



April 16, 2024

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 policies on assessing conditions of study permits; 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

UBC has authority to define certain enrolment statuses for immigration purposes, including full-time, part-time and scheduled break, within its scope as a Designated Learning Institution. 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 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.

Prior to Winter Session 2021-22 (beginning September 2021), it was not possible to satisfy IRCC’s requirement of individually documented term-by-term leaves. However, a student’s eligibility for an Academic Leave still applies based on the Academic Calendar.

Effective Winter Session 2021-22 (September 2021), eligible international students can request an individualized letter confirming their authorization to take academic leave for one or more winter terms.

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/taking-time-away-school-international>

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

Sincerely,

Dr. Philipp Reichert, RCIC
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Director, Global Engagement (Okanagan)
UBC’s Designated Learning Institution number: **O19330231062**