



Authorised Absence for Student Route Visa Students

1.0 Introduction and background

- 1.1 The University is committed to providing an equivalent learning experience and consistent implementation of its regulations and policies across its entire student body. At the same time, it is bound by additional external regulations for some cohorts of students, including students on a Student Route visa, with which it must comply.
- 1.2 During official term time all Student Route students are expected to attend and engage with all taught sessions to comply with the conditions of their visa. Only students with exceptional circumstances (as defined by this policy) will be granted authorised absence during term time.
- 1.3 Students do not need to apply for authorised absence during the University sanctioned vacation periods in winter, spring and summer. The dates for all such vacation periods are listed on the University website under "Term Dates".

2.0 Purpose and scope

- 2.1 This policy sets out in which circumstances students sponsored on the Student Route are eligible to take leave during term time.
- 2.1 This policy is relevant for all students studying at the University of Northampton sponsored on a Student Route visa.

3.0 Definitions

3.1 Term time

- 3.1.1 Students are expected to remain in the UK until the end date of their course as stated on their CAS letter
- 3.1.2 Official holiday periods are dependent on course level and start date, students should refer to term dates and official holidays stated on the university website
- 3.1.3 Term-time includes all exam and re-sit periods (regardless of individual examination dates) along with dissertation writing up periods
- 3.1.4 The University recognises that for September start undergraduate students no teaching or engagement is expected between the examination and resit periods of the summer term. As such, September start undergraduate students may request authorised absence between these periods without providing additional evidence as outlined in 3.2. Students are expected to return to the university should they be required to attend any resit examinations.

3.2 Exceptional Circumstances and Acceptable Evidence

3.2.1 Exceptional Circumstances are defined as circumstances where it would be wholly unreasonable to expect a student to continue attending classes

Examples include:

- 3.2.1.1 Family bereavement – death of a close family member (parent/sibling/grandparent)
- 3.2.1.2 Serious ill health – Hospitalisation/confined to bed rest or mental health difficulty
- 3.2.1.3 To give birth – associated with a student giving birth
- 3.2.1.4 In all of the cases listed above the University may ask for some evidence of the events claimed but this will be done as sensitively as possible.
- 3.2.1.5 Students' Union BUCS fixtures – where no prior Cause for Concern has been raised and the SU confirm students required to participate.

4.0 Key principles

- 4.1 All authorised absence requests must be submitted and granted before students absent themselves from their course.
- 4.2 Applications must be submitted using the "Authorised Absence Request Form".
- 4.3 Forms must be accompanied by additional evidence (please see evidence requirements at section 3.2.1.1 above).
- 4.4 Forms must be signed by the student's Programme Leader as well as an ISSS Advisor before absence is authorised.
- 4.5 Students may be granted up to a maximum of 2 weeks authorised absence.
- 4.6 Students requesting absence for more than 2 weeks must apply through the policy on suspending studies.
- 4.7 Students do not need to request authorised absence outside of their term time but should ensure they have read 3.1 and are clear what the term dates are for their individual programme as term dates *can* differ.
- 4.8 Any student absenting themselves without a grant of authorised absence will be treated as absent without authorisation and risk having their Student Route visa sponsorship withdrawn.
- 4.9 Due to the different structure of engagement with Higher Degree by Research study, Student Route students on PHD programmes will be subject to the following:
 - Students studying on Higher Degree by Research programmes do not follow standard term dates.
 - Along with official University close days students may apply for up to 30 days annual leave per each year of study.
 - 1 year is calculated from 1st August to 31st July.

- Applications must be submitted on the “Higher Degree by Research Annual Leave Request Form”.
- Forms must be signed by student’s supervisor as well as an ISSS advisor before annual leave is authorised.
- Students’ academic progress as well as level of engagement with their course to date will be considered.
- No evidence is required for Higher Degree by Research Annual Leave requests.
- Students who have already used all their annual leave entitlements and who require further authorised leave of absence must apply using the Authorised Absence Authorisation Request process as outlined in section 4.1. above.

5.0 Key responsibilities

- 5.1 Programme Leader – to identify students’ academic progress as well as level of engagement with their course to date and whether absence will affect students’ ability to successfully complete the course. To consider the need for and offer additional support where necessary.
- 5.2 ISSS – to identify any implications the absence will have on the students’ Student Route visa and explain the risks to the student. To document and record travel arrangements, expected/agreed return date and return to study plan.
- 5.3 ISSS will contact students to verify if they have returned by the agreed return date. If a student has not returned as agreed the student’s case will be escalated to the Director of Global Engagement for consideration.
- 5.4 Graduate School – to administer and monitor Annual Leave requests submitted by students on Higher Degree by Research programmes.

