



Hull York Medical School

Policy on Leave of Absence

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HYMS Joint Senate Committee	4 th September 2018
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K:drive	

To obtain this Code of Practice in an alternative format please contact governance@hyms.ac.uk

Student queries

If you have any queries regarding this Policy, please contact the Hull York Medical School Student Support team (student.support@hyms.ac.uk) or Postgraduate Office (postgraduate@hyms.ac.uk).

Definitions

Leave of absence:	is defined as taking a break from studies. It effectively 'stops the clock' of the student's registration. Leave of absence is also known as 'suspension of studies' at the University of Hull and 'suspension of enrolment/registration' at the University of York. For the avoidance of doubt, the term 'leave of absence' should be used in the School.
Day:	means a working day: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday or Friday (<i>excluding public holidays</i>).
Students:	mean all students studying a HYMS programme.
Programme:	means any academic activity, and/or clinical placement or experience, undertaken by a student for the purpose of achieving the award of credits, a certificate, diploma or degree, or for the purpose of achieving progression within training and meeting requirements for registration as a doctor with the General Medical Council, as prescribed in the relevant regulations.
Academic condition:	means a condition relating to a student's engagement in their programme of study made as part of the approved leave of absence.
Pastoral condition:	means a condition relating to the students return to study which relates to the student's wellbeing and ability to engage with the programme.
Retrospective leave of absence:	means a part of the period of leave of absence is taken retrospectively.

Abbreviations

MB BS

Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery

QAA

Quality Assurance Agency

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Appendix A: Flowchart for processing leave of absence requests

Appendix B: Leave of absence request form – taught students

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2. Introduction

- 2.1. The Hull York Medical School Policy on Leave of Absence is largely adopted from the University of Hull's Codes of Practice for Suspension of Studies for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Students and Postgraduate Research Students, and the University of York's Leave of Absence Policy. The School aligns its key policies with one of our parent Universities to avoid duplication and to ensure that we consistently meet the standard set out in the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education. Adjustments to the Universities' Codes of Practice and Policies are made to ensure that this Policy meets the specific requirements of academic programmes and governance processes in the School.
- 2.2. This Policy provides further details on the procedure stated in the Hull York Medical School Policy on Student Welfare and Support (Section 6 Leave of Absence).
- 2.3. The School promotes valid requests for a leave of absence as a proactive student support process enabling students to successfully complete their programme of study. The School strives to provide students with sufficient guidance and support in submitting their request for leave of absence and supporting evidence. However, as future doctors and educated citizens, students should take responsibility for their own request for a leave of absence and proactively seek academic and pastoral support at the earliest opportunity when they have encountered problems during their studies.

3. Request and grounds for a leave of absence

- 3.1. Students can apply for a leave of absence at any time during their studies, however, approval of a leave of absence request is not guaranteed.
- 3.2. Students can request a leave of absence on academic grounds, for example, to undertake an intercalating degree as part of the MB BS Programme, to transfer from one programme to another, to re-start their studies the following academic year, and to re-sit failed examinations or re-take failed assessments during the forthcoming academic year.
- 3.3. Students can also request a leave of absence at any time during their studies on documented medical, compassionate, or personal grounds. A leave of absence may be planned, in the case of time off to travel or work, or be in response to illness or personal problems which are affecting a student's ability to study effectively.

4. Duration

- 4.1. For MB BS students, a leave of absence will normally be granted for a maximum of one year at a time and limited to a total of two years, thus making seven years the total length of time in which the MB BS might normally be achieved in accordance with the Hull York Medical School's Regulations for the degree of MB BS.
- 4.2. For intercalating, postgraduate taught and research students, a leave of absence will normally be granted for a maximum of one year at a time and limited to a total of two years.
- 4.3. Further requests for a leave of absence are normally only granted on the basis of significant extenuating circumstances and require special permission from the HYMS Board of Studies.

5. Retrospective leave of absence

- 5.1. Students should submit requests for a leave of absence to the School, as far as possible, before the proposed start date.
- 5.2. However, in exceptional cases such as a medical or personal emergency, a student might not be able to take the decision to request a leave of absence.
- 5.3. Retrospective leave of absence **must** therefore be seen as exceptional and supported by the School, and the student **must** provide clear evidence and a strong rationale for a retrospective leave of absence.
- 5.4. Leave of absence that is entirely retrospective will normally not be considered or approved.

