students should contact the Faculty Office to confirm their intention to return. Any significant changes affecting the approved leave period must be communicated to the Faculty.

External Study Opportunity

Submit:

- Completed ACA37/38 application form
- Approval/support letter from the supervisor
- Confirmation from the host organisation or institution

Application Timeframes

Students registered in year-long or semester courses should normally submit a Leave of Absence application within the first 10 weeks of the relevant semester.

Applications submitted:

- Retrospectively,
- After approximately two-thirds of the course has been completed, or
- During the final quarter of the academic year,

are only considered in exceptional circumstances and must be accompanied by a detailed motivation and supporting documentation.

What Happens After Approval?

If your Leave of Absence is approved:

- You will receive a formal approval letter.
- Relevant information about your return to study will be provided.
- Your programme convenor and the Student Development and Support Office will be informed.

In addition:

- Fee rebates may apply depending on the timing of the approved leave and the University's Fee Policy.
- If approved after withdrawal deadlines, grades such as INC (Incomplete) or AB (Absent) may appear on your academic record.

Important Academic Implications

Students on Leave of Absence:

- May not attend classes or teaching activities.
- May not receive academic supervision.
- May not make use of University facilities.
- May not stay in University residences during the approved leave period.
- Retain access to their @myuct email account.

Please note that approval of Leave of Absence does not automatically guarantee future academic progression. Progression and readmission decisions remain subject to Faculty and Senate regulations.

Returning to Study**Medical Leave**

Students returning from medical leave will generally be required to complete the Return from Leave of Absence process and may need approval from the Fit for Study Panel before re-registering.

For students in the clinical years of the MBChB programme, an additional faculty assessment may be required before final approval to return is granted.

Compassionate Leave

Contact the Faculty Office to confirm your intention to return to your studies.

Maternity Leave

Contact the Faculty Office to confirm your intention to return to your studies.

External Study Opportunity

Follow the return instructions contained in your approval letter and contact the Faculty Office before registration.

Need Assistance?

If you are considering applying for a Leave of Absence and are unsure whether you meet the requirements, please contact the Faculty Office for advice before submitting your application.