



Authorized Leave for International Students Policy and Procedure

Policy Sponsor:	Provost and Vice-President (Academic)	First Approved:	14 OCTOBER 2025
Primary Contact:	Dean of Students	Last Updated:	DD MONTH 20YY
Approved by:	Senate	Review Scheduled:	DD MONTH 20YY

1. PURPOSE

To implement a way for international students to take an official leave of absence from their studies, in order to comply with conditions of their study permit pertaining to their status in Canada and eligibility for a post-graduation work permit.

This policy will provide Brandon University students with the necessary support they need during difficult times or unforeseen circumstances that disrupt their studies, while ensuring Brandon University facilitates student compliance with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) regulations, and outline how to process authorized leaves for international students.

2. SCOPE

Currently enrolled undergraduate and graduate international students in all Faculties/Schools, who are classified as international students and require a study permit to study at Brandon University.

3. DEFINITIONS

Academic Advisor: Defined as an Academic Advisor, Department Chair, program coordinator or graduate thesis/project supervisor

Enrolled: Defined as the point of a student receiving a Letter of Admission (LOA).

Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC): The Canadian federal government department responsible for immigration, refugees, and Canadian citizenship. IRCC provides permits and visas for individuals who intend to temporarily stay in Canada, including students, workers, and visitors.

International Student: An international citizen who requires a study permit from IRCC to pursue studies in Canada until the permit's expiry date, and those who have temporary status or another permit that grants them permission to study in Canada for a shorter period.

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Student is further defined as the following:

- a) Person enrolled in either full-time or part-time in classes, including when on placements that are part of their academic program;
- b) Person enrolled in the English for Academic Purposes program;
- c) Person who is enrolled in a program but not currently registered in classes.

Study Permit: A document issued by IRCC that allows foreign nationals to study at Designated Learning Institutions (DLIs) in Canada for the duration of the program of study.

Compliance with Study Permit Conditions: Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations (IRPR) 220.1 outlines the conditions for a study permit holder. IRPR 220.1.1 stipulates that “The holder of a study permit in Canada is subject to the following conditions:

they shall enroll at a designated learning institution and remain enrolled at a designated learning institution until they complete their studies; and

they shall actively pursue their course or program of study.”

IRPR 220.1, subsection 4 addresses evidence of compliance with conditions:

“The holder of study permit must provide evidence to an officer of their compliance with the conditions”.

Regular Academic Term: At Brandon University, the regular academic terms are Fall (September – December), and Winter (January-April). Graduate students who are enrolled in Spring and/or Summer sessions will be eligible for an authorized leave.

Scheduled Break: A designated time within a study program where students have the choice to temporarily take a break from their studies. Each DLI sets its own scheduled breaks. Examples of scheduled breaks include reading week, the spring/summer term, and the winter holiday break.

Authorized Leave: Temporary absence from studies for international students on study permits can be granted to allow international students to take a leave during a regular academic term (outside of a scheduled break). In order to adhere to the conditions of their study permit and provide evidence of compliance, IRCC permits students to provide evidence that their DLI has granted them an official leave from a regular term of their program due to extenuating circumstances: officially called “Authorized Leave”. The authorized leave requires approval from the University and must end within 150 days from the time it commenced.

Students must also adhere to any academic leave of absence policy or procedure that may be in effect for their program of study.

Change of Status: The process of altering the legal status in Canada with IRCC. This may involve transitioning from being a student to becoming a visitor or changing from a student to obtaining a temporary work permit in Canada. If students decide to switch to a visitor or work permit during a break, they can resume their studies if their Study Permit remains valid.

Supporting Documentation: Adequate documentation to support the justification behind filing an Authorized Leave request.

4. PROCEDURE

The **Office of International Activities (OIA)** will consider requests from international students for an authorized leave from their studies, due to extenuating circumstances.

Types of Leaves and Required Supporting Documentation:

1. Medical (physician's report)
2. Parental (proof of pregnancy/birth/adoption or physician's report)
3. Compassionate (written explanation, additional documentation may be requested based on circumstances)

Process:

1. As soon as a student is aware of the extenuating circumstances requiring a leave, the student must seek advice from an academic advisor prior to making the appointment in OIA, as the leave may have an impact on their academic studies and anticipated graduation.
2. The student makes an appointment with the Director of International Activities (or designate) in regard to their request. A student may bring a BUSU representative for support if needed.
3. Following discussions with the advisor and OIA, the student must provide:
 - Request for Authorized Leave form
 - Appropriate documentation for the type of leave
 - Copy of valid study permit and passport
4. An ad hoc authorized leave committee consisting of the Director of International Activities (Chair) (or designate), the Dean of Students (or designate), and the President of the Brandon University Students' Union (or designate) shall review the documentation and approve or deny the request. All members of the Committee shall be compliant with any EDIDR training required in their role. Meetings can occur in person or online. This meeting shall occur within 10 business days of receiving the request. Any conflict of interest regarding an application shall be declared prior to the meeting and a designate assigned.

In accordance with IRCC guidelines, the leave can be approved for a maximum duration of 150 days.

5. If approved, the Director, Office of International Activities (or designate) will issue a letter to the student, confirming their authorized leave and pertinent details such as the time period for the leave. If denied, the Director, International Activities (or designate) will issue a letter to the student outlining the reasons for the decision.

Third Party Authorization:

If the student is incapacitated and unable to meet with an advisor, the authorized individual listed in the student's record can submit the necessary documentation to the office.

Any documents provided will be treated with confidentiality in accordance with the university's privacy policy and associated legislation (i.e. PHIA, FIPPA), and all communications will be conducted using the university's

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webmail system. All documentation associated with this policy shall be stored in the office of the Director, Office of International Activities as per legislation.

A student can authorize a designated third party to be added to the student's file as someone permitted to act on their behalf, following the established university procedures.

Add/Drop Course Deadline, Tuition Refunds and Other Policies:

The Authorized Leave Policy is for immigration purposes only. It will not replace existing Brandon University academic policies (such as Appeals), withdrawal regulations, fee and refund schedules, or other deadlines.

In the event that a student is unable to continue a term due to extenuating circumstances, they must withdraw from all their currently enrolled courses before the Voluntary Withdrawal (VW) deadline to prevent any negative academic consequences.

If the decision to withdraw is made after the VW deadline but before the final exam for the course (or last day of class in the case of courses with no final exam), the student must complete an Authorized Withdrawal (AW) request as per University policy.

This policy does not support students in appealing their grades or receiving a tuition refund if they fail to inform or take action within the specified deadlines or follow the academic policies and regulations.

IRCC Decision and Compliance:

An authorized leave granted by Brandon University, does not guarantee approval of a visa/permit by IRCC. The IRCC retains the authority to determine whether a student's application is approved. This letter simply serves as additional documentation to support compliance.

While on authorized leave, it is the student's responsibility to ensure their study permit remains valid and they are compliant with all conditions, including refraining from work while not studying.

Students are responsible to ensure they have adequate medical insurance during their authorized leave.

5. POLICY AUTHORITY

- **Policy Sponsor:** Provost and Vice-President (Academic)
- **Primary Contact:** Dean of Students
- **Approval Authority:** Senate

6. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations: <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/PDF/SOR-2002-227.pdf>

The Personal Health Information Act (PHIA): [C.C.S.M. c. P33.5](#)

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Province of Manitoba [C.C.S.M. c. F175](#)