



# Leave of Absence Policy

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. NMITE acknowledges that during their time of study, a student may experience a range of significant challenges that may compromise their ability to continue to fully engage with their programme of study. A Leave of Absence is a support mechanism NMITE offers to address a variety of circumstances.
- 1.2. The Leave of Absence Policy is in place to outline and address the conditions and processes through which students can take Leave of Absence, re-engage with their studies following a period of Leave of Absence from their studies, or take more permanent steps to cease attending NMITE through a process of Withdrawal.
- 1.3. For short-term circumstances affecting their ability to study or take assessments, or students who have had a late diagnosis of a disability or long-term medical condition, students should refer to the Extenuating Circumstances Policy.



## **2. Eligibility and Conditions**

- 2.1. You may apply to take Leave of Absence from your course normally for up to a total of 12 months. In this event, the maximum registration period will be extended for the same time.
- 2.2. Statutory childcare leave (including maternity leave, paternity leave, shared parental leave and adoptive leave) will not be counted towards the maximum total of 12 months, although the maximum registration period will be extended.
- 2.3. Some common reasons you may have for requesting a Leave of Absence include (but are not limited to):
  - i. Personal issues – these could include caring for a family member, taking a 'gap-year', or just wanting to review options.
  - ii. Bereavement
  - iii. Financial hardship – this may include unexpected loss of income, family financial hardship, lack of funding, debt, or any other financial issue.
  - iv. Illness – this includes any illness affecting a student's ability to study, which could be mental or physical health.
  - v. Academic reasons – lack of progression to the next FHEQ level and/or the need to re-sit whole modules; it may also include wanting to investigate transferring to another education establishment.
- 2.4. Multiple or further Leave of Absence requests can be made, but normally the total amount of Leave of Absence accumulated on your record may not exceed the equivalent of 12 months.
- 2.5. Students may be required to fulfil specified conditions before resumption of their studies.
- 2.6. Requests for Leave of Absence need to be formally submitted (see Section 4) and approved.
- 2.7. Retrospective Leave of Absence is not normally permitted.



- 2.8. Short term requests (i.e., requests for less one module) will not normally be approved. Students requiring less than one module should apply for Extenuating Circumstances.
- 2.9. If you take a Leave of Absence because of extenuating circumstances, upon your return to study, you will be deemed fit to study and the circumstances which affected your ability to study previously will not be considered in relation to your performance. NMITE will, however, exceptionally consider sudden or unexpected worsening of a disability and/or medical condition for a student where medical evidence is provided to confirm the circumstances being presented.

### **3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1. You need to carefully consider the financial implications of requesting a Leave of Absence, as well as implications with regard to the right to remain in NMITE accommodation. The Student Support Team can advise on these issues which may include:
  - i. Tuition fees are charged on a termly basis. Please refer to the Tuition Fee and Refund Policy. If you are receiving payments from a student loan, you will need to notify Student Finance England or the relevant other funding body to ensure you are not overpaid. NMITE are also required to submit a Change of Circumstances form the SLC in all cases of an approved Leave of Absence.
  - ii. Students will not receive their maintenance loan whilst on a Leave of Absence. If you take a Leave of Absence and have already received some of your maintenance loan, you may be required to pay some of it back.
  - iii. If you are in receipt of an NMITE scholarship or bursary, please refer to the Undergraduate Financial Awards Terms and Conditions.
  - iv. If you are in receipt of financial support from a grant or bursary, or if your tuition fees are paid directly from an external sponsor, it is your responsibility to inform them of an approved Leave of Absence.
  - v. If you return from Leave of Absence part way through an academic year, you will need to make a new Student Finance application for that academic year.



in advance of your return to studies. You are advised to request the maximum amount of tuition fee loan and if your tuition fee is reduced NMITE will inform Student Finance.

