



Undergraduate Handbook for Leave of Absence





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Available electronically at <http://www.usc.edu/loa>

*** To assist you with the leave of absence form please refer to Section 2 instructions along with the Guidelines for Withdrawal checklist on page 19.**

General Information (Please Read First)

What is a leave of absence?

A leave of absence is a temporary leave from the university – a kind of “time out” which may be necessary during your undergraduate career.

Why do students take leaves of absence?

Students may elect to take a leave of absence for a variety of reasons, including:

Medical emergencies due to accident or illness;

Family crises or some other **personal situation** that requires you to be away from school for some period;

Financial issues which may take time to resolve;

Academic difficulty which may best be handled by taking some time to refocus on your college work.

How long does a leave of absence last?

Typically, a leave of absence is for 1 semester or 1 academic year. A leave may be extended by contacting your academic unit.

Is it easy to return to USC?

Yes. Especially if you have gone through the steps to file for a leave of absence and you plan ahead for your return. Following these guidelines will help assure Catalogue rights which apply on your return, ease financial aid processing, and provide you with the support you need to successfully return to USC and finish your undergraduate degree.

I'm thinking about taking a leave of absence. What do I do?

Everything you need to know, and all the steps you need to take are in this handbook.

As a first semester freshman or first semester transfer student at USC, may I take a leave of absence?

No. Students must update their application for admission. They must contact Admissions at (213)740-1111.

Does a Leave of Absence automatically cancel my classes?

No. Students must first meet with advisors and then proceed to the Registration Office and drop their classes in person. If they cannot physically reach the USC campus, then they must contact their advisor as soon as possible.

I plan to leave USC, should I file for a leave of absence?

Yes. You may change your mind and decide to return to USC in the future.

If I withdraw without taking a leave of absence, am I eligible to purchase health insurance?

No. Students who do not take a leave of absence are ineligible to purchase health insurance.

Filing for a Leave of Absence Prior to the Start of the Semester

Step One -- Meet with your advisor

Meet with your academic advisor, review your reasons for taking a leave of absence, and submit the completed Leave of Absence form. Once you have completed your Leave of Absence form (after meeting with advisor), immediately thereafter, go to the Registration Office and cancel your enrollment. If you are on academic probation, be sure to inform your academic review counselor that you are taking a leave of absence.

Step Two – Inform your department

If you have declared a major, meet with your departmental advisor to review remaining degree requirements.

Step Three – International Students

If you are an international student, meet with an advisor in the Office of International Services before finalizing your plans for a leave of absence. Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) restrictions require all persons on student visas to maintain 12 units per semester to be considered a full-time student. Leaves of absence for reasons other than medical are rarely granted. A student who finds it necessary to take a leave of absence for reasons other than medical will usually be required to return to his/her country of origin until s/he is ready to return to school.

Step Four – Clearing registration

At the Registration Department (REG 100), drop any courses in which you have enrolled for the upcoming term. You may not drop all classes by using the TouchTone or Web registration systems. You must do this in person. If you are unable to do this in person, then you must contact the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs for assistance. If you have pending incomplete (IN) grades and are unable to complete them, you must meet with your academic advisor to file for an extension. If not granted, these incomplete grades will become "IX" grades, which count as an "F".

Step Five -- Housing

If you have a housing contract, you must contact the Housing Office at (213)740-2546 to inform them that you are no longer enrolled in classes. Turn in your keys and inform your R.A. that you are taking a leave of absence. You must also cancel any meal plan you may have purchased. Housing does not automatically do this. You will not be responsible for any charges after the date you turn in your keys.

Step Six – Your fee bill and outstanding charges

Clear your bill with the University. Make sure that you have no outstanding charges or that you have made payment arrangements.

Step Seven – Financial Aid

If you have been receiving scholarships, need-based financial aid or alternative loans, follow the steps in Section 5 of this handbook. If your leave of absence is prompted by financial concerns, and you have not already done so, set up a meeting with a financial aid counselor to see if there are financial aid options available to help you avoid taking a leave of absence.

