



Context and Purpose

Leave is provided to support research degree student progression. This procedure provides information on the parameters and processes in which students can take leave or be placed on leave, and its impact on program enrolment and stipend support, if any. Periods of support and leave benefits outlined in this procedure are indicated as full-time equivalent; entitlements for part-time students are on a pro-rata basis.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with:

- Policy A-57: [Required Medical Leave](#), which applies to all students.
- Policy AB-58: [Research Degrees](#) and its Definitions
- Policy AB-59: [Research Degrees and Research Training Program \(RTP\) Scholarships](#).

Responsibility

Research degree students, supervisors, and staff associated with the support, coordination and leadership of research degree programs are responsible for understanding and complying with the policy and this procedure.

Stipend holders have a responsibility to understand and comply with all terms and conditions of their scholarship, regarding absence and leave.

Student and Academic Services are responsible for processing leave requests, updating leave on the student record, and notifying research degree students as required by this procedure.

Research degree students have a responsibility to apply for leave, and have approved leave recorded on their student record, for all periods where leave is taken and where the students are unable to continue to work on the research project. Students must use the appropriate forms to apply for the relevant types of leave.

Decisions and outcomes made in accordance with this procedure must be documented and a copy provided to Student and Academic Services to be retained on the student record.

All other procedural responsibilities are detailed in this procedure.

Confidentiality

Refer to [M-1 Privacy Policy](#).

Procedure

A. Application for Leave

1. Research degree students must apply for leave using the [appropriate form](#), ensuring necessary documentation is provided. The application must specify the length of leave and reason for the request.
2. Prior to commencing leave, a research degree student's request must be approved by the Principal Supervisor. Where the intended period of leave exceeds 20 working days, the student must submit a study plan, endorsed by the Supervisory Panel, detailing milestones for the six (6) months following expected return from leave.
3. A research degree student may not take leave within the period of provisional enrolment unless there are exceptional circumstances.

4. Retrospective leave will not be approved, except in exceptional circumstances, where supported by documentary evidence. Leave is considered retrospective if the commencement date of leave falls within a Research Period that has ended. Student and Academic Services will notify the research degree student of the outcome of their application for retrospective leave.
5. The availability and implications of leave vary by research degree student visa status, stipend type and length of enrolment in their program. All provisions in this procedure regarding leave are subject to relevant requirements for international student visa holders (refer to C.20).
6. In accordance with [The National Code 2018](#), international student visa holders are not permitted to take leave for personal requirements or be placed on administrative leave except on the grounds of compassionate and compelling circumstances as defined in the National Code. For these students, this may result in cancellation or amendment of the student's Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE), which may affect their student visa and maximum time allocated to complete the research degree program.

B. Recreation Leave

7. All research degree students are entitled to 20 working days' recreation leave in each full-time equivalent year of enrolment.
8. Recreation leave may be accrued during the time allocated to complete the program but will not extend the maximum time allocated to complete the research degree program, or the duration of stipends or other forms of scholarship support.
9. Recreation leave must be pre-approved by the research degree student's Principal Supervisor and fit within the student's agreed milestones and timelines. Wherever possible, recreation leave should be discussed and noted as part of the student's activities and plans in the Review of Progress.
10. Stipend recipients will continue to receive their regular stipend payments during recreation leave.

C. Sick Leave

11. Sick leave is to be used for periods of illness or carer responsibilities where the research degree student cannot continue with their research.
12. Sick leave must be approved by the research degree student's Principal Supervisor. Wherever possible, sick leave should be discussed and noted as part of the research degrees student's activities in the Review of Progress.
13. All research degree students in receipt of a stipend are entitled to 10 working days paid sick leave per year. Additional sick leave is taken as Leave of Absence (refer to E.19.c.).
14. For stipend recipients, sick leave may be accrued but will not extend the maximum time allocated to complete their program, or the duration of stipends or other forms of scholarship support.
15. Research degree students who are not in receipt of a stipend may take sick leave for periods of illness or carer responsibilities, in which the student is unable to undertake their research activities. This type of leave will extend their maximum allocated time to complete their program by the number of working days the student is on leave.

D. Cultural leave

16. Research degree students who have formally identified with the University as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, are entitled to up to 10 working days leave per year for the purpose of fulfilling cultural requirements and obligations that are recognised as part of the student's culture, in accordance with the University's Cultural Leave Procedure. Students enrolled part-time are entitled to up to 10 working days leave on a pro-rata basis. Cultural leave cannot be accrued and does not extend the maximum time allocated for students to complete their program.

17. Stipend recipients will continue to receive their regular stipend payments during cultural leave.
18. Research degree students may be required to provide sufficient evidence as to the reason for undertaking cultural leave.

