University-Mandated Leave of Absence Policy
2021 Review

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Background & Context

Before 2018
Successful Accommodations in all but a handful of cases
Code of Student Conduct

2013/2014
Recommendations in Ombudsperson Reports

2014/2015

Officially Approved 2018
University-Mandated Leave of Absence Policy
Mental Health Task Force Updates

Completed
• Extended 24/7 access My SSP
• Drop in counselling sessions
• Appointed a Mental Health Services Redesign Team
• Same-day counselling services on the St. George Campus
• Way finding for services - NAVI
• Launched one website for mental health services and programming
• Implemented one institutional letter for accessibility services

In Progress
• Support student organizations promote health insurance
• Conduct a process redesign of student mental health services
• Adopt one online booking system
• Adopt one electronic records system

Planning
• Appoint a Clinical Director to oversee an integrated tri-campus system
Consultations & Research

Hosted 4 town halls

Innovation Hub hosted 6 student focus groups

Secured a web presence to solicit online feedback

Secured consults with tri-campus Students Unions / Clubs / Societies / Committees

Hosted consultations with campus administrative committees, which included representation from First Nations House / EDI Offices / Ombudsperson / SST / H & W / AccessAbility Services / CSO, and more

Reviewed reports, attended sponsored webinars
# Key Themes from Student Consultations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Policy be rescinded, though rejection of return to use of Code of Student Conduct</td>
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<td>Failure to fully respect the autonomy of those students to whom the Policy is applied</td>
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<td>The inclusion of self-harm led some students to avoid seeking help and support</td>
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<td>Impact on international students</td>
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<td>Potential financial impact</td>
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<td>Inclusion of cases of possible self-harm in Scenario 1 of the Policy is too broad</td>
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<td>Unsure about the circumstances in which Scenario 2 of the Policy would apply</td>
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<td>Accepted the need for the Policy in cases where there are possible harm to others</td>
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<td>Transparency on the application of the Policy on marginalized students</td>
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<td>Greater clarity about the possibility of voluntary leaves within the Policy</td>
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<td>Greater access to voluntary leaves at the divisional level</td>
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<td>On-going periodic review of the Policy</td>
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<td>A companion guide</td>
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<td>Ensure that the Policy is used as a last resort</td>
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Key Themes from Faculty and Staff Consultations

- Appreciation that the *Policy* exists to support students in crisis
- Appreciated the care and concern shown to students when the *Policy* is used
- Many were unsure about the circumstances in which Scenario 2 of the *Policy* would apply.
- Suggested that some timelines within the *Policy* require clarification
- A companion guide
- Greater clarity on the role of Equity Officers on a Student Support Team (SST).
Preliminary Recommendations

Maintain a version of the Policy, with some revisions.

Rename the Policy to more accurately reflect its purpose and the options contained within the Policy.

Restrict mandated leaves only to those cases where a student is posing a harm to others or actively interfering with the educational experience of fellow students, and all other options for reasonable accommodations have been exhausted.

Clarify that mere discomfort about a student’s behavior resulting from mental illness does not qualify as a psychological harm under the Policy.

Track and report on additional data related to the Policy, including demographic data, divisional referrals for consideration under the Policy, and timelines for those on leave.
Preliminary Recommendations

- Conduct a further review of the Policy after three years. This review should consider whether there is a need for on-going periodic review of the Policy moving forward.

- Publish a companion guide to the Policy by Fall 2022.

- Establish divisional voluntary leave policies (where they do not already exist), with support available from the Office of the Vice-Provost, Students as needed.

- Provide additional student supports in situations where a divisional voluntary leave has been unsuccessful and/or a student may benefit from a higher level of institutionally coordinated resources, but does not meet the threshold for the Policy. Establish guidelines about when such additional supports would be available.
Next Steps

Consultation site remains open until November 30

Review Team is presenting at campus forums

Revised Policy for consideration in Cycle 3
Any questions or comments related to the review process can be submitted to the consultation website or forwarded to vp.students@utoronto.ca.