



Policy Title:	Student Leave of Absence Policy
Policy Number:	2005

1. Policy Statement

St. Matthew's University (SMU) recognizes that students may occasionally need to interrupt their studies for a limited period of time.

Students must be registered and enrolled at all times unless they have received written approval for a Leave of Absence.

A Leave of Absence may be granted only with written approval from the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs or their designee. Students may take only two Leaves of Absence during their entire program at SMU, and only two Leaves of Absence for one semester each may be granted.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish the requirements for requesting, approving, and recording a Leave of Absence for students.

This policy is intended to ensure that students understand the academic, registration, financial, and program progression implications of taking time away from their studies.

3. Policy

Eligibility for Leave of Absence

A student may request a Leave of Absence where they require approved time away from their studies.

Acceptable reasons for requesting a Leave of Absence may include:

- Financial hardship where the student needs time away to raise funds for their education;
- Illness or injury affecting the student;
- Illness or injury affecting a family member that requires the student's presence; or
- Limited time away to take advantage of an educational opportunity, including travel, research, or classes elsewhere.

Each request is subject to approval.

Approval of Leave of Absence

The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, or their designee, will consider requests for a Leave of Absence.

Approval will be based on whether a semester away is likely to allow the student to resolve the situation and whether the student's performance and behaviour suggest a reasonable chance of success upon return.

A Leave of Absence is not automatic and is granted at the discretion of the University.

Number and Duration of Leaves

Students may take only two Leaves of Absence during their entire career at SMU.

Only two Leaves of Absence for one semester each may be granted.

Students who require additional time away from studies may be required to apply for readmission when they are ready to resume their education.

Registration During Leave

Students granted a Leave of Absence must register during the Leave of Absence to maintain their place in the program.

Students are not automatically considered enrolled.

If a student fails to enrol and does not have an approved Leave of Absence, the student's status may become "Withdrawn" and the student may be required to apply for readmission.

Administrative and Financial Obligations

Students granted a Leave of Absence will be charged the applicable administrative fee.

Students may be required to begin paying any outstanding debt to SMU if they fail to enrol for the next semester or take an unapproved leave.

Students with financial aid or student loans are responsible for understanding how a Leave of Absence may affect repayment obligations, funding eligibility, or other financial aid requirements.

Unapproved Leave

A student who takes time away from studies without an approved Leave of Absence may be placed in "Withdrawn" status.

Students who are not granted an official Leave of Absence may apply for readmission when they are ready to resume their education.

Readmission is not guaranteed and will be subject to applicable University requirements.

Return from Leave

A student returning from an approved Leave of Absence must follow all registration requirements for the return semester.

The student may be required to return at the beginning of the next appropriate semester, subject to program sequencing, course availability, academic standing, and University approval.

A student who does not return from an approved Leave of Absence at the specified time may be withdrawn or administratively dismissed, subject to University requirements.

Program and Academic Implications

A Leave of Absence may affect a student's academic progression, course sequencing, clinical rotation timing, financial aid, immigration status, and overall program completion timeline.

Students are responsible for understanding the implications of a Leave of Absence before submitting a request.

No Leave of Absence will normally be granted after a student has completed all Basic Science and Clinical coursework.

No Leave of Absence will normally be granted after the end of the registration period.

4. Definitions

These definitions apply to terms as they are used in this policy.

Word/Term	Definition
Leave of Absence	A period of time due to personal circumstances during which the student is absent from their studies after approval from the University.
Withdrawn	A student status that may apply when a student fails to enrol, does not have an approved Leave of Absence, or does not return from an approved Leave of Absence as required.

5. Responsibility

Students are responsible for requesting a Leave of Absence in advance and providing all required information and documentation to support the request.

Students are responsible for understanding the academic, registration, financial, immigration, student loan, and program progression implications of a Leave of Absence.

Students are responsible for registering during an approved Leave of Absence to maintain their place in the program.

Students are responsible for returning at the approved time and completing all registration requirements for the return semester.

The Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, or designee, is responsible for reviewing Leave of Absence requests and determining whether the request is approved or denied.

The Registrar is responsible for maintaining records of approved Leaves of Absence, student status, registration, withdrawal, and readmission requirements.

Student Accounts or Financial Services is responsible for advising on outstanding balances, administrative fees, and financial implications related to the Leave of Absence.

Student Services is responsible for supporting students in understanding the academic and student support implications of a Leave of Absence