

# How-To Leave of absence

If you have any questions, please email [eigenini@asta.rwth-aachen.de](mailto:eigenini@asta.rwth-aachen.de)

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In order to take a leave of absence from your studies, you can claim several reasons. We from the ASTA, in cooperation with the Student Secretariat, have summarized the various reasons for leave of absence for you, along with the documents to be submitted in each case.

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## What does leave of absence mean?

You can interrupt your studies for a variety of reasons. The most common reasons for a leave of absence are, for example, the completion of an internship, illness or pregnancy. A complete list of all reasons for taking a leave of absence is listed below. When taking a leave of absence, you must keep in mind that it is only possible if the reason for your leave of absence covers at least half of the semester. During a semester of leave, your university semesters will continue to be counted, but the semester of leave will not be counted as a semester of study. This means that it must not be possible for you to continue your studies for at least three months.

## When and where can I apply for my leave of absence?

You can submit your application for leave of absence during the re-registration period of the semester fee by e-mail to [studsek@zhv.rwth-aachen.de](mailto:studsek@zhv.rwth-aachen.de) or in person. In addition, you can submit your application until the end of the last working day at the end of the first month of lectures, usually 31.10. for a winter semester or 30.04. for a summer semester. If you take a leave of absence due to illness, this deadline does not apply, in which case the leave of absence is possible until the end of the current semester, with special justification. A backdated leave of absence for a past semester is not possible.

## What should I consider when taking a semester off?

### Health insurance

If you are insured as a student, your insurance remains valid during your semester of leave. You can be insured for a maximum of 14 semesters, your semester of leave will not be counted towards the number of semesters. Please note that you cannot work as a student trainee during your leave of absence. If you earn more than 450€, your employer must register you as a normal employee and you must pay social security contributions.

### BAföG

During a semester of leave, your entitlement to BAföG expires. This also applies if you still take exams or attend courses. The only exception is studying abroad, where you are entitled to BAföG abroad.

### Child support

Whether you continue to receive child benefits during your leave of absence depends on the reason for your leave of absence. If your leave of absence is related to your studies, for example, because you are studying abroad or doing an internship, you will continue to receive child benefit. If you are on maternity leave, you will only receive child benefit if you resume your studies in the following semester. You will not receive child benefit if you are involved in committees or are raising children.

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## Other

In principle, leaves of absence are only possible from the second semester onwards. In a Master's program, you can take a leave of absence for the first semester if you are studying abroad or completing an internship. A leave of absence is usually granted for the duration of one semester and must be applied for again in due time for each semester. A leave of absence beyond one semester is possible if the reason remains for at least two semesters and you provide proof of this. A total of up to six semesters of leave of absence (continuous or intermittent) may be granted during the entire period of study. As a student on leave of absence, you retain all existing rights and obligations during your first semester of leave. However, these expire as soon as the leave of absence lasts longer than one semester.

## For what reasons can I take a leave of absence and what documents are required?

- **Illness:** If you want to take a leave of absence for health reasons, you must submit a medical certificate in addition to the application for a leave of absence, which certifies that you are unable to study for the entire semester. You can apply for a leave of absence due to illness, with medical justification, beyond the deadline for the application for the entire semester.

- **Caring for and nursing** a primary relative such as a spouse, registered domestic partner, children, a person related in a direct line, or a person related by marriage to the first degree: When caring for a relative, in addition to the application for leave of absence, you will need a doctor's certificate stating that the care is necessary and can only be provided by you.
- **Pregnancy or raising children not of school age:** If you are pregnant or raising a school-age child, you must submit the maternity record or birth certificate in addition to the leave of absence application.
- **an economic hardship** that prevents you from completing the expected course work in the corresponding semester: If you are unable to complete your course work due to an economic hardship, you must also submit your bank statements for the last three months in addition to your application for leave of absence. It is important that these are complete. In addition, you must provide proof of all your income and expenses, including rent, electricity costs and your salary. The required form is available upon request at the Student Secretariat.

