

## **D2 - Deferral and Leave of Absence Policy**

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### **1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to take into consideration unforeseen circumstances that may arise during the course of a student's study with BBI – The Australian Institute of Theological Education (BBI-TAITE) and the best practice for managing the procedures for deferral and leave of absence.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

BBI-TAITE is committed to the provision of high quality theological education.

### **3. SCOPE**

This policy applies to all students enrolled in an award or course with BBI-TAITE across all modes of study.

### **4. DEFINITIONS**

**Trimester** – BBI-TAITE offers three terms of study per year classified as Trimesters, the third of which (Trimester 3 Summer) is an optional term of study. Trimesters 1 and 2 are compulsory for award / course progression. Students who are unable to study in Trimesters 1 and 2 must apply in writing for a Leave of Absence (LOA).

### **5. POLICY**

#### **Deferral**

- a) Applicants who have applied for entry to a course with BBI-TAITE may defer the start of their course for up to one year (12 months) from the period of their first trimester.
- b) Failure to begin studies at the conclusion of the deferral period will result in the applicant's offer of admission lapsing and the applicant will be required to reapply through BBI-TAITE's online admissions system.

#### **Leave of Absence (LOA)**

- a) Students who have completed at least one unit of study may apply for LOA for no less than one trimester and no more than three trimesters (12 months), with the exception of leave required solely for the optional third summer trimester for which LOA is not required (as a single term of leave).
- b) Under exceptional circumstances students may apply for up to three additional trimesters (one additional 12 month period) upon the provision of adequate

supporting documentation. Additional leave will be approved at the discretion of the Academic Dean.

- c) Any time taken as LOA is included within the maximum timeframe specified for each course and not in addition to it except where approved by the Academic Dean.
- d) During LOA students will retain limited access to BBI-TAITE resources.
- e) Failure to resume studies at the conclusion of the LOA (even if the next proceeding term is trimester 3 summer) will result in the student's candidature lapsing and the student will be required to reapply through BBI-TAITE's online admissions system.

### **Eligibility for Leave of Absence**

- a) Any student who has completed at least one unit of study with BBI-TAITE may apply for up to a total of three trimesters (twelve months) of LOA during their postgraduate award / course with BBI-TAITE. This leave may be taken in one block, or in separate increments throughout the student's course of study.
- b) All applications for LOA are subject to approval by the Student Registrar or delegate. All applications for extended LOA (one additional year or three consecutive trimesters) will only be granted after review by the Academic Dean. LOA of more than two years will not be approved and will result in the cancellation of the student's candidature and the student will be required to reapply for entry to the Institute via BBI-TAITE's online admissions system.
- c) Students who do not enrol into a unit in a given term (with the exception of Trimester 3 summer) and who do not submit an application for LOA will be considered AWOL and at risk of their candidature being terminated. The award and course enrolments of all students will be reviewed at the conclusion of each term in order to ensure satisfactory course progression.

### **Applications for Leave of Absence**

- a) Students must apply for LOA by emailing [studentservices@bbi.catholic.edu.au](mailto:studentservices@bbi.catholic.edu.au) and stating the length of leave and the reasons why the leave is being requested.
- b) Applications for LOA must be submitted in writing no later than the census date of the first trimester in which the student wishes to take LOA. If a student does not apply for LOA prior to this date they will be considered to be AWOL and their candidature may be terminated.

### **Unapproved Leave**

Students who fail to enrol into sequential trimesters (considered to be Trimesters 1 and 2, while Trimester 3 summer is an optional term) and do not have an approved LOA will be considered AWOL and may have their candidature terminated on the grounds that they have abandoned their studies. Students who withdraw from all of their units in a trimester either before or after the census date and do not apply for a LOA are considered to have taken unapproved leave.

## 6. Procedure

### Deferral

- a) Applicants who have received approval to commence a course of study with BBI-TAITE may apply to defer their studies for up to one year (12 months or three trimesters, including Trimester 3 summer). Students must indicate their intention to defer when returning the Student Declaration section of the Confirmation of Enrolment.
- b) Failure to resume study in the trimester immediately following the conclusion of the deferral period, even if that trimester is the optional Trimester 3 summer, will result in cancellation of the applicant's enrolment and they will be required to reapply for entry to the course via BBI-TAITE's online admissions system.
- c) The applicant will be made aware of the outcome of their application for deferral via their personal email account.

### Leave of Absence

- a) Students who wish to apply for LOA must email [studentservices@bbi.catholic.edu.au](mailto:studentservices@bbi.catholic.edu.au). Applicants have a ten day period in which to provide any documentation to support their application for LOA.
- b) The student will be made aware of the outcome of their application for LOA via their BBI-TAITE student email account.

### Cancellation of Deferral or Leave of Absence

- a) An applicant or student who wishes to apply for cancellation of deferral or LOA may request to do so in writing by emailing BBI-TAITE's Student Registrar before the start date of the trimester in which they wish to resume their studies.
- b) Requests for cancellation of deferral or LOA into a particular trimester will not be granted for that term if the request is received later than the conclusion of the first week of the trimester.
- c) The candidate will be made aware of the decision of the Student Registrar via their email account.

### Implications of Leave for students

- a) Candidates who are studying part time and are granted permission to take LOA may be required to study more than one unit per trimester in order to ensure completion of their award / course within the maximum available timeframe. LOA does not increase the maximum time available for completion of an award /course.
- b) It is the responsibility of each student who takes LOA to ensure that they re-enrol into a unit once their LOA expires. Failure to do so may result in the termination of the student's candidature on the basis that they have abandoned their studies.

- c) Students will be made aware of these implications when their LOA application is approved.

## 7. KEY RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Award and Course Completion Policy

## 8. NOTES

Contact Officer	Director Student Services and Operations
Implementation Officer/s	Academic Dean / Student Registrar
Approval Authority / Authorities	Academic Board
Date Approved	11/11/2016
Date of Commencement	11/11/2016
Date for Review	24 months after commencement
Amendment History	<p>23/11/2016 - Amended to account for maximum time limits and to clarify Trimester 3 as an optional term of study.</p> <p>12/12/2016 – Amended to include Course Completion Policy as a key related document</p> <p><b>REVIEWED 03/12/2018</b></p> <p>03/12/2018 – removed reference to BBI-TAITE student email account</p>
Key Stakeholders	All students