

NACCAS' Policies January 2014

Policy IV.06 – Leave of Absence Policy

An authorized leave of absence (LOA) is a temporary interruption in a student's program of study. LOA refers to the specific time period during a program when a student is not in attendance. An LOA is not required if a student is not in attendance only for an institutionally scheduled break. However, a scheduled break may occur during an LOA.

An LOA must meet certain conditions to be counted as a temporary interruption in a student's education instead of being counted as a withdrawal requiring an institution to perform a refund calculation.

In order for an LOA to qualify as an approved LOA (if the institution elects to offer LOAs):

1. The institution must have a formal written policy regarding leaves of absence requiring that all requests for leaves of absence be submitted in advance in writing, include the reason for the student's request, and include the student's signature.
 - a. The policy must require a student to apply in advance for an LOA unless unforeseen circumstances prevent the student from doing so. For example, if a student were injured in a car accident and needed a few weeks to recover before returning to institution, the student would not have been able to request the LOA in advance.
 - b. An institution may grant an LOA to a student who did not provide the request prior to the LOA due to unforeseen circumstances, if the institution documents the reason for its decision and collects the request from the student at a later date. In this example, *the beginning date of the approved LOA would be determined by the institution to be the first date the student was unable to attend the institution because of the accident.*
2. The student must follow the institution's policy in requesting the LOA.
3. There must be a reasonable expectation that the student will return from the LOA.
4. Approval of the student's request for an LOA is in accordance with the institution's policy.
5. The institution may not assess the student any additional institutional charges as a result of the LOA.
6. The LOA together with any additional leaves of absence must not exceed a total of 180 days in any 12-month period.
7. A student granted an LOA that meets these criteria is not considered to have withdrawn, and no refund calculation is required at that time.
8. The institution must extend the student's contract period by the same number of days taken in the LOA. Changes to the contract period on the enrollment agreement must be initialed by all parties or an addendum must be signed and dated by all parties.
9. At an institution that is not required to take attendance, if a student does not return to the institution at the expiration of an approved LOA (or a student takes an unapproved LOA), the student's withdrawal date is the date the student began the LOA. At an institution required to take attendance, the withdrawal date for the purpose of calculating a refund is always student's last day of attendance. (See the NACCAS [*Withdrawal and Settlement Policy and Checklist*](#), see page 43).