Step Eight -- Parking

If you have purchased a parking permit, return it to Parking Services (PSA). The cost of parking permits is pro-rated so you may receive a partial refund. Also clear any outstanding parking fines.

Step Nine -- USCard

At the USCard Office (STU), close print or discretionary accounts. Once you have dropped all of your courses, you are eligible for a refund of any remaining balance. Your refund will be credited to your account within 3-4 business days. Once the refund has been credited, you may request a check that can be picked up in Student Account Services (KOH 200).

Step Ten – Student Health Insurance

Check the status of your health insurance. If you have USC Health Insurance you will be dropped from the program and receive a refund if you are not enrolled after the third week of classes. Keep in mind that if you are covered under your parents' insurance policy, you most likely have to be a full-time student (enrolled in at least 12 units) to qualify for coverage.

Step Eleven – Tuition Refund Insurance

If you withdraw during a semester and you are participating in the Tuition Refund Plan (TRP) and if the reason for your leave of absence is medical, you may file a claim for a TRP credit. Forms for filing a claim are available in Student Account Services (KOH 200) and in the Registrar's Office (SAS 104).

Step Twelve – Library books

Return all library books.

Step Thirteen – Update your address

Update your address and telephone number at <https://camel.usc.edu/updtaddr> or in the SAS lobby.

Filing for a Leave of Absence During the Semester

Step One – Meet with your advisor

Meet with your academic advisor, review your reasons for taking a leave of absence and submit the completed Leave of Absence form to [GFS 315](#).

Step Two – Inform your department

If you have declared a major, meet with your departmental advisor to review remaining degree requirements.

Step Three -- International Students

If you are an international student, meet with an advisor in the Office of International Services before finalizing your plans for a leave of absence. Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) restrictions require all persons on student visas to maintain 12 units per semester to be considered a full-time student. Leaves of absence for reasons other than medical are rarely granted. A student who finds it necessary to take a leave of absence for reasons other than medical will usually be required to return to his/her country of origin until he/she is ready to return to school.

Step Four – Dropping courses

Before the end of the 3rd week of classes – at the Registration Department (REG 100), drop any courses in which you have enrolled for the upcoming term. This will result in no courses showing on your transcript for the semester, and no tuition charges. You may not drop all classes by using the TouchTone or Web registration systems. You must do this in person. If you are unable to do this in person, then you must contact the office of the Vice President for Student Affairs for assistance at (213) 740-2421.

Weeks 4-12 of classes – follow the procedure above. You will receive a mark of “W” in each of your courses, which means official withdrawal. These courses will appear on your transcript with the mark of W, which has a neutral effect on your grade point average. Full tuition is charged for courses dropped after the third week of classes.

After the 12th week – Students who have an unforeseeable and/or unavoidable illness or emergency which occurs after the twelfth week should pursue grades of incomplete by speaking with each professor; otherwise grades will be calculated based on work completed, with a “0” for uncompleted work. If you will be unable to return for the following semester, see Section 2 on filing for a future Leave of Absence.

Step Five -- Housing

If you have a housing contract, you must contact the Housing Office to inform them that you are no longer enrolled in classes. Turn in your keys and inform your R.A. that you are taking a leave of absence. You must also cancel any meal plan you may have purchased. Housing does not automatically do this. You will not be responsible for any charges after the date you turn in your keys.

Step Six – Your fee bill and outstanding charges

Clear your bill with the University. Make sure that you have no outstanding charges or that you have made payment arrangements.

Step Seven – Financial aid

If you have been receiving scholarships, need-based financial aid or alternative loans, follow the steps in Section 5 of this handbook. If your leave of absence is prompted by financial concerns, and you have not already done so, set up a meeting with a financial aid counselor to see if there are financial aid options available to help you avoid taking a leave of absence.

Step Eight -- Parking

If you have purchased a parking permit return it to Parking Services (PSA). The cost of parking permits is pro-rated so you may receive a partial refund. Also clear any outstanding parking fines.

Step Nine -- USCard

At the USCard Office (STU), close print or discretionary accounts. Once you have dropped all of your courses, you are eligible for a refund of any remaining balance. Your refund will be credited to your account within 3-4 business days. Once the refund has been credited, you may request a check which can be picked up in Student Account Services (KOH 200).