6. Process

- 6.1. In principle, before making the decision to request a leave of absence, the student should discuss their options with the Hull York Medical School Student Support team or Postgraduate Office and with a relevant academic member of staff such as the Director for Student Support or Research Supervisor.
- 6.2. The leave of absence process is shown in Appendix A: Flowchart for processing leave of absence requests.
- 6.3. Requests for a leave of absence must be made using the Hull York Medical School's Leave of Absence Request Form (see Appendix B and C), along with supporting evidence. Requests made without full completion of the form or supporting evidence will not be considered or approved.

- 6.4. All requests for a leave of absence require approval by the Board of Studies (normally via Chair's Action) on the recommendation of the Director for Student Support (for MB BS and Physician's Associate students) or the Chair of the Postgraduate Programme Board (for postgraduate students).
- 6.5. Normally, the School will ensure that you are notified of the outcome within ten days of submitting your request.

7. Evidence and submission of request

- 7.1. As indicated in the Hull York Medical School's Leave of Absence Request form, all requests for leave of absence must be submitted with relevant supporting evidence. If no evidence is submitted, your request will not be considered until the evidence is received and this may result in a delay.
- 7.2. If you are applying for a continuation of a current leave of absence, you must include recent up-to-date evidence to support the new leave of absence request.
- 7.3. You can submit evidence to the School with scanned electronic copies. Evidence includes but is not limited to:
 - 7.3.1. Medical certificate or doctor/counsellor letter.
 - 7.3.2. Occupational health report.
 - 7.3.3. Death certificate or other dated evidence of bereavement.
 - 7.3.4. Letter from an employer.
 - 7.3.5. Financial statement or written affidavit.
 - 7.3.6. Confirmation of maternity/paternity/adoption.

Any written letter should state the grounds for leave of absence and duration of treatment.

- 7.4. A letter from the Student Wellbeing Service at the University of Hull or the Open Door Team at the University of York is **not** considered medical evidence. Students may be required to provide further evidence in order to have the leave of absence approved.
- 7.5. If students submit their form and evidence electronically, they must send the documents from their Hull York Medical School email address. Students can forward their Hull York Medical School email account to another email address but any correspondence to the School must be sent from a Hull York Medical School email address.

8. Tier 4 (Student) Visa

- 8.1. International students who wish to take a leave of absence from the School may no longer be eligible for the Tier 4 (Student) Visa. Therefore, if a student is an international student, they must consult with an Immigration Advisor at the University of Hull or the University of York **before** they take this step.
- 8.2. The Immigration Advisor is required to sign the specified section of the School's Leave of Absence Request Form to indicate that the international student has received appropriate advice.
- 8.3. The School, via the University of Hull or the University of York, is required to report a leave of absence of an international student to the UKVI within 10 days of the start date of the leave of absence.

9. Academic conditions regarding leave of absence

- 9.1. Students who are on a leave of absence are defined as taking a break from studies. As such, they are not a registered student and they are not entitled to receive any tuition or supervision. Specifically, the following conditions will apply unless specific permission for a variation has been given by the Board of Studies:
 - 9.1.1. They are expected to spend their time away from the University/clinical placement.
 - 9.1.2. They are not permitted to use University resources (e.g. attend lectures, seminars, supervision, Thesis Advisory Panel meetings, or work in a laboratory) during a leave of absence.
- 9.2. Except where a specific academic condition is set, students may not do work which contributes to their period of study or research during their leave of absence.

10. Conditions for return

- 10.1. Students will only be able to re-register if they have fulfilled all the conditions to return from a leave of absence.
- 10.2. Where a leave of absence is granted on medical grounds, the student must provide medical confirmation of their fitness to return to study (e.g. occupational health report, GP letter) before the School will permit them to re-register. This condition and details of how to obtain confirmation of fitness to return to study will be included in the letter notifying them of the approval of the leave of absence.

- 10.3. The student must engage with any academic conditions made in the leave of absence approval (such as a proposed plan of return, pre-sessional work, refresher period, assessment or examination) before they are allowed to return to your study.
- 10.4. The student must engage with any pastoral conditions made in the leave of absence approval such as specific arrangements required before return, before they are allowed to resume their studies.
- 10.5. If the student is unable to return from their current leave of absence, they can request a further leave of absence by submitting another request but will be required to provide new, up-to-date evidence.

