

Section:	Academic/Student (AC)
Subject:	Student Performance and Behaviour
Legislation:	
Effective:	September 15, 2021
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APPROVED: _____
President and CEO

POLICY

The policy of the Board of Governors is to provide support to current students when absence from their studies is necessary for compelling reasons.

PROCEDURE

PHILOSOPHY

SAIT recognizes that students may encounter life circumstances which require them to be away from their program of study for an extended period of time.

DEFINITIONS

Family medical leave	A leave required for the student to address or treat a family member's physical illness or injury (either chronic or temporary), mental health illness or conditions, or hospitalization.
Family member	A person usually related by blood, marriage or adoption, or living in the same household, or a legal or de facto guardian.

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Humanitarian leave	A leave required for the student to complete a full-time humanitarian mission related to a student's work with the provincial or federal government or with a non-governmental organization (NGO). The leave is usually outside of Calgary, and may be domestic or international.
Legal leave	A leave required for a student to meet legal obligations such as extended jury duty.
Medical leave	A leave required for the student to address or treat the student's physical illness or injury (either chronic or temporary), mental health illness or conditions, or hospitalization.
Military leave	Leave required for a domestic student to meet the student's military service obligations as a member of the Canadian Armed Forces or for an international student to meet the student's military service obligations to the student's home country.
Parental leave	Maternity, paternity and adoption leaves.
Personal circumstances leave	A leave for compelling personal circumstances that includes, for instance, bereavement, caregiving and work obligations.
Religious leave	A leave required for the student to complete a full-time religious mission related to a student's membership in a religious-affiliated cause. The leave is usually outside of Calgary, and may be domestic or international.

GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

1. In recognition that students may require leave from their studies for a variety of circumstances, SAIT may make accommodations to enable students to do so.
2. This procedure applies to students who are enrolled in credit programs leading to a SAIT credential and who usually have completed one term of study.
3. Leaves include a family medical leave, humanitarian leave, legal leave, medical leave, military leave, parental leave, personal circumstances leave and religious leave.

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4. A leave may be granted for a period of one term or longer, usually up to a maximum of one academic year.
5. This procedure does not apply to:
 - a) A student's absence from SAIT on a study abroad activity or program. See procedure [AC.2.13.2 Study Abroad](#).
 - b) A student's absence from SAIT for less than one term. See procedures [AC.3.8.1 Attendance](#) and [AC.3.8.2 Attendance-Apprentices](#) for a student's absence for less than one term.

PROCEDURE

1. The student must submit the Request for Leave to the student's academic chair/coordinator at least 10 business days before the beginning of the leave for that term, although a shorter notice period may be allowed in extenuating circumstances. The student may be required to submit documentation or other evidence from external or internal sources that corroborates the student's request.
2. If the student's academic chair/coordinator approves the student's request for a leave, the academic chair/coordinator will discuss with the student the impact that accommodations may have upon the student's studies and progression in the program. As part of this discussion, the student's academic chair/coordinator may need to consult with the academic chair/coordinator responsible for delivering service courses in the program.
3. The student is expected to complete the graduation requirements of a program within the timelines for that program, as per procedure [AC.3.1.1 Grading and Progression – Credit Courses](#). The student should be aware that the longer the student takes to complete a program, the more likely it is that the curricula and completion requirements will change, and this may make graduation more complicated. This may also have an impact on the student's ability to complete externally-administrated exams by a program's regulatory body.
4. The academic chair/coordinator may consider one or more of the following accommodations:
 - a) Deferring scheduled exams, assignments or other assessments that conflict with the student's leave. These assessments may be deferred for no longer than eight weeks after the end of the course.

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- b) In the case of a military leave, allowing the student to complete a deferred assessment under proctor at a military establishment.
 - c) Allowing the student to complete an online exam where appropriate, as per procedure [AC.3.3.2 Distance Education Invigilation and Security of Examinations](#).
 - d) Allowing the student to fulfill program requirements, including work-integrated learning requirements, through the student's military leave, religious leave or humanitarian leave where appropriate, as per policy [AC.3.18 Recognition of Prior Learning](#) and its accompanying procedures.
 - e) Allowing a student who, due to the considerations of the leave, requests permission to end studies in the course before its completion to:
 - i) Receive an "Incomplete" ("I") grade for that course as per procedure [AC.3.1.1 Grading and Progression – Credit Courses](#);
 - ii) Withdraw from the course and receive a "W" in that course, as per procedure [AC.3.1.1 Grading and Progression – Credit Courses](#) and potentially receive a full refund of tuition for that course;
 - iii) Transfer registration in that course to the same or an equivalent course offered through distance delivery, if available, at no additional cost to the student; or
 - iv) Receive a grade based on the course work completed to date in that course, if the student has completed at least 70% of the course and if the student's instructor believes that there is sufficient evidence of academic achievement to merit the awarding of that grade.
5. Instructors and academic chairs/coordinators have the right to ensure that accommodations for students do not detrimentally affect established competencies and requirements for SAIT's programs and courses.
6. a) A student who disagrees with the decision of the academic chair/coordinator pursuant to paragraphs 2 or 4 of this procedure may choose to appeal this decision within five business days of that decision by way of a letter to the dean or designate.
- b) The dean or designate shall meet with the student within seven business days of receipt of the student's letter and shall advise the student in writing of the decision within five business days of that meeting. The student is entitled to be accompanied to the meeting by another individual for advice and support, but only the student shall speak on the student's behalf.

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- c) The decision of the dean or designate is final and binding.

7. Impact of an approved leave:

- a) The leave has no affect on the student's admission status in the program.
- b) The student will not be required to pay Intent to Return fees upon the student's return to the program.
- c) The student will not be charged tuition fees for the duration of the authorized leave. However, if the leave results in the program being extended beyond the initial program completion timeframe, the tuition and fees as stated in the SAIT Fees Table current at that time will apply.
- d) Tuition refunds are governed by procedure [FN.18.1.1 Student Tuition and Fee Refunds](#).
- e) The student remains an active student and has access to SAIT email.
- f) The student cannot register for SAIT credit courses or participate in student internships, in research or in SAIT Trojans teams while on leave.
- g) If the student wishes to complete courses from another post-secondary institution during the student's leave and to apply those courses for transfer credit, the student must discuss with the academic chair/coordinator prior to taking those courses. Depending on the particular circumstances of the leave, the student may or may not be able to apply those courses for transfer credit at SAIT.
- h) The ability to return to the student's program is subject to seat availability in that program and is not guaranteed. The academic chair/coordinator must consult with Accessibility Services if a student's particular situation falls under a protected ground of discrimination under Alberta's human rights legislation, as that student will generally have priority in registration where space availability is limited.
- i) An international student is not able to work either on-campus or off-campus during the time of their leave from SAIT, regardless of the terms of their study permit.

8. Upon returning to studies at SAIT, the student must meet with the student's academic chair/coordinator and/or academic advisors in the student's school to develop a success plan. If the returning student wishes to complete a work-integrated learning course, the student may be required to complete a skills assessment as per the process that individual programs and/or schools have established, in order to protect the public interest, public safety or public health.

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9. A student who needs to extend the time of an approved leave must follow the same approval process as for their initial leave, as set out in this procedure. This allows SAIT to work with the student in ensuring accommodations are in place to support student success, ensures that the student's program of study and access to services remains active, and allows SAIT to efficiently manage enrollments in its programs and courses.
10. The student may be withdrawn from SAIT if the student has not returned to studies after one full year of leave.

POLICY/PROCEDURE REFERENCE

AC.3.19 Student Leave policy

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