Step Ten – Student Health Insurance

Check the status of your health insurance. If you have USC Health Insurance you will be dropped from the program and receive a refund if you are not enrolled after the third week of classes. If your leave of absence begins after the end of the third week of classes, you will be covered for the remainder of the semester. Keep in mind that if you are covered under your parent's insurance policy, you most likely have to be a full-time student (enrolled in at least 12 units) to qualify for coverage.

Step Eleven – Tuition Refund Insurance

If you withdraw during a semester and you are participating in the Tuition Refund Plan (TRP) and if the reason for your leave of absence is medical, you may file a claim for a TRP credit. Forms for filing a claim are available in Student Account Services and in the Registrar's Office (SAS 104).

Step Twelve – Library books and text books

Return all library books. You may also wish to sell back your textbooks at the University Bookstore.

Step Thirteen – Update your address

Update your address and telephone number at <https://camel.usc.edu/updtaddr> or in the SAS lobby.

Things you should know about financial aid

Step One – Let us know

Notify the USC Financial Aid Office in writing about your leave of absence, or send the Financial Aid Office a copy of your Leave of Absence form.

Step Two – Tuition Refund Insurance

If you withdraw during a semester and you are participating in the Tuition Refund Plan (TRP) and if the reason for your leave of absence is medical, you may file a claim for a TRP credit. Forms for filing a claim are available in Student Account Services (KOH 200) and in the Registrar's Office (SAS 104).

Step Three – Student Loans

If you have ever borrowed student loans, notify your lender(s) of your leave of absence. Ask each lender how your leave of absence will affect your grace period and repayment. If you are not already in repayment, expect to enter repayment immediately or after the expiration of the grace period, depending on the loan. If you begin to receive loan billing statements, do not ignore them. Call the lender to inquire about deferment and forbearance possibilities. Keep copies of all correspondence you send to your lenders. Keep a record of all telephone conversations you have with your lenders. Once you re-enroll at least half time, notify each lender and inquire about an in-school deferment.

Federal Stafford Loan, Federal Supplemental Loans for Students, Federal PLUS Loans: Notify your lender or current loan servicer of your leave of absence. If you are not sure who your lender is, call the Financial Aid Office and we can give you that information.

Federal Stafford Loan, Federal Perkins Loan, National Direct Student Loan, University Direct Student Loan, Health Professions Student Loan, Loan for Disadvantaged Students or other institutional loans: Notify the USC Student Financial Services Office at (213) 740-4077. The Financial Services Office will determine if you need to complete a loan exit counseling session.

USC Subsidized Loan or Unsubsidized GATE Loan: Notify American Educational Services at (800) 645-0750.

Private loan programs, such as Nellie Mae Excel, Sallie Mae Signature Loan, GATE Family Loan or TERI: Notify your lender of your leave of absence.

Step Four – Work Study

If you have a Work-Study job, you must notify your employer of the date your leave of absence begins. You must stop earning money through the Federal Work-Study program as of the date you drop to half-time enrollment.

Step Five – Cal Grants

If you are a Cal Grant recipient, and your leave of absence is for at least one semester, you must notify the Cal Grant Program and apply for a Cal Grant Leave of Absence by completing a G-10 form. G-10 forms are available from the Financial Aid Office, or call the Cal Grant Program at (916) 526-7590.

Step Six – USC Scholarships

Recipients of Trustee, Presidential, Deans', Trojan or USC Associates Scholarships who notify the Financial Aid Office about a planned leave of absence (see Step 1 above) will be considered for a leave of absence from the scholarship program. The Financial Aid Office will notify you in writing of its decision. If you are approved for a scholarship leave of absence, the letter will state the conditions for reinstatement of the scholarship. Before you return to USC, you must notify the Financial Aid Office of your expected date of return. The Financial Aid Office will determine whether you meet the conditions for reinstatement of your scholarship.

Step Seven – Other Renewable Academic Scholarships

If you are a recipient of any other renewable academic scholarships, you must notify the awarding agency or department in writing of your leave of absence. Specify the reason for the leave as well as its expected duration. If you are approved for a leave of absence from the scholarship program, request reinstatement of the scholarship before your return to USC.