11. Access to Services

- 11.1. Access to University and Students' Union services may be affected by the student's period of suspension of study¹. Once the student's status has been amended on the Student Information System, this information is transferred to other systems, e.g. to Students' Union and Library / room access systems. Guidance on Leave of Absence can be found at:

<https://www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/manage/plan/taught/loa-taught/#tab-1>

<https://universityofhull.app.box.com/s/v2z752bl9eb8r5dh0cm4jw4q0qbm3ey5>

12. Financial consequences of leave of absence on any grounds

- 12.1. There are many financial consequences for students who take a leave of absence. Students with queries regarding their entitlements and liabilities whilst suspending study should contact either Student Support Services or the Student Union Advice Centre, preferably before applying to suspend their studies. Students studying on a Tier 4 visa may also have additional costs relating to their visa status and should seek advice in advance.

13. Privacy, Confidentiality and Data Protection

- 13.1. Any leave of absence request submitted by a student will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality that can be maintained. Hull York Medical School, the Universities of Hull and York, and any other relevant bodies will only disclose confidential information relating to a leave of absence to members of staff who are directly involved in the administration and consideration of a leave of absence request as necessary to allow open and fair consideration.

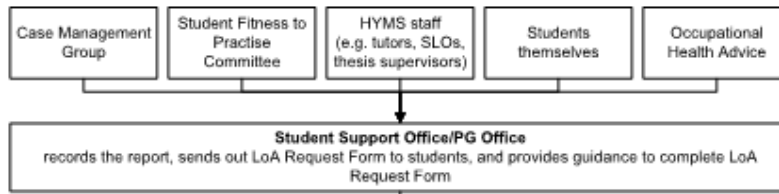
¹ Reference to Students' Union throughout this Code means Hull University Union (HUU), York University Students' Union (YUSU) or the Graduate Student Association (GSA) – all of which are available as a source of support and advice dependent on the student's programme of registration.

- 13.2. Depending on the nature of the leave of absence, the information gathered may include third party data, opinion and information which was provided in confidence. This information needs to be handled consistently and fairly and in accordance with common data protection principles, making it clear to all parties that the sharing of this information is agreed for the purposes of reaching an informed and fair decision.
- 13.3. The relevant laws covering the processing of personal information are the Data Protection Act 2018 (which incorporates the UK's implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)) and the Equality Act 2010.

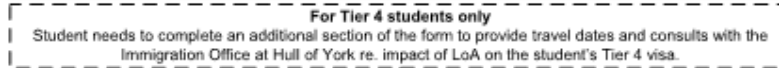
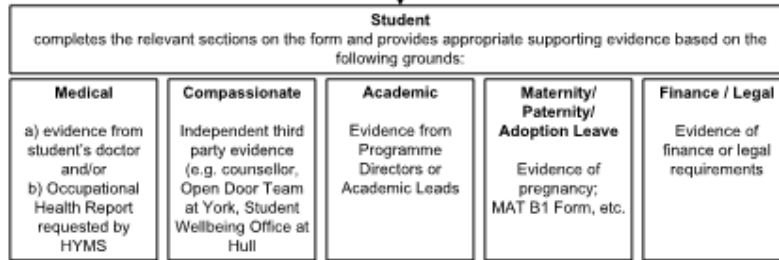
Appendix A

FLOWCHART FOR PROCESSING LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS

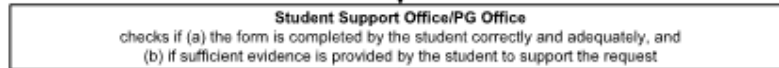
Stage 1 (completed by Student Support Office/PG Office): Case referral to Student Support Office/PG Office
 Student requests for LoA are referred to the Student Support Office via different routes.



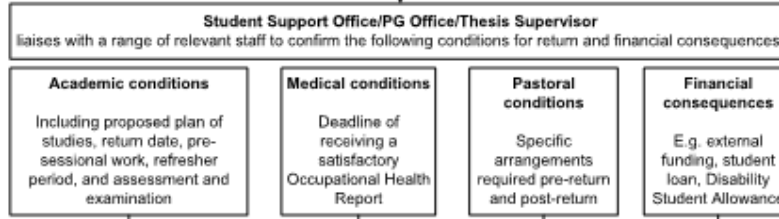
Stage 2 (completed by the student): Student submits completed LoA Request Form along with appropriate supporting evidence
 Student Support Office/PG Office provides guidance to students on HYMS requirements of appropriate supporting evidence based on the grounds of the request.