- vi. If you are responsible for paying your own tuition fees and your approved Leave of Absence will have an impact on payments made/due, your position will be reviewed automatically by the NMITE Finance Department
- vii. Change of your student status to 'interrupted' (refer to the section 5.1) may impact on tuition fees paid and due, and you may even be entitled to a refund. Please refer to the Tuition Fee and Refund Policy
- viii. Taking a Leave of Absence may have other financial implications for support from welfare agencies, who are likely to re-assess eligibility for assistance.

#### **4. How to apply for a Leave of Absence**

- 4.1. If you are considering a Leave of Absence, we recommend you, in the first instance, speak to a member of the Student Services Team and / or your Personal Tutor, to discuss your circumstances.
- 4.2. If you are studying on a student visa as interruption from your study has implications for your visa; you are advised to discuss the possibility and implications of Leave of Absence with the Director of Registry and Student Life.
- 4.3. At the point where you decide to request the Leave of Absence, you need to submit completed the Application for Leave of Absence form via email to [registrar@nmite.ac.uk](mailto:registrar@nmite.ac.uk).
- 4.4. The following information will also be required:
  - i. The duration of the period of Leave of Absence you wish to take from your studies.
  - ii. The grounds for the Leave of Absence (e.g., medical, or personal, giving brief details of the circumstances).
- 4.5. The Director of Registry and Student Life will liaise with the Relevant Programme Lead on your behalf to seek academic approval for the Leave of



Absence. The Relevant Programme Lead will complete the Leave of Absence – Academic Approval form and return to the Director of Registry and Student Life within 5 working days of submission date.

- 4.6. Once the Leave of Absence is approved and the central student record updated, you will receive confirmation of the Leave of Absence to your NMITE email account. Leave of Absence is granted on the basis of your last date of attendance at NMITE, and not the date the application is made or approved.

## **5. Access to NMITE facilities**

- 5.1. For the period you are on Leave of Absence, your student status is set to 'interrupted', as you are not in attendance at NMITE. During your 'interruption' period you will not receive any form of tuition or academic supervision, unless otherwise explicitly agreed. You are not expected to engage with your programme, and you should not attend classes and submit assessments.
- 5.2. Unless specified, you will be required to hand in your NMITE laptop; this ensures essential maintenance, and updates are completed; your laptop will be returned to you on your return to studies. Your NMITE account will not be suspended, and you will still have access to your NMITE email, Canvas and one drive.
- 5.3. A place in NMITE accommodation is not normally provided to students who have taken a Leave of Absence and following the approval of a Leave of Absence you will receive further information from the Student Support Team about making arrangements to vacate your accommodation.
- 5.4. You will be expected to correspond with both Student Support Services and the Director of Registry and Student Life under the terms and conditions agreed as part of your Leave of Absence and / or expected re-engagement. You will therefore continue to have access to your NMITE student email for the purposes of this communication and are advised to continue reviewing it regularly.
- 5.5. Where it is necessary, students on Leave of Absence may arrange to receive on-going support from Student Support Team. Such an arrangement is especially recommended for students who remain in the local area throughout their Leave of Absence. This is, however, at the discretion of Student Support



Team, and the terms of this arrangement must be agreed at the time Leave of Absence is arranged.

## **6. Returning from a Leave of Absence**

- 6.1. Students on a Leave of Absence will be contacted by Registry approximately one calendar month prior to their expected return date, and asked to select one of the following options:
  - i. Return to Study: The student declares that they are able, and if appropriate, fit, to return to study on the expected return date. If you wish to return to study and therefore re-engage with NMITE on this basis should complete the application to return from Leave of Absence and return to the Registry.
  - ii. Request a further Leave of Absence – the student requests a further period of Leave of Absence, providing reasons and relevant documentation where required.
  - iii. Notification of permanent Withdrawal from NMITE (see Section 7 of this policy).
- 6.2. Students who intend to reside in NMITE managed accommodation must have completed the re-engagement process prior to taking residence at NMITE.
- 6.3. When you are due to return from your Leave of Absence, you will not be able to take up residence in NMITE managed accommodation until you have completed the process of re-engagement with your programme of study.
- 6.4. If you fail to communicate with NMITE within 20 working days following the request from Registry to state your intention to return from your Leave of Absence, then you might be considered to have withdrawn from the course.
- 6.5. You will be informed of the approval to return from Leave of Absence by the Director of Registry and Student Life. The return date will be confirmed and in line with the recommendation made by the Relevant Programme Lead to coincide with the start of the appropriate module of study.
- 6.6. If your return from Leave of Absence is agreed and all required conditions have been achieved and you subsequently fail to return, the Director of Registry and Student Life will attempt to make contact via e-mail. If you do not