Step Eight – Returning in the Spring Semester

If your leave of absence occurs during the fall semester and you plan to return in the spring of the same academic year, you should complete the financial aid application process if you have not already done so. This includes responding to requests for additional information. If you have already been awarded financial aid for the academic year, and you notified the Financial Aid Office about your planned leave of absence (see Step 1 above), the Financial Aid Office will send you a revised Statement of Financial Aid Eligibility, if one is needed. You should call the Financial Aid Office at least six weeks prior to your return to insure that you've done everything you need to do to receive your funds.

Step Nine – Returning in a Future Academic Year

If you will not be returning to USC until a future academic year (fall or spring), plan ahead for your return. Call the Financial Aid Office to request a financial aid application packet in December preceding the academic year of your expected return. You must meet all financial aid deadlines for the academic year of your expected return. You must also continue to satisfy all financial aid general eligibility requirements; for example, you must not default on any student loan while you are on your leave of absence.

Residency Requirements

What does “residency requirement” mean?

Residency requirements are the university guidelines for courses that must be taken in residence at USC.

What is the policy regarding residency requirements?

For all students beginning their undergraduate studies at USC in fall 1997 or later (or following a Catalogue for Fall 1997 or later)¹, a minimum of 64 units toward the bachelor’s degree must be earned in residence at USC. A minimum of 80 units toward a bachelor’s degree in Architecture must be earned in residence at USC. For students in Engineering’s “3-2” Program, at least 48 units must be earned in residence at USC.

All upper-division units required for the major and minor must be earned in residence.

On a case-by-case basis, the major or minor department may give credit for upper-division courses taken prior to matriculation and may pre-approve required upper-division courses to be taken out of residence.

Fall/Spring Course Work

Once students matriculate at USC, all courses taken for subject or unit credit in the fall and spring semesters must be taken in residence. Only transfer work that appears on the transfer institution’s transcript for a summer term will be accepted. Undergraduate students who wish to take course work at another institution during the fall or spring must request an exception to residency using the “Request for Exception to Residency” form available in their major department. Students must consult with

¹ Students who began their undergraduate studies at USC prior to fall 1997 must see their advisor regarding residency requirements and transferability of courses as some different rules may apply.

their major department (students in the College), with the Office of College Advising (undeclared/undecided students) or with the Student Affairs office of their academic unit (students in professional schools).

Permission to take courses in the fall or spring requires approval by the dean of the school in which the student is majoring (or the Dean of Academic Programs of the College for undeclared/undecided students). Permission is only granted in rare circumstances. If permission to take courses out of residency is granted, the major (or minor) department must pre-approve use of the courses for the major (or minor), and use of the courses to fulfill electives must be pre-approved by the closest equivalent department at USC. In addition, you must consult the Degree Progress Department (SAS 010) before taking course work elsewhere to ensure the work will transfer.

Summer Course Work

During your leave of absence, if you wish to take summer course work elsewhere you must obtain appropriate written pre-approval from the Degree Progress Department using the "USC Transfer Course Work Pre-Approval Form". This form is available on the web, from Degree Progress, and from your department. If you wish to use transfer work to fulfill upper division requirements in your major or minor, you must instead use the "Request for Exception to Residency" form, which must be approved by the major or minor department. Students following the Fall 1997 Catalogue or later may not use transfer work taken after enrollment at USC to fulfill general education or writing requirements.

When courses are completed elsewhere, you must request that the other institution send an official transcript to USC so that the course work can be evaluated and transferred. After you have earned 64 college-level units, regardless of where they were earned, you may transfer a maximum of 8 units to USC up to the 64-unit transfer limit. Courses past this limitation may earn "subject credit" – they may fulfill university requirements – but they will not earn units toward the total needed for graduation. Units earned in overseas studies programs approved by USC's Undergraduate Studies Committee and in courses approved by consortia or other institutional agreements are considered to be taken in residence.

Residence Requirement for a Second Bachelor's Degree

For students with their first bachelor's degree from USC, 32 units applicable to the degree beyond the number of units required for the first USC bachelor's degree must be completed in residence.