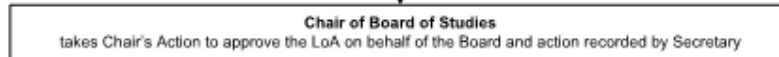
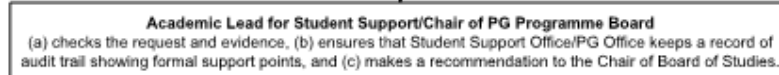
Stage 3 (completed by the Student Support Office/PG Office/Thesis Supervisor): Internal discussion of requirements
 Student Support Office/PG Office/ Thesis Supervisor leads and coordinate internal discussions between relevant staff to ensure requirements for return. Relevant staff includes Programme Director, Phase Leads, and Head of Clinical Placements



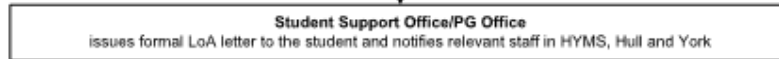
Stage 4 (for MB BS completed by Academic Lead of Student Support, for PG Chair of PG Programme Board,): Formalisation of the LoA request
 Academic Lead for Student Support/ Chair of PG Programme Board makes a recommendation to the Board of Studies



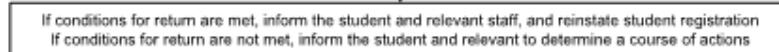
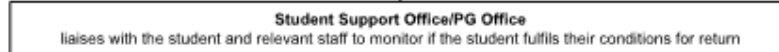
Stage 5 (completed by Secretary of Board of Studies): Approval by the Board of Studies via Chair's Action
 Secretary of Board of Studies ensures that Chair's Action is recorded and reported back to the next Board meeting.



Stage 6 (completed by Student Support Office/PG Office): Notification of outcomes



Stage 7 (completed by Student Support Office/PG Office): Monitoring of conditions and support for student return



Hull York Medical School (HYMS)

Leave of Absence Request Form – Taught Students

IMPORTANT: Request for Leave of Absence is a proactive student support process to enable you to take leave from the programme. It is a formal university process that requires you to disclose relevant information and provide sufficient evidence to support their request. The request requires the formal approval by the Board of Studies and is scrutinised by HYMS based on the evidence you submitted. The Student Support Office/Postgraduate (PG) Office is responsible for coordinating the entire process and providing you guidance on every step of the process. Any confidential information will be handled sensitively and stored appropriately by HYMS.

All boxes will expand when you type.

Section 1: Report of the case (completed by Student Support Office)

Route of case referral (please indicate by 'x')	<input type="checkbox"/> Case Management Group <input type="checkbox"/> Fitness to Practise Committee <input type="checkbox"/> HYMS Staff, please specify: <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational Health Advice/Report <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify:
Date of case referral	
Student guidance offered	<input type="checkbox"/> I confirm that the student has been given guidance to complete this form.
Date of this form sent to the student	
Staff name	

Section 2: Student Details (completed by the student)

Full name	
University of registration	
Programme registered	
Programme start date	
Year of study	

Contact Details (Address, telephone and email)	
Are you receiving funding (e.g. scholarship, student loan)?	Yes/No (please delete). If yes, please provide details:
Are you a Tier 4 Visa student?	Yes/No (please delete). If yes, please complete sections 7 and 8 of this form.

Section 3: Period of Leave of Absence requested (completed by the student)

**LOA start Date
(DD/MM/YY)**

**Return Date
(DD/MM/YY)**

If you are uncertain about the exact dates, please contact the Student Support Office/PG Office.

Section 4: Grounds and evidence for the request (completed by student)

Indicate by 'x' to confirm the grounds of your request. Request without clear grounds and sufficient evidence will not be considered.

Medical (evidence from student's doctor and/or Occupational Health reported requested by HYMS)

Compassionate (independent third party evidence, e.g. a counsellor, Open Door Team at York or Student Well-being Office at Hull)

Academic (evidence from Programme Directors or Academic Leads)

Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave (evidence of pregnancy, MAT B1 Form, etc.)

Finance / Legal (evidence of finance or legal requirements)

Section 5: Evidence provided to support the request (completed by student)

Refer to the grounds you selected above, please list each piece of evidence you have provided below to support the request. If you cannot submit certain evidence due to delays (by yourself or any authorities, you should

provide reasons for delays and anticipated date by which the outstanding evidence is ready)

--

Section 6: Reason for the request (completed by student)

Please provide detailed reasons to support the request. You should be reassured that any confidential information disclosed is handled sensitively and stored appropriately by HYMS. Evidence to support the request must be attached to the form.

