

FS Leave of Absence Policy

Approved Leaves of Absence (LOA)

A 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 and will return to complete the program. Students returning from a LOA are not required to re-apply for admission but must re-register for their courses.

Unapproved Leaves of Absence

FS may grant a student a LOA that does not meet the conditions to be an approved LOA for Title IV purposes (for example, for academic reasons). However, any LOA that does not meet all of the conditions for an approved LOA is considered a withdrawal for Title IV purposes.

LOA and Withdrawal Request Forms

The form required by FS to request a LOA or a Withdrawal is available in the Study Advisory Office.

Approved LOA's

A 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 FS to perform a Return calculation. If a LOA does not meet the conditions and the student is considered to have ceased attendance and to have withdrawn from FS, FS is required to perform a Return calculation. In order for an LOA to qualify as an approved LOA –

1. All requests for LOA's must be submitted in writing to the Program Director or Study Advisor and include the reason for the student's request. The form must be signed and dated by the student and specify the date the student wants the LOA to begin and end.
2. Students must apply in advance for an LOA unless unforeseen circumstances prevent the student from doing so.
3. The situation described as the reason for the LOA must be generally non-academic in nature and must be one that leads to a reasonable expectation that the student will return from the LOA within the allowed time frame.
4. The LOA together with any additional leaves of absence must not exceed a total of 180 days in any 12-month period including days in which school is not in session.

All requests for LOA's will be reviewed by the Program Director, Study Advisory and the Director of Financial Aid. The student will be notified in writing by Study Advisory of FS's decision. During the LOA, the institution will not charge the student any additional institutional charges, the student's financial need will not increase, and therefore, the student will not be eligible for any additional disbursements of Federal Student Aid.

A student granted an LOA that meets the criteria stated above is not considered to have withdrawn, and no Return calculation is required. Upon the student's return from the leave, he or she continues to earn the Federal Student Aid previously awarded for the period.

Completion of coursework upon return

In as much as approved leaves of absence are viewed as temporary interruptions in a student's attendance, and since the academic programs at FS are considered term-based programs, where the payment period is the term, a student returning from an LOA must do so at a time when he or she can complete the term in order to complete the payment period and be eligible to receive a second or subsequent disbursement. Therefore,

for students enrolled in credit-hour term programs, in order for an LOA to be an LOA, the school must allow a student returning from an LOA to complete the coursework that he or she began prior to the LOA.

Students who return earlier than anticipated

FS may permit a student to return to class before the expiration of the student's LOA in order to review material previously covered. However, until the student has resumed the academic program at the point where he or she began the LOA, the student is considered to still be on the approved LOA. The days the student spends in class before the course reaches the point at which the student began his or her LOA must be counted in the 180 days maximum for an approved leave of absence. A student repeating coursework while on LOA must reach the point at which he or she interrupted training within the 180 days of the start of the student's LOA.

Student who fail to return from LOA's

If a student does not return to FS 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.

Explanation of consequences of withdrawal to loan recipients

A student who is granted an approved LOA is considered to remain in an in-school status for Title IV loan repayment purposes. If a student on an approved LOA fails to return, FS must report to the loan holder the student's change in enrolment status as of the withdrawal date. One possible consequence of not returning from an LOA is that a student's grace period for a Title IV program loan might be exhausted. Therefore, in order for a LOA to be an approved LOA, prior to granting a leave of absence, FS must inform a student who is a Title IV loan recipient of the possible consequences a withdrawal may have on the student's loan repayment terms, including the exhaustion of the student's grace period.

Unapproved LOA's

FS may grant a student an LOA that does not meet the conditions to be an approved LOA for Title IV purposes (for example, for academic reasons). However, any LOA that does not meet all of the conditions for an approved LOA is considered a withdrawal for Title IV purposes. The student's withdrawal date is the date the student begins the LOA. An unapproved LOA may be treated as an official withdrawal since the school would have previously granted an LOA. Therefore, FS would know immediately that the student had ceased attendance for Title IV purposes, and must use the specified withdrawal date in the Return calculation.