For students with their first bachelor's degree from another institution, the second bachelor's degree requires 64 units applicable to the degree completed in residence, except for the B.Arch. degree which when earned concurrently with the M.Arch. degree requires 32 units applicable to the degree completed in residence.

Leaves of Absence & Residency Requirements

Leaves of absence are generally granted in order to give students time to deal with personal, family, financial, and/or medical emergencies. A leave of absence is not a means to circumvent the university's residency requirements. Students should not plan to take courses at another institution during a leave of absence. In the event that you wish to pursue course work at another institution during your leave and receive credit upon your return to USC, you must secure the necessary approvals IN ADVANCE. Please contact the Articulation Office for assistance at (213) 740-4628.

Returning to USC

Step One – Let us know !!

Before you return, contact your academic department to inform them of your return date.

Step Two – Contact Financial Aid

Financial aid application materials for the following year are available at the Financial Aid Office beginning in December. For example, application packets for Fall 2002 and/or Spring 2003 financial aid will be available in December 2001. It is your responsibility to obtain an application packet and apply on time each year. You may reach the Financial Aid Office at (213) 740-1111.

Step Three – Housing

If you reside on campus or in campus housing, contact the Housing Office at (213) 740-2546 to inform them of your return date. Resubmit any necessary forms to reapply for campus housing.

Step Four – Meet with your advisor

In order to register, you must first meet with an advisor in your academic unit (e.g. the College Office of Academic Advising, Marshall Student Services, School of Engineering Student Affairs office, etc.) and have the leave of absence holds lifted from your student records.

Step Five – Register for courses

Contact the Registration Department at (213) 740-8500 and receive a registration appointment time. Complete the registration process for the upcoming/current semester.

Section
7

Resources

University Admission & Financial Aid

Office of Admission

Admission Center
(213) 740-1111

Office of Financial Aid

SAS Lobby
(213) 740-1111

Academic Records & Registrar

Office of the Registrar/Registration

REG Lobby
(213) 740-8500

Degree Progress

SAS 010
(213) 740-7444

Academic Review

SAS 113
(213) 740-7741

Articulation Office

REG 208
(213) 740-4628

Transcripts

SAS 106
(213) 740-7445

Student Affairs

Office of the Vice President
For Student Affairs

STU 201
(213) 740-2421

Student Counseling Services

YMCA 100
(213) 740-7711

Office of International Services

STU 300
(213) 740-2666

Career Planning & Placement Center

STU 111
(213) 740-9111

Student Health Center

SHC Lobby
(213) 740-5344

Office for Residential and Greek Life

STU 200
(213) 740-2080

Disability Services & Programs

STU 301
(213) 740-0776

Housing Office

PSX First Floor
(213) 740-2546

Academic Advisement

Office of Academic Advisement
(The College)

CAS 120
(213) 740-2534

School of Engineering
Student Affairs

OHE 106
(213) 740-4530

Marshall School of Business
Student Services

BRI 104
(213) 740-0690

Financial Services

Student Financial Services

HSH 102
(213) 740-4077

Student Account Services

KOH 200
(213) 740-7471

Undergraduate Leave of Absence Form

(International students must file for a Leave of Absence with OISS)

Date _____

Personal Information

Class Level _____

Student ID# _____ Major _____

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Permanent Street Address _____

Permanent City, State & Zip _____ Permanent Phone _____

Mailing Street Address _____

Mailing City, State, Zip _____ Local Phone _____

Email _____ (Please note: It is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to cancel your enrollment.)