--

Section 7: Travel Plans including flight details (completed by Tier 4 Visa student only)

Outbound:

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Inbound:

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Please submit this form to the Immigration Office of your University of registration to seek formal immigration advice regarding the impact of the leave of absence on your Tier 4 student visa.

Section 8: Immigration Advice (completed by the Immigration Office for Tier 4 Visa student only)

--

Signature of Immigration Advisor
(please type your full name in the signature box for electronic submission)

--

Name

--

Date

--

Section 9: Student Declaration (completed by student)

I declare that the information I provided in support of this request is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief and does not contravene any Codes of Practice of Hull York Medical School or of the parent universities.

Student's Signature

--

Date

--

(please type your full name in the signature box for electronic submission)

You should now send the completed form and supporting evidence to Student Support Office (student.support@hyms.ac.uk) for MB BS students or the Postgraduate Office (postgraduate@hyms.ac.uk) for postgraduate taught students.

Section 10: Checking by Student Support Office/PG Office (completed by Student Support Office/PG Office)

Date of form received from the student	
Form completed?	Yes / No
Sufficient evidence provided?	Yes / No
Staff name	

Section 11: Conditions for return (completed by Student Support Office for MB BS / PG Office)

Student Support Office/PG Office leads and coordinates internal discussions with relevant staff to ensure appropriate requirements for student's return, with the prospect of successful completion of the programme.

Members of staff consulted (list all names)	
CONDITIONS FOR RETURN	
Confirmed LoA start date	/ /
Confirmed LoA return date	/ /
Year of study returning to after leave of absence	
Revised end date of programme	/ /
Academic conditions (including proposed plan of study, pre-session work, refresher period, repeated course/module, assessment and examination requirements)	

Medical conditions (e.g. deadline and specific requirements of satisfactory Occupational Health report)	
Pastoral conditions (specific pastoral arrangements required pre-return and post- return)	

Section 12: Previous periods of leave of absence (completed by Student Support Office/PG Office)

Please give dates and details of any previous period of leave of absence

Start date:	End date:	Details:
Start date:	End date:	Details:
Start date:	End date:	Details:

Section 13: Checking and recommendation by the Academic Lead for Student Support/Chair of Postgraduate Programme Board

I have checked and reviewed the information provided by the Student Support Office/PG Office and evidence provided by the student. I am satisfied that the request is properly supported by sufficient evidence. I therefore recommend the Board of Studies to approve the student's request for leave of absence.

Notes (only if applicable):

**Signature
(please type your full name
in the signature box for
electronic submission)**

Name

Date

Section 14: Approval by the HYMS Board of Studies

I have reviewed the request and confirmed that due process has been followed in the consideration of the student's request for leave of absence. I therefore approve the request on behalf of the Board of Studies.

Notes (only if applicable):

Signature

Name

Date

(please type your full name in the signature box for electronic submission)

HYMS OFFICE USE

Date approved by Board of Studies	
Date sent to Student Support Office / PG Office to notify student, relevant staff in HYMS, Hull and York	

Hull York Medical School (HYMS)

Leave of Absence Request Form – Research Students

process to enable you to take leave from the programme. It is a formal university process that requires you to disclose relevant information and provide sufficient evidence to support their request. The request requires the formal approval by the Board of Studies and is scrutinised by HYMS based on the evidence you submitted. The Postgraduate (PG) Office is responsible for coordinating the entire process and providing you guidance on every step of the process. **Any confidential information will be handled sensitively and stored appropriately by HYMS.**

All boxes will expand when you type.

Section 1: Report of the case (completed by Postgraduate Office)

Route of case referral (please indicate by 'x')	<input type="checkbox"/> HYMS Staff, please specify: <input type="checkbox"/> Student <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational Health Advice/Report <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify:
Date of case referral	
Student guidance offered	<input type="checkbox"/> I confirm that the student has been given guidance to complete this form.
Date of this form sent to the student	
Staff name	

Section 2: Student Details (completed by the student)

Full name	
University of registration	
Programme registered	
Programme start date	
Year of study	

Contact Details (Address, telephone and email)	
Are you receiving funding (e.g. scholarship, student loan)?	Yes/No (please delete). If yes, please provide details:
Are you a Tier 4 Visa student?	Yes/No (please delete). If yes, please complete sections 7 and 8 of this form.

