

Leave of Absence

Version Information

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Purpose

This policy sets out the principles and procedures for managing leave of absence from Goodstart Institute of Early Learning's course/s.

Scope

This policy applies to students enrolled within all vocational education and training programs offered by Goodstart Institute of Early Learning.

Definition

Within this document, the following meaning apply:

- **Defer** – To formally delay completion of a course with the intention to recommence study to complete at a further time
- **Suspend** – to temporarily put commenced students on hold
- **Leave of absence** – Refers to a period of time during which the student does not engage in study or course participation but remains enrolled.

Deferment of Commencement

Students may apply for a delay in the commencement of their studies. The application needs to be in writing using the Leave of Absence form. The completed form must be provided with sufficient supporting evidence to enable assessment of whether the circumstance(s) justify a deferment, based on the potential impact that the delay may have on the applicant's studies. Applicants will be advised in writing of the outcome of the process; documentary evidence will be retained on the student's file.

If the student is under 18 years of age, Goodstart Institute of Early Learning must receive written approval from the parent or guardian of the deferred commencement date.

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Temporary Suspension of studies

Goodstart Institute of Early Learning may approve applications for temporary suspensions of studies (i.e. approved leave of absence) on the grounds of compelling and compassionate circumstances (see Section Acceptable grounds to approve leave for examples).

Before students apply for leave of absence they must obtain approval from their employer to ensure that it is determined if taking leave from study will affect their eligibility for employment or the current role (position) they may hold within the early childhood education and care profession.

If the student is under 18 years of age, Goodstart Institute of Early Learning must receive written approval from the parent or guardian for the temporary suspension of studies.

In all cases, documentary evidence relating to the application for temporary suspension of studies and the assessment process will be retained on the student's file.

Acceptable grounds to approve leave of absence:

The following would generally be considered acceptable grounds to approve leave of absence:

- Maternity leave
- Parental leave
- On the grounds of illness
- Temporary disability
- Bereavement
- Accident
- Jury duty (extended durations)
- Sporting or cultural commitment at state, national or international representative level
- Or other compassionate circumstances (for example, death of a family member or close relative, serious illness of a family member or close relative, involvement in an accident where this does not involve injury, significant and unexpected employment problems or pressures, significant relationship problems)

(It is a requirement that all Trainees and Apprentices have their study suspended while on maternity leave, however students under other funding arrangements may decide to continue their studies throughout their maternity leave period).

Application process

Requests for leave of absence or deferred studies must be submitted to goodstart@goodstart.edu.au using the 'Leave of Absence' form and accompanied by appropriate documentary evidence to Student Services for consideration prior to commencement of leave. Leave of absence cannot begin until the current module has been submitted and the unit of competencies within this module competent except for students who experience:

- Illness
- Temporary disability

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- Bereavement
- Accident.

In these cases leave will be approved upon receipt of documentary evidence.

Following submission of a completed application for leave of absence and its consideration by the approving Goodstart Institute of Early Learning staff member, the student will be notified of the outcome via email.

Appealing a declined application

Students who feel that their case for leave of absence has been wrongly declined by Student Services may seek a review of that decision outcome within ten days of receiving notification of the outcome of the application. This appeal must be submitted as a formal appeal to the Institute Manager. The decision of the Institute Manager is final.

Documentation required to support an application for leave of absence

Documentation of medical condition

Students applying for deferred assessment on medical grounds must submit an original medical certificate completed by a registered medical or dental practitioner stating:

- I. The date on which the practitioner examined the student;
- II. The severity and duration of the complaint;
- III. The practitioner's opinion of the effect of the complaint on the student's ability to undertake study.

A statement that the student was 'not-fit-for-duty' or was suffering from 'a medical condition' will not be accepted unless the information in (i), (ii) and (iii) above is included.

Other documentation

Students applying for leave of absence on other grounds must submit suitable documentary evidence, such as bereavement notice, letter from employer, practitioner or professional, statutory declaration, copy of accident report.

Extension requirements

Your course end date will automatically be increased by the same duration of the suspension period. Once you return to your studies if your course end date is due you will be required to complete and submit an extension request.

Timeframes

Goodstart Institute of Early Learning may approve one 6 week leave of absence. In extenuating circumstances up to a maximum of one year leave of absence may be granted with evidence due to:

- Maternity leave
 - Temporary disability
- Bereavement;

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- Accident
- Sporting or cultural commitment at state, national or international representative level.
- Or other compassionate circumstances (for example, death of a family member or close relative, serious illness of a family member or close relative, involvement in an accident where this does not involve injury, significant and unexpected employment problems or pressures, significant relationship problems).

Qualification changes

Leave of absences are only approved only to students whom acknowledge and accept that if the qualification which the student is currently on leave from is updated or superseded in any way that the students will be re-enrolled into the updated and most current qualification.

This may require students to complete a gap analysis and undertake further assessment to meet the new qualification knowledge and skills requirements.

Returning to study

Students will be sent a notification by Student Services prior to the date that training is due to re-commence.