



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa

Rhodes University Policy On Leave of Absence for Students

Policy Volume	Volume A - Academic Faculty & Students
Policy Chapter	Student Affairs
Responsible Committee/Unit/Division/Faculty	Division of Student Affairs
Responsible Chairperson/Director/Manager	Director: Student Affairs
Dates of First and Subsequent Council Approvals	
Policy Approval Pathways (e.g. committee, Senex, Senate, Council)	Student Services Council, Teaching & Learning, Faculty Boards, Senate, Council
Revision History: Approved Reviews	2010, 2015, 2019
Review Cycle (e.g., every 2/5/7 years etc.)	5 years
Next Review Date	2027

1. POLICY PARTICULARS

1.1. Policy Title	Policy for Leave of Absence for students
1.2. Policy Statement	Rhodes University strives to produce outstanding internationally recognised graduates who are innovative, analytical, balanced and adaptable. Students are therefore expected to adhere to all academic requirements and be provided with all the necessary support.
1.3. Reason for Policy	To ensure support is provided to students of Rhodes University for academic success.
1.4. Policy Objective/s	The policy aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Support the academic focus of the university by requiring students to attend to academic activities unless special circumstances prevail.● Outline the particular circumstances in which students may be granted a leave of absence.● Recognise the need to grant a leave of absence to students who can provide evidence that they are physically or psychologically unwell.● Recognise the need to grant leave of absence to students who are participating in sporting, cultural/religious or leadership activities.
1.5. People affected by this Policy	All students of Rhodes University.
1.6 Who should read this Policy	All divisions within the University.
1.7 Implementers of this Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The Division of Student Affairs● Academic Departments● Registrar
1.8 Website address/link for this Policy	https://www.ru.ac.za/institutionalplanningunit/policies/

2. RELATED DOCUMENTS FORMS AND TOOLS

<p>Relevant Legislation (Legislation/Regulatory requirements/Organisational Reports – name these)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 ● The Higher Education Act,1997 ● The Mental Health Care Act , 2002 ● The South African Nursing Council rules ● The Health Professions Amendment Act, 2007 ● The Traditional Health Practitioners Act,2007 ● The National Health Act, 2003(Emergency Medical Services Regulations)
<p>Related Policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student Disability Policy ● Rhodes University Calendar (General Rules)
<p>Related Protocols</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pregnancy Protocol
<p>Forms and Tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Application for leave of Absence form ● Aegrotat Application form

3. POLICY DEFINITIONS

(Technical or Conceptual terms used in the policy)

No	TERM	DEFINITION
3.1	General Leave of Absence	A period of time granted to a student to be absent from university due to genuine circumstances beyond their control (which can be on medical; psychological; traditional/religious/leadership or ceremonial grounds) the period of which may not exceed two weeks.
3.2	Extended Leave of Absence	A period exceeding general leave of absence granted to a student to be away from the University due to medical/ psychological/ other circumstances covered by this policy. This is subject to the General University Rule (G.12).
3.3	Supporting Document	A letter providing grounds to endorse the leave of absence application. Medical grounds for a leave of absence to be supported by a medical certificate signed by

		a duly registered medical practitioner for general, psychological and psychiatric reasons as the case may be. Supporting documents will be recognised as being aligned to and evidencing the grounds for leave of absence.
3.4	Traditional Health Practitioners Council of South Africa	A juristic person established by section 4 of the Traditional Health Practitioners Act, 2007. This is the body that serves and protects the interests of members of the public that use the services of traditional health practitioners(also called healers).
3.5	Emergency Care	The evaluation, treatment and care of an ill or injured person in need of such care. This includes the continuation of treatment or care during the transportation of the person to or between health establishments.

4. PRINCIPLES GOVERNING THIS POLICY

OVERVIEW
Rhodes University strives to carry out the following, as far as is reasonably practicable:
<p>4.1 Observe Confidentiality.</p> <p>4.2 Ensure that every student is afforded an opportunity to Education.</p> <p>4.3 Leave of absence shall be granted in cases of genuine ill- health, sporting, cultural or religious activities on condition that the application meets the requirements.</p> <p>4.4 The leave of absence approval is at the discretion of the Head of Department.</p> <p>4.5 Leave of Absence does not excuse students from work which must be submitted or written, submissions will be deemed due within 1 week of the submission and approval of the LoA.</p>

5. DIRECTIVES FOR IMPLEMENTING THIS POLICY

<p>5.1 Supporting students on Medical grounds.</p> <p>5.1.1 All applications for Leave of Absence on medical grounds must be supported by a General Practitioner (including the Health Care Centre sessional Doctor).</p> <p>5.1.2 The Health Care Centre nursing staff may not support an application but may assist the locum Doctor by recording symptoms on the patient's files which are then presented to the doctor for approval.</p>

5.1.3 LOAs will **NOT be supported** in the following circumstances:

- a) when a healthy student comes to claim a retrospective LOA for being sick at a time prior to the consultation;
- b) when a student misses a lecture or test while waiting to be seen but proves to be in good health when attended to;
- c) provision a and b above are subject to the discretion of the HoD.

5.2 Supporting students on Psychological grounds

5.2.1 All applications **must be supported by** a registered Psychologist.

5.2.2 In the event that a student was seen by an Intern Psychologist, the supervising Psychologist must countersign.

5.2.3 A request for support for an LOA is a professional decision and is granted at the discretion of the Psychologist.

5.3 Leave of absence on compassionate grounds

5.3.1 In the case of the death or terminal illness of a close family member (grandparents, parents, siblings, child or a significant other), or friend, students will be granted 5 consecutive weekdays of compassionate leave that can be extended at the discretion of the Head of Department.

