



**Higher Education Services
Attendance & Leave of Absence
Policy**

July 2025

DOCUMENT INFORMATION AND VERSION CONTROL

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Version	Author	Date	Brief summary of changes
1	A. Watson	28/07/25	Original version

Contents

1.0 Introduction.....	4
2.0 Distance Learning Student Attendance.....	4
3.0 Leave of Absence.....	4
4.0 Applying for Leave of Absence.....	5
5.0 Returning to Study.....	5
6.0 Monitoring.....	5
Appendix.....	6
Leave of Absence Request.....	6

Higher Education Services Attendance & Leave of Absence Policy

1.0 Introduction

1.1 FutureLearn is dedicated to delivering a high-quality learning experience. Active student participation is encouraged to achieve academic success. This policy applies to all Higher Education Services students. It sets out clear expectations for both attendance and engagement, and how students can apply for leave of absence.

1.2 Students are expected to actively engage with programme materials and activities, participate in tutorials and seminars, contribute to individual and group activities and resources, complete and submit assessments, and respond to FutureLearn communications in a timely manner.

1.3 The document should be read alongside the procedures for leave of absence for partner students.

- Brunel University (BU) [Abeyance Policy for Taught Students](#)
- Roehampton University (RU) [University Policies and Regulations | University of Roehampton, London](#)

2.0 Distance Learning Student Attendance

2.1 While distance learning at FutureLearn offers flexibility to accommodate individual schedules and commitments, we strongly encourage students to actively participate in their learning journey. Engagement with the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is essential to academic success. As part of this, students are expected to be fully enrolled and registered, complete their online induction, and begin interacting with their programme materials by working through lessons and activities within their first module. Attending a live induction session also helps build early connections with lecturers and peers. Additionally, students should have their payment plan arranged, or student finance confirmed to ensure uninterrupted access to their studies.

2.2 From week two of a module starting both the Academic teams and Student Services teams monitor engagement online through learner analytics and final submissions. Any individual not engaging with the VLE or submission points are contacted by their lecturers or Student Services Officers to offer support and work with the student to reengage them onto their programme.

3.0 Leave of Absence

3.1 There may be times when a student's learning journey is interrupted due to external factors beyond the student's and FutureLearn's control. In these instances, the student can apply for a leave of absence. This is a temporary suspension of their studies for an agreed period of time. Leave of absences could be prompted for reasons such as, medical, pregnancy, maternity, paternity, adoption, or personal issues. It is important to apply for leave of absence where personal circumstances may impact on progress of studies.

3.2 A student must have a valid reason for a leave of absence and where possible support the application with evidence.

3.3 A leave of absence is discouraged during the first six months of study.

3.4 Any student applying for leave of absence will be counselled by a member of the Student Services team. Generally, a student can request up to 12 months leave, however due to the carousel model and

students being able to sit their assessments in order it is encouraged that students return at month 11. Any time beyond 12 months will be at the discretion of the Academic Registrar.

3.5 For short term leave of absences students are directed to the [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#).

4.0 Applying for Leave of Absence

4.1 Students should apply for leave of absence through the [Leave of Absence Request Form](#). This should be sent to studentsupport@futurelearn.com. For BU and RU, processes are outlined in the link in section 1.3.

4.2 A Student Services team member will contact the student and guide them through the process and clearly explain the implications on the student's studies and progression.

4.3 FutureLearn will confirm in writing to the student once the application has been successful. Until that time the student must continue with their studies.

4.4 Any current payment plan will be cancelled and upon return a new payment plan including any outstanding debts will be issued and signed by all parties.

4.5 It is the responsibility of the student to inform the Student Loan Company of a leave of absence and temporary suspension of the Postgraduate Loan.

4.6 Backdated requests for Leave of Absence during an assessment period will not normally be considered. Where circumstances prevented the student from submitting, the student should submit a claim through either the [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#) or [Academic Appeals Procedure](#).

5.0 Returning to Study

5.1 Grades achieved prior to the start date of the leave of absence will be carried forward. However, it may not be possible to carry forward component marks if the assessment has changed during the leave of absence.

5.2 A member of the Student Services team will contact the student one month before the return date to support the student with their transition back into study.

5.3 If a student wished to return earlier than planned and the leave of absence was due to a medical reason the student will need to produce a medical note to confirm fitness to study.

5.4 If a student is unable to return after the agreed time, they must seek support and further guidance from the Student Services team. If a student does not return, does not inform FutureLearn and is non-contactable the student will be deemed to have withdrawn and will be presented at the next available Subject and Award Board.

6.0 Monitoring

6.1 The policy will be kept under review and formally reviewed every three years by the Academic Registrar.

Appendix

Leave of Absence Request

Please complete and sign this form and return to: studentsupport@futurelearn.com

SECTION A: STUDENT DETAILS

Forename(s):	
Surname:	
Student ID:	
Contact Address:	
Email Address:	
Telephone Number:	
Programme:	

SECTION B: PREVIOUS LEAVE OF ABSENCE DATES

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SECTION C: REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Please give details of the circumstances of your request for Leave of Absence. Include the period requested, the purpose for the leave, and supporting evidence (attach).

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Please indicate contact details during the leave.

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Please note that you are expected to return to your studies on the date above. The Student Services team will contact you at least one month prior to your expected date of return. If you are leaving for extenuating circumstances, we may require seeing evidence that you are fit to resume your studies. If you do not return on your expected date of return, it will be assumed that you do not wish to continue with your studies with FutureLearn and you will be permanently withdrawn from your course.

A leave of study counts towards the maximum duration of your course. You commenced your study in the _____ academic year and are expected to have completed your course by _____.

SECTION D: STUDENT DECLARATION

By signing this form:

I can confirm that I have read the Leave of Absence policy and procedure. I understand:

- The academic and financial implications of taking a Leave of Absence.
- That it is my responsibility to manage the impact that this leave will have on my future funding for study and financial support.
- That the leave counts towards the length of time I am taking to study my course and that maximum duration regulations apply.

Signed (Your Signature)	Date
Authorised by: Head of Programmes (Signature)	Date