6.0 Links to related UN Policies/Guidance/Regulations

- 6.1 International Student Terms and Conditions
- 6.2 Study Break Policy
- 6.3 Wednesday Afternoon Policy

7.0 Links to related external documents (e.g. QAA)

- 7.1 UKVI Guidance for Educators –
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-sponsor-guidance>
- 7.2 Student Route Policy Guidance –
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/points-based-system-student-route>

8.0 Appendices

- 8.1 Summary Sheet
- 8.2 Authorised Absence Request Form
- 8.3 Higher Degree by Research Annual Leave Request form
- 8.4 Authorised Absence Confirmation Letter Template

9.1 Summary Sheet:

Policy Title:	
Authorised Absence for Student Route Students	
Purpose of Policy and to whom it applies (please specify cohorts):	
<p>This policy sets out the grounds on which a student on a Student Route visa will be allowed to take a leave of absence during studies, without this being counted against their attendance and engagement record.</p> <p>This policy applies to all students studying at the University of Northampton on a Student Route visa</p>	
Owner and Department:	
TBC, Director of Global Engagement	
Principal contact:	
TBC, Director of Global Engagement	
Dissemination and implementation plan:	
Via SEC and SSECs Via Web	
Date of initial committee approval (state committee name):	October 2014 (SEC)
Date of Senate approval:	October 2014
Date for implementation and cohorts to which it applies:	October 2014
Date of next annual update:	June 2024
Date of last annual update:	July 2023
Proposed date of full review:	June 2024
Date of last full review:	June 2018
Version number and date:	5.0 July 2023



Authorised Absence Request Form

Students should refer to the Authorised Absence Policy before completing this form.

Completed forms should be submitted to the International Student Support Service, Learning Hub, Waterside or emailed to ISS@northampton.ac.uk

Section A – To be completed by the Student		
Student Number:		Student Name:
Course:		Level/Year:
Period of Proposed Absence	From: ___ / ___ / ___	To: ___ / ___ / ___
Reason for absence:		
Evidence submitted to support request:		
Please read and sign the following declaration		
I confirm that I have considered the impact this absence will have upon my studies at the University of Northampton and have actively planned how I will meet deadlines upon my return.		
I understand that this request is only classed as “authorised” if it is approved by both my course leader and a member of ISSS.		
I understand that this absence alone will not be considered grounds when applying for mitigating circumstances, extension or other academic appeal.		
Student Signature.....		

Section B – To be completed by the student’s Programme Leader	
I confirm that the above named student’s academic progress as well as level of engagement with their course to date is acceptable	Yes / No
I confirm that the student can complete their course of study within the time limit of their current visa	Yes / No
I confirm that I have spoken with the above named student and made any additional arrangements necessary to give them the opportunity to catch up with work missed during their absence.	Yes / No
Please detail additional arrangements agreed for assignment submissions, assessments/examinations and placements:	
I confirm that I approve / do not approve (<i>please circle</i>) this student’s request for authorised absence.	
Name:	Signature:
Section C – To be completed by an ISSS advisor	
I confirm that the above named student has provided sufficient evidence to support their application	Yes / No
I confirm that I have spoken with the above named student and explained the implications this absence will have on their Student Route visa.	Yes / No
Please detail arrangements agreed with the student regarding their return to studies (e.g. flight tickets / meeting with ISSS on return):	
I confirm that I approve / do not approve (<i>please circle</i>) this student’s request for authorised absence.	
Name:	Signature:

<i>For Office use only</i>			
Approval letter sent to student	<input type="checkbox"/>	QLS amended	<input type="checkbox"/>
Copy sent to			
SAT	<input type="checkbox"/>	Help Desk	<input type="checkbox"/>
Course Leader	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Date completed:			



Higher Degree by Research Annual Leave Request Form

Annual leave requests should be signed off by students’ supervisor and a member of the International Student Support Service.

All forms should be submitted to the International Student Support Service at the Learning Hub, Waterside or by email to ISS@northampton.ac.uk for final approval.

Students should use the same form for all annual leave requests for the year.

Student Number:	Student Name:
Total Leave Entitlement: 30 days	
Leave Period: 01 / 08 / 20 ____ to 31 / 07 / 20 ____	

I require the following annual leave:

From:	To:	Number of days	Total Annual Leave Taken	Total Annual Leave Left	Signature of Supervisor	Signature of ISSS

Authorised Absence Confirmation Letter Template

International Student Support Service
University of Northampton
Waterside Campus

<<DATE>>

Dear <<STUDENT NAME>>

Re: CONFIRMATION OF AUTHORISED ABSENCE

Please accept this letter as confirmation that your request for authorised absence has been approved.

Your absence has been authorised from <<START DATE>> to <<END DATE>>.

If for any reason you are unable to return to your studies by <<END DATE>> you must contact the International Student Support Service immediately on ISS@northampton.ac.uk or 0044 (0)1604 893113.

Please be aware that failure to return by this date may result in the University withdrawing sponsorship of your Student Route visa.

Yours faithfully,

New signatory and Job titles required