5.3.2 In case of such terminal illness of a close family member or significant other, written support from a medical practitioner must be submitted before the LOA will be granted. The evidence should normally be supplied within 2 weeks of the student returning to the University.

5.3.3 In the case of death of a close family member, the Head of Department may request evidence (e.g. a certified copy of the relevant death certificate or an affidavit confirming the death) before the LOA is granted. This evidence should normally be supplied within 2 weeks of the student returning to the University.

5.4 Support for traditional/ religious ceremonies

5.4.1 All applications must be **supported by** a recognised traditional leader, religious leader, a ward or local government councillor, or justice of peace in the student's community.

5.4.2 In the cases of cultural ceremonies that are planned at specific times of the year (e.g. circumcision, umhlanga, or umkhosi/incwala/ weddings) students are required to get approval at least one week before the ceremony.

5.5 Support for students participating in sporting/extra- mural activities/ leadership activities

5.5.1 Students may apply for a LOA for a competitive sporting event or extra- mural commitment, at provincial, national or international level and where representing Rhodes University in this manner.

5.5.2 Students may apply for LOA for attendance at practices which take place after 17h00 on a weekday and over weekends during the **two weeks preceding** a scheduled provincial, national or international event.

5.5.3 No late applications (submitted after an event) will be supported. The application should normally be made at least ONE week in advance of the event, and must be accompanied by all relevant supporting documentation.

5.5.4 The application for sporting activities should be **supported by** the Head of Sports Administration or administrators with delegated authority.

5.5.5 The SRC may apply for an LOA for leadership commitments and those will be supported by the Student Development and Support Officer with final approval by the Head of Department.

5.5.6 The application should be supported by the Student Development and Support Officer for extra-mural activities/ university meetings or conferences.

5.5.7 The extent of absence should be taken into consideration and the student must be aware that academic requirements need to be met for DP approval and course requirements.

5.5.8 Should a requested LOA not be granted, the affected student may request the Head of Sports Administration or The Director of Student Affairs to appeal to the Head of Department on their behalf.

5.6 Support for students who will be away for an extended period

5.6.1. An application for a student to be away for a period longer than two weeks is to be submitted to the Director Student Affairs with the relevant documentation.

5.6.2 The *Director Student Affairs* will write a letter to the student, advising them that they are required to take leave of absence in order to recover and resolve their psychological; medical; pregnancy or cultural concerns.

5.6.3 The Division of Student Affairs will inform the Academic Dean, the Registrar Division and the warden.

5.6.4 Students on an extended LOA are de-registered from all courses and entitled to a fee rebate where applicable in line with 5.6.6 below.

5.6.5 A case management meeting will be held with the student, parent/caregiver and Academic Dean to discuss the options for possible continuation of studies once psychiatric/ psychological treatment has been received so that support can be provided as far as possible should the student seek to recommence with their studies. The nature of the student's curriculum and the extent of absence may make it necessary for the student to resume studies the following year.

5.6.6 The academic and residence fees of students on an extended LOA will be charged pro-rata. The full academic and residence fees may be waived on compassionate grounds.

5.6.7 Students may be given an option to keep their rooms on the condition that they will pay for the period they are away.

5.6.8 Before returning to Rhodes University the student must submit a medical/ psychological report from a medical practitioner/ psychologist/ psychiatrist or a report from a traditional leader confirming that the student is ready to resume studies. Such reports are considered by the Director: Student Affairs. If the Director: Student Affairs is satisfied with the reports, the relevant Academic Dean will consider the application for readmission and re-registration for courses from which the student was previously de-registered and any new courses.

5.6.9 Following re-admission and re-registration, students may apply for any aegrotat examinations for courses for which they were in possession of a Duly Performed Certificate at the time of de-registration.

5.6.10 Students who are re-admitted and re-registered for courses or granted aegrotat examinations for any courses will have any fees previously reduced pro rata reinstated in full.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

(Roles and responsibilities of Key personnell/Divisions/Faculties/Departments)

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Registrar	The Registrar is responsible for de-registering and re-registration of students that have been granted an extended LOA, from all courses.
Director of Student Affairs	The Director Student Affairs is responsible for supporting a leave of absence application based on cultural/ religious/ leadership commitments. The Director is also responsible for facilitating the process of issuing an extended leave of absence.
Dean of Faculties	All Deans will ensure that the strategies outlined in the policy are implemented in academic Departments.
Health Care Centre	The sessional Doctor is responsible for supporting leave of absence on medical grounds.
Counselling Centre	The Counselling centre is responsible for supporting leave of absence on Psychological grounds.
Sports Administration	The Manager Sports Administration is responsible for supporting leave of absence for sporting activities.

7. CONTACTS

Area of Concern	Division/Faculty/Department	Telephone	Email
Implementation	Student Affairs	046 603 8181	studentaffairs@ru.ac.za

8. POLICY REVIEW PROCEDURE

The policy will be reviewed at the end of the five-year cycle.

It will go through the following structures: Student Services Council, Teaching & Learning Committee, Faculty Boards, Senate, Council

Communication of the review process:

At the end of the five-year cycle the Director Student Affairs will facilitate a process for the review of the policy. The Review Committee will be comprised of the following representatives:

- Director: Student Affairs
- SRC President
- One Dean

- One HOD
- Head: Counselling Centre
- Head: Health Care Centre
- Manager: Sports Administration
- One Hall warden