

SECRETARIAT

ACADEMIC POLICY SUMMARY SHEET

NAME OF ACADEMIC POLICY:	Authorised Absence Policy
PURPOSE OF POLICY AND WHOM IT APPLIES TO:	<p>The policy aims to provide guidance to students and staff in relation to authorised absence.</p> <p>The policy applies to all students studying at any University campus, on placement or studying abroad.</p>
RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ COMMITTEE WITH ROUTE OF APPROVAL:	Education & Student Life Committee
LEAD STAFF MEMBER RESPONSIBLE FOR ITS UPDATE:	Director of Student Affairs
PERSONS CONSULTED IN DEVELOPING POLICY:	Members of the Education & Student Life Committee
POLICY FINALLY APPROVED BY:	Academic Board
DATE OF ORIGINAL IMPLEMENTATION:	January 2016 and revised periodically
DETAIL OF DISSEMINATION:	The policy was circulated to relevant staff in January 2016 and is available on the Secretariat's portal site.
PROPOSED DATE OF REVIEW	Annually
SECRETARIAT OFFICER – MAIN CONTACT:	Officer to Education & Student Life Committee
DATE:	April 2019



1. Purpose

The purpose of the Authorised Absence Policy (the Policy) is to form part of the Student Engagement and Participation Policy and to support students where they are unable to attend classes or engage with their studies. Authorised absence should only be requested in exceptional circumstances.

The policy applies to all students studying at any University campus, on placement or studying abroad and aims to provide guidance to students and staff in relation to authorised absence.

In addition, the Authorised Absence Policy enables the University to support international students in complying with the Home Office's Tier 4 visa requirements.

2. Authorised Absence Process

All students will need to apply for authorised absence through the School Administration – Absences Site that is available through Blackboard or via <https://lincn.ac/aarequest> as soon as practicable.

If the absence is approved, this will not affect the student's attendance percentage. If the University rejects the absence request due to lack of supporting evidence, or the reason provided is not considered authorised absence (Section 3), this will be considered as informed absence. Informed absences are considered unauthorised and the student's attendance percentage will be affected if they are absent from their timetabled session(s).

Students who submit an authorised absence in advance, but subsequently attend the timetabled session and sign the attendance register will have their absence changed from informed or authorised absence to in-attendance.

In the event a student is unwell and unable to attend, their absence request may be automatically considered as authorised. For an absence to be authorised in this way, the request must be for a period of 5 days or less and the period being requested must not allow the student to have had more than 5 days of illness-related absence in the last 30 days. Where a student exceeds this rule they will receive an error message with further instruction.

If a student is absent for more than five consecutive days, a doctor's medical certification should be provided as an attachment to the authorised absence request form. The absence will be approved, subject to evidence provided.

For all other absence categories, students must request authorised absence and evidence should be submitted in support of the request (if possible). Evidence should also be translated into English where appropriate.

3. Consideration of Authorised Absence Requests

Acceptable reasons and the evidence required for absence to be authorised include but are not limited to:

- Own illness (medical note or certificate is required if more than five consecutive days)
- Appointment with a registered* doctor, healthcare professional or dentist (medical note or certificate if possible).
- Maternity/Paternity leave (birth certificate or official medical certificate)

- Own wedding ceremony (marriage certificate required)
- Serious personal difficulties (letter by someone who has direct knowledge of the problem, for example a counsellor)
- Involvement in a significant/prestigious event (letter of invitation from the relevant organising body)
- Critical or life-threatening illness of a close family member, for example spouse, parent, grandparent, guardian, sibling, son or daughter (official medical certification required)
- Death of a close family member, for example spouse, parent, grandparent, guardian, sibling, son or daughter (official medical certification or death certificate)

* *Registered with the relevant professional body (GMC, NMC etc.)*

Unacceptable reasons for authorised absence include but are not limited to:

- Traffic delays
- Complementary healthcare appointments with a private provider
- Domestic or personal disruptions such as moving house
- Attendance at family celebrations
- Employment related issues, either paid or voluntary
- Leaving before the end of the study period to obtain more economical travel tickets
- Cultural reasons

All evidence will be assessed to ensure that it is date relevant and fully supports the reason for absence for the entire period requested. Where any evidence does not cover the full period requested a part authorisation may be given.

In considering whether to authorise absence, the student's ability to submit assessments, sit examinations and progress will need to be considered. If the absence would have an impact on the student's ability to progress, then an interruption of study should be considered as an alternative to authorising absence for a prolonged period of time.

4. Taught Undergraduate

Students on taught undergraduate programmes will have a timetabled programme of study and where students will miss any timetabled class they will need to apply for authorised absence.

During scheduled vacation or self-study weeks where no classes are timetabled, there is no requirement for students to be present on campus and therefore students do not need to request authorised absence.

5. Postgraduate Taught Students

Students studying on a taught postgraduate programme may have a mix of taught timetabled sessions and a thesis research period. Unless there is scheduled vacation period, postgraduate taught students are expected to apply for authorised absence during all elements of their study, including during research periods where there is no timetabled classes.

For information about Annual Leave for Postgraduate Taught programmes during the thesis period please refer to the Student Engagement and Participation Policy

6. Postgraduate Research Students

Postgraduate research students will not have a timetabled programme of study, but are expected to have regular contact with academic staff and supervisors as part of their programme. Students wishing to take annual leave from their research for vacation purposes should consult with their supervisor to seek authorisation for annual leave.

Students wishing to take leave from their research due to illness or other personal reasons which are noted in item 3.0, above, should complete the authorised absence form at <https://lincn.ac/aarequest>.

Tier 4 visa students who need to have a period of study away from Lincoln as part of their research or to attend a conference are required to complete the Change of Circumstances form located at <https://lincn.ac/t4coc>.

7. Placements

Students completing a placement or other period of study away from the University which is not a standard part of the programme must request a period of authorised absence.

8. Tuition Fees and End Dates

Students granted authorised absence will not be eligible for a refund of tuition fees, nor will their expected end date of studies be amended to reflect the period of absence.

9. Tier 4 Visa Holders

For Tier 4 visa holders, requests for authorised absence are considered by a member of the Tier 4 Compliance team.

Any periods of authorised absence for Tier 4 visa students will be assessed in conjunction with UK Visas and Immigration rules to ensure students can continue to comply with their visa conditions.

Any authorised absence that is approved will be on the basis that the absence will not affect their ability to complete their course of study by the student's visa expiry date.

In addition, any request made by a Tier 4 student that exceeds 60 calendar days will be declined, in line with UK Visa and Immigration rules.

Where a student requests authorised absence that will affect the student's ability to complete the course by the visa expiry date, or where the period of absence exceeds 60 calendar days, the request will be declined and students would have to consider a period of interruption.