

Leave of Absence Policy

*Ashoka University, Office of Academic Affairs
(approved by the Academic Council on Mar 16, 2021)*

Exceptional circumstances, such as health- or family-related difficulties, may arise in which a student takes their best option to be that of taking a leave of absence (LOA). The following regulations specify the procedure governing such requests followed by the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA).

Exceptions from this policy must be approved by the OAA.

1. A LOA must always be requested and can only be granted for one full semester only.
 - 1.1 If the request for a LOA is received within eight weeks of the start of the semester and if the request is subsequently granted, the OAA will update the student's semester status to LOA, remove the student from all the courses they are enrolled in and inform the student's professors. As a result, the semester disappears from the student's transcript.
 - 1.2 If the request for a LOA is received after eight weeks of the start of the semester and if the request is subsequently granted, the semester will not be removed from the student's transcript. The OAA will withdraw the student from all courses with a WX grade and inform their professors about the LOA.
 - 1.3 If before the point in time a request for an LOA is approved (or after, viz. in case a decision on an alleged Academic Integrity Violation is pending) a final grade has been given to the student for a course in the semester for which the LOA is requested, then even if the LOA is granted, that final grade will stay on the transcript.
2. To request a LOA, the student must send an email intimating their request and providing their reasons for their request to the OAA.
3. Generally, not more than three LOAs may be granted to a student during the first three years of the 3-year UG programme. Late graduates are permitted one LOA in the 4th and 5th year of the program provided the total number of LOAs does not exceed four.
4. In general, for students enrolled in the Ashoka Scholars Programme (ASP), the Master of Liberal Studies Programme (MLS), one of Ashoka's M.A. programmes, and PhD students, no more than two LOAs can be granted.
 - 4.1 As per UGC guidelines, ASP students must complete their ASP by the end of their 6th year after the beginning of their UG studies.
 - 4.2 ASP students who are late UG graduates or who have taken a gap year after UG graduation before taking up their ASP may thus not be eligible for further LOAs as taking a LOA would make them exceed the maximum allowed duration of study listed in 4.1.
 - 4.3 For MLS, M.A., and PhD students, requests for LOAs should be supported by an email from their respective advisor(s).

5. Students, it is assumed, are aware of and take full responsibility for the implications that opting for an LOA has on their future studies, such as, e.g., the fact that they are likely to graduate late and thus, if they are undergraduate students, not automatically eligible for enrolling into the ASP after their UG graduation (see the [ASP Guidelines](#)). It is recommended that students approach the OAA or concerned office(s) for clarifications, where required, or the discussion of alternate options.
6. The OAA may request additional material from the student. Examples are:
 - 6.1 by default, the OAA will require that the student's guardian support the student's request by sending a confirmation email regarding the LOA from the email account registered with the OAA.
 - 6.2 if a UG student requests a third LOA, they will be required to submit a formal undertaking, co-signed by their guardian. The undertaking form is available from the OAA on request.
 - 6.3 as indicated in 4.3. above, for MLS, M.A., and PhD students, requests for a LOA need to be supplemented by an approval email from their respective advisor(s).
7. Upon receipt of all relevant material, and if the LOA is granted, the student will be informed and information about the student's LOA will be shared with relevant departments such as Finances, the Registrar's Office, and the Office of Student Affairs.
8. Holding fees of Rs 20000/- will be charged if a student applies LOA within one month of the semester start and thereafter pro rata basis charges will be levied on Tuition and Hostel fees.
9. To be reinstated after a LOA, a student must request reinstatement with the OAA in a timely fashion. Students should be mindful of the fact that pre-registration for the next semester takes place much before the semester begins. It is advised that students be proactive and get in touch with the OAA in a timely fashion so as to ensure that they will be able to take part in the preregistration process.