

How-To Leave of absence

If you have any questions, please consult your contact person (see **this Website**)

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. Special information on **leave of absence for student engagement** can be found at the end of the following list and on the last pages.

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 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.

Hiwi job

During your semester on leave you cannot work as a Hiwi.

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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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- **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.
- **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.
- **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 4. If in doubt, you can have other reasons checked by your contact person in the Student Administration Office.

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How-To Leave of absence for student initiatives

If you have any questions, please mail eigenini@asta.rwth-aachen

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 accreditation of the initiative and enumeration in the list of positions eligible for leave of absence below!

The AStA engagement team usually sends out a survey to register on this list via the AchsO mailing list and closes it usually at the latest in the middle of each semester for the following semester. Since the eligible initiatives and corresponding positions must be determined at the beginning of the student re-registration period, the survey is sent out well in advance. Reminders are sent out regularly and after the deadline we check the eligibility together with the university; subsequent applications are not possible.

If you have any questions about leave of absence for student engagement or the AchsO mailing list, please contact the engagement team (eigenini@asta.rwth-aachen.de).

Procedure for applying for leave of absence

First, fill out the usual application for leave of absence from the student secretariat. When stating the reasons, "committee work / student commitment" must be selected. As a supplementary sheet, please attach your own statement explaining the reasons why you need the semester of leave. In addition, a confirmation from the association is required, which confirms that you are not able to study to an appropriate extent (i.e. the majority of the semester) during this semester and due to the upcoming project.

An official confirmation of initiative (i.e., on an official letterhead) will be accepted as proof. Please make sure that the respective position description can be found in the confirmation and that it corresponds to the approved positions of the initiative.

On the following pages you will find the approved initiatives and their positions that are accepted as a reason for a leave of absence in the semester mentioned on top. Please note that these documents and the list may be out of date. You can always obtain up-to-date information from the engagement team (eigenini@asta.rwth-aachen.de).

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Following initiatives are recognized for a leave of absence in the winter semester 2024/25:

<u>Name of the initiative</u>	<u>Positions</u>
Aachen Blockchain Club	Vorstandsmitglieder
Aachen Drone Development Initiative	Vorstand, Teamleitung, Wettbewerbsteams
AESEE-Aachen e.V.	Vorstand
AIIESEC in Aachen e.V.	Vorstandsmitglieder
aixsolution e.V.	Vorstand
Autak e. V.	Leitung Entwicklung Rollstuhl-Mechanik & Elektronik
bonding-studierendeninitiative e.V.	1./2. Messeleitung, 1./2. Hochschulgruppenvorstand, 1./2. Finanzer, Marketing- & Veranstaltungs-Ressortleitung
Collective Incubator e.V.	Vorstandsmitglieder, Ressortleitungen
Ecogenium e.V.	Vorstand, Teamleitung
Ecurie Aix Formula Student Team RWTH Aachen e.V.	Vorstandsmitglieder, Teamleitung, Gruppenleitung, Eventpersonal für Saisonteam
Enactus Aachen e.V.	Vorstand, Ausreisende (ab 4 Wochen + Vor- & Nachbereitung); Projekt- & Ressortleitungen
Energie Forum Aachen e.V.	Vorstand, Projektleiter
Energybirds e.V.	Projektleitungen
EUROAVIA Aachen	President, Secretary, Treasurer
Filmstudio an der RWTH Aachen e.V.	Vorstand
Fliegergruppe an der RWTH (FTHA)	Vorstands-Jugendgruppenleitung
Flugwissenschaftliche Vereinigung Aachen 1920 e.V	Vorstand, Projektleitungen
IAESTE LC Aachen e.V	Vorstand, Heads of Incoming, Outgoing, Marketing & Summer Program
Ingenieure ohne Grenzen e. V.	Ausreisende (ab 4 Wochen + Vor- & Nachbereitung), Vorstand, Gruppenansprechpartner/in
IPSA - International Pool for Studies Abroad e.V.	Vorstand, Team-/Projektleiter
IT4Kids e.V.	Vorstand, Departmentleitungen, Projektleitungen
Queerreferat an den Aachener Hochschulen e.V.	die Vorsitzenden

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Roboterclub Aachen e.V.	Vorstand, Wettbewerbsorganisation, Gruppenleitung
Space Team Aachen e.V.	Vorstand, Projekt- & (Co-)Teamleiter
Team Tachyon e.V.	Vorstand, Department Leads; Co-Department Leads Mechanical & Electrical
TechAachen e.V.	Geschäftsführender Vorstand
Triton e.V.	Vorstand
VWI Hochschulgruppe Aachen	Vorstandsmitglieder & Amtstragende im Dachverband

Not accredited: *Leave of absence is not possible until proof of accreditation is provided
(to be tracked at <https://online.rwth-aachen.de/RWTHonline/webnav.ini>)*

- None -

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