E. Leave of Absence

19. Leave of Absence is to be used for periods when the research degree student cannot undertake research work to progress within their program. Reasons for Leave of Absence include jury duty, maternity and adoption leave, parental leave, additional sick leave, personal leave and administrative leave.
 - a. **Jury duty:** Research degree students receiving a stipend may apply for up to 20 paid working days of jury duty during the maximum time allocated to complete their program. Enrolment and stipend support continues during this leave. The maximum time allocated to complete their program and any stipend support is increased where this leave is utilised.
 - b. **Maternity/adoption leave and parental leave:** Research degree students who have received a stipend for 12 months may apply for up to 60 working days paid maternity leave or adoption leave or 10 working days paid parental leave at the time of the birth or adoption. Medical certificates and/or other documentary evidence are required. Enrolment and stipend support will continue during this leave. The maximum time allocated to complete their program and stipend support is increased where this leave is utilised.
 - c. **Additional sick leave:** Stipend recipients may apply for up to 60 working days of additional (paid) sick leave when sick leave entitlements have been exhausted (refer to C.13). The additional sick leave entitlements may also be used to cover leave for research degree students with family caring responsibilities. Medical certificates are required. Enrolment and any stipend support continue during this leave. The maximum time allocated to complete their program and stipend support is increased where this leave is utilised.
 - d. **Personal leave:** Research degree students, who are not studying on an international student visa and who have had their candidature confirmed, may apply for up to 6 months of Leave of Absence for personal requirements, including paid work or internships. This type of leave will extend their maximum allocated time to complete their program by the number of days the student is on personal leave. Any stipend or other form of scholarship support will be suspended during this leave.
 - e. **Administrative leave:** At the discretion of the relevant Dean of Research (or delegate), a research degree student may be placed on administrative leave for up to six (6) months where progress is being impeded for reasons such as change of supervision or approval of change to the program of research (refer to Procedure AB-58 P2: Research Degrees Supervision, A.2.c.). Limited support is available during this period and any stipend will be suspended for the period of the administrative leave.
20. The total cumulative Leave of Absence within a research degree may not exceed 12 calendar months. Any type of Leave of Absence taken during candidature will count towards this amount and applies to both full-time and part-time research degree students. If a student needs to take Leave of Absence that exceeds 12 calendar months, it must be approved by the Dean of Research (or delegate).
21. Leave of Absence for reasons other than in C.23 may only be taken for a maximum of 6 calendar months at any one time. The relevant Dean of Research (or delegate) must approve a request for a Leave of Absence that is six (6) months or greater, or where a research degree student has already taken six (6) months Leave of Absence in total, or where the requested Leave of Absence will result in a total period of Leave of Absence greater than six (6) months.
22. Leave of Absence will not be approved for a research degree student who has exceeded the maximum time to complete their program, except when approved by the relevant Dean of Research (or delegate), due to exceptional circumstances.

23. A research degree student requiring Leave of Absence in excess of 24 calendar months must apply to the Dean of Graduate Studies. Any application for this Leave of Absence must be justified by the student and must include a supporting statement from the Principal Supervisor and be supported by the relevant Dean of Research (or delegate).
24. In exceptional circumstances, Leave of Absence of up to 12 calendar months may be granted to a research degree student who has been approved to concurrently enrol in a program leading to the award of another degree, provided that Leave of Absence undertaken for this purpose will count towards the total amount of leave permitted within the program (refer to Procedure AB-58 P1: [Research Degrees Admission and Enrolment](#), I.45.). Enrolment and stipend support are suspended during this Leave of Absence. The maximum time allocated to complete the program and stipend support remains unchanged where this leave is utilised.

F. Required Medical Leave

25. In a situation where a research degree student has a serious health condition which is causing behaviour that poses a significant risk to themselves and/or others, Policy A-57: [Required Medical Leave](#) applies.

Definitions

Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) is a form issued by the University to international students studying in Australia on a student visa, for student visa purposes.

Dean of Research is the research leadership role in each Academic Unit who enacts the University's research strategy and is responsible for the oversight of research degree programs in their Academic Unit. The Dean of Research may delegate the leadership and management of research education and related activities to a Professorial Lead with portfolio responsibility for the research degrees in the Academic Unit.

Enterprise Agreement / Collective Agreement is the current University of South Australia Enterprise Agreement and the University of South Australia Senior Staff Collective Agreement.

Exceptional circumstances are unexpected and beyond the control of the student. These circumstances have a significant impact on the progress of the student's research project and/or the student's well-being. Exceptional circumstances may include: medical (serious illness or injury), family, personal, employment or program-related circumstances, and major political upheaval or natural disaster in an international students home country requiring emergency travel.

Form refers to all online and paper-based forms and applications.

Principal Supervisor is a university academic staff member or adjunct who has primary responsibility for guiding the postgraduate research undertaken by a designated research degree student and for overseeing the progress of that student towards completion of their research degree. The Principal Supervisor is normally responsible for decisions and processes as detailed in relevant procedures, including convening the Supervisory Panel for reviews of research degree student progress, and consultation on the research project.

Research degree student is an individual enrolled in a research degree.

Research Period is an administrative period during which a research degree student is enrolled. Research degree students are enrolled in two (2) Research Periods per year, the dates of which are published in the [Academic Calendar](#).

Stipend is a monetary payment or living allowance awarded to assist a research degree student to undertake or complete a program of research at the University.

Staff member is an individual employed by the University under its Enterprise Agreement or Collective Agreement, and also includes adjuncts, visiting academics and guest lecturers, and volunteers, whether they are paid or unpaid.

Supervisors are members of the University Community who have oversight and/or direction of the work of staff or students.

Supervisory Panel is a team, usually comprising three (3) to five (5) members, who are responsible for providing supervision to a research degree student. The Panel must include a minimum of two (2) UniSA supervisors, one (1) of whom will be the Principal Supervisor. Supervisory Panels can also include experts from other disciplines and advisors, where appropriate for the research project.

University Community refers to all students and staff members of the University including honorary title holders, adjuncts, visiting academics, guest lecturers and volunteers who are contributing to the work of the University but who are not staff members.

Further Assistance:

[Student and Academic Services](#)

Related Documentation:

Policy AB-58: [Research Degrees](#)

Policy AB-59: [Research Degrees and Research Training Program \(RTP\) Scholarships](#)

Policy A-57: [Required Medical Leave](#)

Procedure AB-58 P1: [Research Degrees Admission and Enrolment](#)

Procedure AB-58 P2: [Research Degrees Supervision](#)

Procedure AB-58 P3: [Research Degrees Student Progression](#)

Procedure AB-59 P1: [Research Degrees and Research Training Program \(RTP\) Scholarships](#)

[Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines \(Research\) 2017](#)

[The National Code 2018](#)

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