

# 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 for non-trainees/apprentices.

## Scope

This policy applies to non-trainee/apprentice 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 of absence' 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/injury
- Jury duty (extended durations)
- Sporting or cultural commitment at state, national or international representative level
- Or other compassionate circumstances (for example, 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](mailto: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 unit of study has been submitted and assessed as competent, except for students who experience:

- Illness
- Temporary disability
- Bereavement

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- 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.

## Extension requirements

Your course end date will automatically be increased by the same duration of the suspension period when you return to your studies.

## Appealing a declined application

Student may appeal a declined Leave of Absence application via the process defined within the Complaints and Appeals policy.

## 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.

## Timeframes

Goodstart Institute of Early Learning may approve leave of absences from 4 weeks to 12 months duration, depending on rationale and evidence supplied by the student.

## Qualification changes

Leave of absences may only be approved for students whom acknowledge and accept that if the qualification they are enrolled in is superseded in any way during their leave of absence that upon their return to study they may be enrolled into the most current version of their qualification. This may require the student to undertake further assessment to meet the new qualification knowledge and skills requirements.

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## Returning to study

Should a student request to return to their studies prior to the end of their leave of absence period they must notify Student Services who will update their enrolment status.