



January 11, 2021

UBC – Acknowledgment of Current Leave Policies for International Students

This letter is applicable to all current international students at the Vancouver and Okanagan campuses of the University of British Columbia (UBC).

The purpose of this letter is to:

- Acknowledge UBC’s current institutional policies related to students taking time away from studies in response to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)’s announced policies in January 2019 on assessing conditions, such as actively pursuing studies, for study permit holders; this letter is not a personalized authorization for individual students.
- Provide an institutional document that UBC students can use to support applications submitted to IRCC or address requests from IRCC officers.
- Clarify UBC’s definitions for immigration purposes, and
- Support actions taken by our students to make academic and non-academic decisions.

UBC’s Definitions for Immigration Purposes

As a Designated Learning Institution, UBC has authority to define various enrolment statuses, including full-time, part-time and scheduled break. For up-to-date definitions, see <https://students.ubc.ca/international-student-guide/immigration/ubc-definitions-immigration-purposes>.

UBC uses the above definitions to report on the enrolment status of international students as required by IRCC.

Regular Academic Sessions

UBC has two academic sessions per year that are divided into two terms:

- Winter session: Term 1 (September – December) and Term 2 (January – April)
- Summer session: Term 1 (May – June) and Term 2 (July – August)

Dates may vary by program. For immigration purposes, a student’s regular academic session at UBC is:

- Graduate students and students enrolled in the Diploma in Accounting program: Winter and Summer sessions (note: summer is not considered a scheduled break)
- All other enrolled students: Winter session (note: summer session is considered a scheduled break)

Taking Time Away From Studies

UBC recognizes that students, regardless of their program or level of studies, might need to take a term or longer away from their studies for a variety of personal, academic or mandatory reasons.



Below are two currently approved academic policies relevant to students in good academic standing:

1. **Academic Leave** – An undergraduate student in good academic standing may take an academic leave of up to two consecutive Winter Sessions and maintain registration eligibility in the same program. Students are reported as “no longer enrolled” on the Immigration Compliance Report.

Students in cohort-based or limited enrolment programs are required to seek permission for an academic leave prior to departing due to a limited ability to accommodate leaves in such programs.

It is currently not possible to satisfy IRCC’s requirement of individually documented term-by-term leaves.

Academic Calendar References:

Vancouver: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,289,0,0>

Okanagan: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/okanagan/index.cfm?tree=3,326,0,0>

2. **Leave of Absence** – Graduate students at UBC, with the exception of those enrolled in the Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm.D) program, may request that their status be changed to “on leave.” Requests must be made on specific grounds (e.g. personal, health, parental, etc.), be supported by the graduate program, and approved by the appropriate Faculty. Leaves can be 4, 8 or 12 months long. When a request is approved, the student is considered on “authorized leave” and reported as such in the Immigration Compliance Report.

Academic Calendar References:

Vancouver: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=12,204,341,191>

Okanagan: <http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/okanagan/index.cfm?tree=18,285,999,1207>

UBC’s Authorization for Leaves/Gaps

A comprehensive page outlining the actions recommended by UBC for students who take time away from their studies is available here: <https://students.ubc.ca/international-student-guide/immigration/take-time-away-studies>

Should you require any further details, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dr. Michelle Suderman, EdD RISIA

Director, International Student Development | Student Development & Services

UBC’s Designated Learning Institution number: **019330231062**