

STUDENT LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY

The Student Leave of Absence (LOA) policy allows degree-seeking, undergraduate students to take an official leave from their studies at Finlandia for a period of up to one year. During this one-year period, undergraduate students may be readmitted to the University through the Admissions Office, without having to officially reapply.

To take an official Leave of Absence, students must report to the Office of Academic Success and Student Life to complete the appropriate paperwork. Resident students who take a leave are required to vacate student housing immediately. Students officially taking a Leave of Absence are not eligible to participate in varsity or intramural athletics, student clubs or any University-sponsored activity or organization.

Students considering taking a Leave of Absence should speak with their academic advisor or program director about their options, the process of taking a Leave of Absence, and the procedure and timeline of applying for readmission. Students receiving financial aid are also required to meet with Financial Aid personnel prior to the approval of the LOA.

An official Leave of Absence will not be approved for students subject to dismissal due to academic deficiencies or disciplinary actions.

Students requesting to start a Leave of Absence during an academic semester may choose to officially withdraw from their courses thus receiving “W”s for their courses; or receive incomplete grades (I) for their courses. Students opting to take incomplete grades must establish course completion strategies as part of the LOA request and are thereby expected to complete their work as outlined in the Leave of Absence agreement. Incomplete grades that are not successfully completed according to the agreement will automatically convert to an “F” as per the University’s Incomplete Grade Policy. Administrative withdrawals will be processed if the LOA request is granted past the official withdrawal date.

Students receiving approval for an official Leave of Absence will be allowed to complete their degree following the prescribed progress sheet under the original catalog date. If any of the courses within their degree program have been changed or no longer offered, the university will work with the student to provide acceptable alternatives through the university’s course substitution process.

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Process for Applying for an Official LOA:

All requests for an official LOA are to be submitted in advance, in writing, and will include the reason for the request, signed by the student, and dated. Unforeseen circumstances, such as an accident, may impede this process. As such, an LOA may be granted on condition that the required paperwork will be submitted at a later, pre-determined date.

1. Obtain LOA paperwork from the Office of Academic Success and Student Life
2. Meet with academic advisor and/or program director to discuss options
3. Meet with Financial Aid office to discuss impact of the LOA on financial aid and what impact not returning from the LOA will have on your repayment terms
4. Submit completed paperwork to the Office of Academic Success and Student Life
5. The application for the LOA will be reviewed by a team of university professionals to include the registrar, dean of the college in which the program is offered or program director, financial aid representative, director of student affairs, and chief academic officer
6. The decision will be rendered within 7 business days - It is important to note that not all LOA requests are granted
7. Students will be notified by phone and postal mail of the final decision
8. Approved LOA requests will include the timeline for readmission
9. Once approved, the LOA agreement will be managed in the Registrar's Office

To be granted an LOA, there must be a reasonable expectation that the student will return to complete their degree. Students on a Leave of Absence may return to classes prior to the expiration date. During the LOA, the university will not impose additional charges and will not award additional financial aid for courses or classes the student needs to complete in order to catch up to where the Leave of Absence began. A Leave of Absence will not exceed 180 days within a 12-month period.

Students who do not return from their Leave of Absence will be considered withdrawn from the university at the end of their last semester of regular enrollment and will be required to return federal financial aid funds as per policy. Students are thereby advised to discuss these consequences with the Financial Aid Office ***prior to*** applying for the official Leave of Absence.