Reason for Leave of Absence (this information will be kept confidential)

- Academic Medical Religious Mission Military Service
 Financial Personal Permanent Disability Family Other

Please elaborate if appropriate (Mandatory for scholarship recipients planning to renew their award upon return)

Carefully review the Residency Requirements – Section 5 beginning on page 12

When was the last date on which you attended classes? _____

Expected date of return _____

I have carefully read, understood and followed the steps and guidelines in the Leave of Absence Handbook

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Academic Advisor Review and Approval:

Signature _____ Department _____ Date _____

Academic Dean Review and Approval:

Signature _____ Department/School _____ Date _____

Please mail or fax to:

Office for Undergraduate Programs
ATTN: Leave of Absence - GFS 315
University of Southern California
Los Angeles, CA 90089-1695
Tel: 213 740-1741
Fax: 213 740-9757

Department Use Only

_____ Date Received _____ Entered in Student Information System _____ Sent to Financial Aid

The Leave of Absence home page is located at www.usc.edu/loa

GUIDELINES FOR WITHDRAWAL

Students wishing to withdraw from the university are responsible for making contact with all applicable offices to ensure closure in all areas. Departments below may require action that differs from information in “Comments” section. It may also be necessary to consult *additional* offices, not listed here, to complete the withdrawal process.

NOTE: Students requesting a leave of absence must go to their academic unit to complete paperwork. If this is the first semester of USC enrollment, a student will not be eligible for a leave of absence and must update their admission application with the Office of Admission.

“UPC” denotes University Park Campus

“HSC” denotes Health Sciences Campus

DEPARTMENT	PHONE	OFFICE	COMMENTS	CHECK WHEN COMPLETED
Registration	Office 740-8500 Fax # 740-7995	REG	Drop to 0 units, in person or by fax, & obtain registration confirmation reflecting change of status. Ensure forwarding address is entered on Student Information System. If student purchased Tuition Refund Insurance for the current semester, pick up claim form. Student Affairs can withdraw a student with written permission from that student, or parent permission if student is hospitalized or unable.	
Major Department	Varies	Varies	Make contact with academic advisor to inform them of withdrawal and discuss remaining degree requirements. If the student has not been declared a major, they must go to the College Advising Office.	
Office of Admission	740-1111	Admission Center	Students in their first semester at USC must contact the Office of Admission and complete an admission update form if they wish to return. They are not eligible of a leave of absence.	
Financial Aid UPC HSC	740-1111 (323)442-1016	SAS Lobby KAM 420	See a counselor to discuss effects of withdrawal on present and future financial status, as well as loans in deferment. If necessary, the student may need to contact Sallie Mae at 888-272-5543 as well as other outside lenders. Call 740-4077 for the federal Perkins loan.	
Student Acct Svcs –UPC (cashiers) Student Acct Svcs -HSC	740-7471 (323)342-3040	KOH 200 SRH 101B	Students should check OASIS to see if they have an existing balance, if so, they must pay it off	
Collections	740-9087	HSC 211	If unable to pay off the existing balance, payment must be arranged with collections	
Housing – UPC Housing - HSC	740-2546 (323)442-1576	PSX Seaver	If applicable, take confirmation of withdrawal to Housing to cancel contract. Keys must be handed in at local Customer Service Center.	
USCard - UPC USCard - HSC	740-8709 (323)442-2110	STU Seaver	If applicable, close print and discretionary accounts and show confirmation of withdrawal to cancel meal plan.	
Transportation Services (UPC)	740-3575	PSA	If applicable, return parking permit for pro-rated refund and clear any outstanding fees.	

HSC	(323) 442-1201	KAM 120		
Libraries	Varies	Varies	If applicable, return all outstanding materials and pay any fines.	
Health Insurance	740-5344	SHC	Check status of insurance.	
Office for International Services	740-2666	STU 300	Applicable only for international students.	
Campus Employment	Varies	Varies	If applicable, ensure that campus employer has forwarding address to send final paycheck.	
Restrictions			Check for holds on the student account via the web.	
Update Address/phone		SAS Lobby	Update phone number and address. Local address information may be updated at a kiosk or on the web.	
Degree Progress (Transfer Credit)	740-7444	SAS 010	Courses completed during fall or spring semester at institutions other than USC do NOT transfer. Check with this office to ensure that courses taken during summer session at other institutions are eligible for transfer.	
Student Financial Services	740-4077	HSB 102	If applicable, students with the Tuition Payment Plan or Tuition Prepayment Plan should contact this office.	
Academic Review	740-7741	SAS 113	Check for academic disqualification or probation, pending or new petitions, and requests for grade changes.	

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