communicate with the Director of Registry and Student Life within 5 working days, then NMITE might consider you to have failed to re-engage and you might be considered to have withdrawn from the course.

## **7. Appealing the Decision of the Leave of Absence request**

- 7.1. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of the Academic Approval, you may appeal the decision via the Academic Appeals Procedures, so long so your appeal meets the relevant criteria specified in paragraph 3.2(ii) of the Student Academic Appeals Policy.

## **8. Withdrawal**

- 8.1. If you are considering withdrawal, you are encouraged to engage with the sources of support and advice available within NMITE before finalising your decision in order to ensure that all other avenues and potential solutions are fully explored.
- 8.2. Withdrawal is a voluntary choice made by the student to discontinue their studies and permanently leave NMITE, this decision may be based on individual factors such as changes in circumstance linked to health or personal life, or to facilitate a transfer to another Higher Education Institution.
- 8.3. There are no barriers to withdrawal should you wish to do so, however, this is a very important decision to make, and you should be aware that once you withdraw from your studies, this is final and if you wished to return to study at NMITE at any point thereafter you would have to formally seek readmission.
- 8.4. NMITE encourages students to consider withdrawal carefully before finalising the process. You may also be affected by external legislation and policy as a result of the withdrawal (such as by the requirements of funding bodies). It is your responsibility to ensure that you make an informed choice and that you are fully aware of any implications to withdrawal.
- 8.5. If you have made the decision to withdraw, you will then be required to contact the Director of Registry and Student Life, who will provide the withdrawal notification form for you to complete. Application to withdraw should be received prior to the anticipated withdrawal date.



- 8.6. You will be asked to state the effective date and reasons for withdrawal.
- 8.7. Once a student has permanently withdrawn, they will not have access to any part of the NMITE services, including academic study, student support services, NMITE accommodation, IT services and MyNMITE; their NMITE e-mail will be suspended 30 days following the withdrawal date.
- 8.8. Students are required to return all equipment owned and provided by NMITE, this includes the laptop, ID card and locker key assigned to the student on enrolment.



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|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Policy Owner                                               | Director of Registry and Student Life                                                                                                                  |                                |
| Version Number                                             | 5.1                                                                                                                                                    |                                |
| Date Policy (Re)Approved                                   | November 25                                                                                                                                            |                                |
| Approval authority                                         | Academic Council                                                                                                                                       |                                |
| Date of Commencement                                       | 01/09/2024                                                                                                                                             |                                |
| Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) completed                 | April 2025                                                                                                                                             |                                |
| Amendment History                                          | Date                                                                                                                                                   | Reason for Update              |
|                                                            | 08/2023                                                                                                                                                | Annual review                  |
|                                                            | 05/2024                                                                                                                                                | Annual review                  |
|                                                            | 03/2025                                                                                                                                                | Biennial Review                |
|                                                            | 10/2025                                                                                                                                                | Changes in Academic Leadership |
| Summary of changes made to this version                    | Update to job titles only<br>Responsibility of approval moved to relevant Programme Lead                                                               |                                |
| Date for next review                                       | 01/08/2027                                                                                                                                             |                                |
| Related Policies, Procedures, Guidance, Forms or Templates | Extenuating Circumstances Policy<br>Academic Appeals Policy<br>Tuition Fees and Refund Policy<br>Undergraduate Financial Awards – Terms and Conditions |                                |
| Policies superseded by this Policy                         | V2 – 09/2022<br>V3 – 08/2023<br>V4 – 05/2024<br>V5 – 03/2025                                                                                           |                                |