

**SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY
ONE WASHINGTON SQUARE
SAN JOSE, CA 95192**

S15-3, University Policy, Leaves of Absence for Students

Legislative History:

Rescinds S88-1 and S93-1

At its meeting of March 2, 2015, the Academic Senate approved the following policy recommendation presented by Senator Frazier for the Instruction and Student Affairs Committee. This policy outlines general provisions for leaves of absences (LOAs) for students, categories of LOA-eligible students, procedures for LOA applications and processing, exceptions to eligibility, and other items. LOAs for students have been granted for many years at SJSU, according to procedures and practices that have, over time, diverged remarkably from prior policy on the matter. A revision is therefore needed that accounts for procedures now established as well as new proposals.

On October 15, 2019, President Mary A. Papazian signed and approved Amendment A to University Policy S15-3. Amendment A updates LOA categories, eligibility, procedures, and exceptions.

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This policy outlines general provisions for LOAs, categories of LOA-eligible students, procedures for LOA applications and processing, exceptions to eligibility, and other items. The policy is guided by certain principles: when considering granting LOA to students, personal and financial hardships should be acknowledged, especially in light of the fact that the granting of an LOA has no deleterious effect on other students or other applicants for admission. Limits on the duration of leaves up to two years should

IV. Leave Durations and Extensions

Fully approved petitions for leaves must be submitted prior to the first semester of the period requested. Leaves, other than for U.S. military duty, may be requested for a maximum of four Fall and Spring semesters, typically two semesters at a time, including an initial stop-out semester. In other words, the initial stop-out semester shall be considered part of the maximum of four consecutive semesters. Petition submission would then be required before the start of the semester following the stop-out semester.

Extensions can be requested prior to the first day of classes following the approved leave by submission of a new leave-of-absence petition. If the request is for a different reason than the original leave, an explanation and documentation for that reason must be provided. Exceptions to the maximum of four consecutive semesters shall be rare.

At the end of the leave period, failure to enroll in classes shall result in disenrollment from the university. Application for re-admission would then become necessary for a return to matriculated status at the university. An early return from leave must be accompanied by written notice to the Registrar's Office in order to activate the student's enrollment once again. For students in academic cohorts, restrictions may apply for early returns; see "Exceptions" below. Students cannot graduate during a leave of absence, so they must enroll in classes the semester following a leave to complete their programs during those semesters.

V. Retroactive Leaves of Absence

Retroactive leaves may be granted for up to two semesters after the semester of the student's last enrollment, excluding summer and winter sessions. These leaves shall modify the enrollment status retroactively. After two semesters, the student will be required to reapply and be subject to current application deadlines.

VI. First-Semester Leaves of Absence

These leaves, which are to be awarded sparingly, are for matriculated students exclusively. Therefore, the student must have been admitted into the university rather than merely applying for admission. Any conditions or provisions imposed on admission status that are still in effect shall carry over to the semester of re-enrollment following the leave.

VII. Course Expiration

Course expiration, as per long-standing SJSU practice, (10 years on undergraduate courses and 7 years on graduate courses) shall remain in effect even for students who have taken leaves of absence. Upon a student's return, the student's catalog rights shall pertain to his or her most recent admission date.

VIII. Exceptions

1. **Graduate Students in RP Status.** Per University Policy S17-5, a further exception to the allowance of a one semester stop-out is for graduate students who have completed all degree requirements except their thesis, project, comprehensive examination, or other culminating experience. These students may not stop out but must maintain continuous enrollment every Fall and Spring semester until the culminating experience has been completed and approved. During this stage of a graduate student's career, leaves of absence for any reason beyond medical or U.S. military duty shall be precluded except under rare circumstances.
2. **International Students.** International students are eligible for leaves of absence when authorized by International Student and Scholar Services. Lack of enrollment for any reason other than prevention of the ability to pursue one's studies by severe medical circumstances shall result in the student having to leave the United States. If the student is able to return from abroad at the expiration of the leave period, he or she shall derive the benefits of having had the formal leave, such as avoiding the readmission process. However, other restrictions, such as in the ability to work within the United States, may be imposed by federal immigration regulations.
3. **Cohort Programs.** Students who are members of an academic cohort may be restricted by their respective departments or schools in the duration of their leaves. Thus one-semester leaves may not be possible if it is necessary for course enrollment to join a future cohort, which usually would start after one academic year.