Section 3: Period of Leave of Absence requested (completed by the student)

**LOA Start Date
(DD/MM/YY)**

**Return Date
(DD/MM/YY)**

If you are uncertain about the exact dates, please contact the PG Office.

Section 4: Grounds and evidence for the request (completed by student)

Indicate by 'x' to confirm the grounds of your request. Request without clear grounds and sufficient evidence will not be considered.

Medical (evidence from student's doctor and/or Occupational Health reported requested by HYMS)

Compassionate (independent third party evidence, e.g. a counsellor, Open Door Team at York or Student Well-being Office at Hull)

Academic (evidence from supervisors)

Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Leave (evidence of pregnancy, MAT B1 Form, etc.)

Finance / Legal (evidence of finance or legal requirements)

Section 5: Evidence provided to support the request (completed by student)

Refer to the grounds you selected above, please list each piece of evidence you have provided below to support the request. If you cannot submit certain evidence due to delays (by yourself or any authorities, you should provide reasons for delays and anticipated date by which the outstanding evidence is ready)

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Section 6: Reason for the request (completed by student)

Please provide detailed reasons to support the request. You should be reassured that any confidential information disclosed is handled sensitively and stored appropriately by HYMS. Evidence to support the request must be attached to the form.

--

Section 7: Travel Plans including flight details (completed by Tier 4 Visa student only)

Outbound:

--

Inbound:

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Please submit this form to the Immigration Office of your University of registration to seek formal immigration advice regarding the impact of the leave of absence on your Tier 4 student visa.

Section 8: Immigration Advice (completed by the Immigration Office for Tier 4 Visa student only)

--

**Signature of Immigration Advisor
(please type your full name in the signature box for electronic submission)**

--

Name

--

Date

--

Section 9: Student Declaration (completed by student)

I declare that the information I provided in support of this request is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief and does not contravene any Codes of Practice of Hull York Medical School or of the parent universities.

**Student's Signature
(please type your full name in the signature box for electronic submission)**

--

Date

--

**You should now submit the completed form and supporting evidence to the
Postgraduate Office (postgraduate@hyms.ac.uk)**

Section 10: Checking by PG Office (completed by PG Office)

Date of form received from the student	
Form completed?	Yes / No
Sufficient evidence provided?	Yes / No
Staff name	

Section 11: Previous periods of leave of absence (completed by PG Office)

Please give dates and details of any previous period of leave of absence		
Start date:	End date:	Details:
Start date:	End date:	Details:
Start date:	End date:	Details:

Section 12: Conditions for return (completed by the Supervisor)

The Thesis Supervisor leads and coordinates internal discussions with relevant staff to ensure appropriate requirements for student's return, with the prospect of successful completion of the programme.	
Members of staff consulted (list all names)	
CONDITIONS FOR RETURN	
Confirmed LoA start date	/ /
Confirmed LoA return date	/ /
Year of study returning to after leave of absence	

Revised end date of programme	/ /
Academic conditions (including proposed plan of study, pre-session work, refresher period, assessment and examination requirements)	
Medical conditions (e.g. deadline and specific requirements of satisfactory Occupational Health/GP report)	
Pastoral conditions (specific pastoral arrangements required pre-return and post-return)	

Section 13: Principal Supervisor's supporting statement and declaration

Statement of support from the supervisor:

I confirm that I reviewed the student's request and the supporting evidence submitted. I have also discussed the request with other TAP members. In my professional opinion, I have provided the above recommendation to the PG Programme Board.

Signature

(please type your full name in the signature box for electronic submission)

Name

Date

Section 14: Checking and recommendation by the Chair of Postgraduate Programme Board

I have checked and reviewed the information provided by the PG Office and evidence provided by the student. I am satisfied that the request is properly supported by sufficient evidence. I therefore recommend the Board of Studies to approve the student's request for leave of absence.

Notes (only if applicable):

Signature
(please type your full name
in the signature box for
electronic submission)

Name

Date

Section 15: Approval by the HYMS Board of Studies

I have reviewed the request and confirmed that due process has been followed in the consideration of the student's request for leave of absence. I therefore approve the request on behalf of the Board of Studies.

Notes (only if applicable):

Signature
(please type your full name in
the signature box for electronic
submission)

Name

Date

HYMS OFFICE USE

Date approved by Board of Studies

**Date sent to Student Support Office / PG
Office to notify student, relevant staff in
HYMS, Hull and York**