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- **Committee work:** If you engage in voluntary work at the university and thereby exercise a committee activity, you can take leave of absence with an official confirmation (i.e. on official letterhead). §10 (2) of the Higher Education Act of North Rhine-Westphalia stipulates that members of the university may not be disadvantaged because of their activities in self-administration. Based on this, one can take a leave of absence for these activities.
- **The "Good Start to Studies" project:** If you take part in the Good Start to Studies project, you can take a leave of absence with a certificate of participation.
- **Military service or federal voluntary service for foreign students:** If you are called up for military service in your home country, you can take a leave of absence with your draft notice or with a certificate from the respective authority.
- **an internship that serves the purpose of your studies:** If you complete an internship during your studies, you can take a leave of absence with an internship certificate from the company or with the internship contract signed by you and the company. A simple e-mail from the company is not sufficient.
- **Study at a foreign university or at a language school:** If you study at a language or foreign university, you have to submit the confirmation of the university (e.g. Letter of Acceptance) or the confirmation of the International Office in case of a leave of absence.
- **Stay abroad as part of an exchange program (Erasmus or similar):** As with the previous point, you must also submit the Letter of Acceptance from your foreign university or a confirmation from the International Office.
- **Absence from the place of study in the interest of the university or cooperation in a research project:** If you want to take a leave of absence due to a research project, you need a letter of confirmation from your chair or faculty.
- **Enrollment in the first semester of a Master's program in connection with studies abroad or an internship:** As a rule, it is not possible to take a leave of absence in the first semester. However, if you are planning an internship or a stay abroad in the first semester of your Master's program, you can apply for a semester off. The documents required for this are the same as for the previous three points.
- **Serving a prison sentence:** If you are serving a prison sentence and want to take a leave of absence for that time, you will need proof from the prison.
- **Accredited Student Initiatives:** You can take a leave of absence to serve in certain positions in accredited student-run initiatives. You can find more detailed information on this on page 3. If in doubt, you can have other reasons checked by your contact person in the Student Administration Office.

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## Accredited student initiatives

Volunteering enhances one's personality and is instrumental in building various skills such as leadership development, project design and implementation skills, as well as teamwork and organized work. Many projects can be integrated well into the course of study, but there are exceptions which require the full attention of the student. To allow students to work on such projects, they can take a semester-long leave of absence. But how exactly does this work? The prerequisite for taking a leave of absence is that the initiative is accredited and that it is enumerated in the list below! First, fill out the usual application for leave of absence. When stating the reasons, check No. 9 "Other important reasons that are of similar importance as the other reasons (please attach a separate supplementary sheet)". As a separate supplementary sheet, first attach your own statement as to the reasons for which the semester of leave is required. In addition, a confirmation of the association is required, which confirms that you are not able to study to a reasonable extent (i.e. at least three months) in this semester and due to the upcoming project.

Below you will find the approved self-initiatives and their positions that are currently accepted as reasons for leave of absence. If possible, as with the other reasons for leave of absence, a sentence on the form of proof should also be included. E.G.: An official confirmation of initiative (i.e., on an official letterhead) will be accepted as proof.

Please make sure that the respective position description is clear from the confirmation and that these correspond to the approved position descriptions of the initiative.

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Name der Initiative	Positionsbeschreibung
ADDI e.V.	Vorstand, Teamleitungen
aixsolution e.V.	Vorstand
Akademischer Seglerverein der RWTH in Aachen e.V.	Kassenwart*in, Takelmeister*in, Ausbildungswart*in
Aktion Sodis e.V.	Vorstand, Projektleitung
bonding-studierendeninitiative e.V.	Vereinsvorstand, Hochschulgruppenvorstand, Messeleitung, Finanzer*in, Thementags-, Marketing- und Veranstaltungsleitung
Collective Incubator e.V.	Vorstand, Ressortleitung
Collegium Musicum der RWTH Aachen	Organisatorische Leitung Chor und Orchester
Ecogenium e.V.	Board of Directors, Team Leads
Ecurie Aix Formula Student Team	Vorstand, Teamleitung, Gruppenleitung, gesamtes Saisonteam
Enactus Aachen e.V.	Vorstand, Projekt- und Ressortleitung, Ausreisende (ab 4 Wochen + Vor-/Nachbereitung)
EUROAVIA Aachen	President, Secretary, Treasurer, Event Working Group Coordinators
Floodlight Musicals e.V.	Vorstand (erweitert), Produktionsleitung, Kreativteams (Regie, musikalische Leitung)
Flugwissenschaftliche Vereinigung Aachen (1920) e.V.	Vorstand (erweitert), Projektleitung
Hochschulradio Aachen	Vorstand, Kassenwart
Ingenieure ohne Grenzen	Ausreisende (ab 4 Wochen + Vor-/Nachbereitung), Vorstand, Gruppenansprechpartner/in
IT4Kids e.V.	Vorstand, Departmentleitungen, Projektleitungen
Roboterclub Aachen e.V.	Vorstand, Wettbewerbsorganisation
ROCK YOUR LIFE! Aachen e.V.	Vorsitz, Ressortleitung
Space Team Aachen	Vorstand, Projekt-/Teamleitung
Studenten bilden Schüler e.V.	Mitglieder des Bundesvorstandes, Beirat des Bundesvorstandes
Team Sonnenwagen Aachen	Gesamtes Saisonteam

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