

LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY

A leave of absence is a temporary break in a student's attendance during which s/he is considered to be continuously enrolled. If an institution chooses to have an enrollment policy that permits a leave of absence, the policy must be published in the institution's catalog and must comply with the following requirements:

1. A student must request the leave of absence in writing in advance of the beginning date of the leave of absence, unless unforeseen circumstances prevent the student from doing so. If a student does not request a leave of absence within a timeframe consistent with the institution's consecutive absence policy, he or she must be withdrawn.
2. The leave of absence is limited to 180 calendar days in one calendar year, or one-half the published program length, whichever is shorter. Multiple leaves of absence may be permitted provided the total of the leaves does not exceed this limit.
3. The student must sign the leave of absence request and specify a reason for the leave. The reason must be specified in order for the institution to have a reasonable expectation of the student's return within the timeframe of the leave of absence as requested.
4. The student must attest to understanding the procedures and implications for returning to his/her course of study.
5. The institution must document its approval of the leave of absence request in accordance with its published policy.
6. The institution may not assess the student any additional charges as a result of the leave of absence.
7. An approved leave of absence may be extended for an additional period of time provided that the extension request meets all of the above requirements, and the total length of the leave of absence does not exceed the specified limit, as noted in item 3. An institution may need to apply pertinent state requirements as well as those listed above.

An institution that participates in the **Title IV programs** must establish a leave of absence policy that is in compliance with federal regulations. Federal or state regulations may differ from AAHEA policy, and if stricter, take precedence.