

Session Break Policy 2019



Longer term students studying at all EC centres are welcome to take a session break to enjoy some free time traveling or returning home for a short visit. It should be noted that session break rules will vary by location and are based on local visa regulations. Students returning from their session break cannot expect to return to the same class, teacher or accommodation. No credit is given for accommodation during session breaks. Students requiring a visa for study must ensure that their visa is issued for the correct dates to include any session breaks.

Session break policies by location can be found below. For further questions please speak with your EC Contact.

Students studying at EC Malta on a Tourist Visa and staying for 90 days:

- Students must be booked for an 8-week course or longer to qualify for a session break.
- Students booking an 8 to 23-week course are allowed a maximum of 2 weeks' session break.

Students studying at EC UK, EC Canada, EC Malta (non-tourist visa) & EC South Africa:

- Students must be booked for at least a 12-week course in order to qualify for a session break.
- Students who booked a 12-23-week course can have a maximum of 2-week session break.
- Students who booked 24 weeks + can have a maximum of 4-week session break.
- Students who have attendance of 80% and lower cannot apply for session break.
- Students can use the session break weeks separately or at once.
- Students can use the session break period anytime except during exam preparation.
- Students must give a 2-week period of notice.
- Students are solely responsible for ensuring their visa is issued for the correct dates to include any session break.
- Study weeks are postponed, not lost provided that 2 weeks' notice is given (in case of Accommodation, EC's cancellation policy is followed especially for those in student residences. No credit is given for accommodation).
- Number of study weeks required in-between vacations is 4 weeks.

Students Studying at EC Dublin:

- Students must be booked for an 8-week course or longer to qualify for a session break.
- EU/WHV students booking an 8 - 12-week course are allowed a session break equal to one third of their course (up to 4 weeks)
- EU/WHV students booking a 13 – 24-week course are allowed a session break equal to one third of their course (up to 8 weeks)
- Non-EU Academic Year / ILEP 25+-week students are allowed holidays as per INIS regulations.* See below.
- Students must have an overall attendance level of 85% or higher to qualify for a session break (if booked during the course)
- Students must give 2 weeks' notice when booking a session break.
- Session breaks can be requested via EC Online and by email.
- Session breaks cannot be booked during exam preparation.
- Study weeks are postponed, not lost, provided that 2 weeks' notice is given (in case of Accommodation, EC's cancellation policy is followed especially for those in student residences. No credit is given for accommodation).
- Students are solely responsible for ensuring their visa is issued for the correct dates to include any session breaks.
- Students who require a visa (not permission to stay) must apply for a multi / re-entry visa before arranging to leave Ireland.

*** The information regarding non-EU students in Ireland contained in this document is taken from the INIS Policy Statement as at 14.9.2018**

EU / Working Holiday Students

- As per EC session break policy.
- Working Holiday Visa must be provided in advance of booking holidays.
- NOTE: WHV students can study for up to 6 months only.

Visa Required and Visa Waiver (permission to stay) students:

- In line with EC policy

Plus

- On enrolment, students will be provided with a written timetable outlining the daily and weekly tuition times and dates.
- The programme schedule, including holiday periods, will be outlined on student letters, provided in advance of immigration registration.
 - o Letters can be requested through EC Online and collected at EC Dublin reception within 24-48 hours of request.
 - o Emergency letters can be provided on demand.
- Holiday periods must be booked in advance of immigration registration via EC Online or email:
 - o If possible, holiday periods should be booked during enrolment
 - o Holiday periods not booked during enrolment must be confirmed by email or EC Online request prior to collection of INIS registration documentation.
 - o Holiday requests will be approved by the Director of Studies or Centre Director in compliance with INIS requirements.
- Holidays cannot be booked within the first 8 weeks of the programme.
- The holiday period cannot exceed 1/3 of the total weeks elapsed:
 - o E.g. 10 weeks studied = 3 weeks' holiday permitted.
 - o 12 weeks = 4 weeks' holiday permitted.
- Any timetable changes will be agreed with students in advance.
- No unscheduled breaks will be permitted except in documented cases of illness or close family bereavement and in accordance with GNIB rules.
 - o Circumstances under which these requests may be considered can be found in the Sick Policy.
 - o The criteria for accepting or refusing a request will be documented, including the decision-making process.
 - o The name of the person responsible for making such decisions will be documented and made publicly available.

The holiday break information above has been written in compliance with INIS requirements and will supersede school policy in the case of Visa-required and Visa Waiver students.

Students studying at EC US centres on an F-1 Student Visa:

- Students must be booked for a 12 week course or longer in order to qualify for a session break.
- Students are allowed to take one 2 week session break after they have completed 12 weeks of studies. Breaks cannot be combined and should a student choose to only take one of the two weeks available, the second week will be lost. Students must have at least 4 weeks of courses booked and paid for upon returning from their break.
- Students must have overall attendance of 80% or higher to qualify for a session break.
- Students cannot use the session break period during exam preparations.
- If a student is transferring from one EC Centre in the US to another, a session break may be taken between courses only if the student has completed 12 weeks of study at the first location and meets attendance qualifications.
- Students must give a 2 week period of notice before taking a session break.
- Students who are planning to leave the country during their break, will require the signature of the school DSO to travel.
- Students who are planning to leave the country, and have less than 80% attendance are permitted to depart, as long as we terminate current I-20, and issue an I-20 for their return. Attendance calculation will start over once they re-enter on the new I-20.

Students studying at EC On-Campus:

- Students must be booked for 16 weeks or longer to qualify for a 2 week session break.
- Students must have 80% attendance or higher to qualify for a session break.
- Students must be **booked** for at least 4 weeks after their break and paid in full in order to qualify.
- No session break may exceed 2 weeks and the weeks cannot be divided up. Unused weeks will be forfeited.
- Students in US based centres will require the DSO signature for travel outside the US during their break.
- Students who are planning to leave the country, and have less than 80% attendance are permitted to depart, as long as we terminate current I-20, and issue an I-20 for their return. Attendance calculation will start over once they re-enter on the new I-20.

DESCRIPTION 4

US Students on Extended Leave:

Students who have a family emergency or need to return home for medical reasons may take a leave of absence for up to 5 months and remain on their currently issued I-20. Leaves of absence are determined on a case by case basis and require approval of the centre DSO.

Pre and Post Arrival Student Visa Holders staying at EC New Zealand

Pre-Arrival Leave:

- No more than 4 weeks for the entire booking / can only be booked for courses longer than 24 weeks.
- Note: NZ prefer to avoid any pre arrival session break being booked

Post-Arrival Leave:

- Students visa holders studying in New Zealand may book session break after they arrive. Students will have additional time at the end of their visa (4 weeks) in which they can use.
- U18 students (regardless of visa type) cannot take session break throughout their course unless a parent, guardian or direct relative is with them.

Pre and Post Arrival Student Visa Holders staying at EC Australia

Pre-Arrival Leave:

- Students who booked a 0 - 12-week course cannot apply for session break.
- Students who booked a 13-23-week course can have a maximum of 6-week session break
- Students who booked 25+ weeks can have a maximum of 8-week session break.
- DHA states that a student cannot take greater than 8 consecutive weeks session break between courses.

Post Arrival Leave:

Students must apply for session break via the Academic team and / or the Centre Director. Post Arrival Leave applications can only be approved if the student has grounds and evidence to prove compassionate or compelling circumstances.

- Students cannot take more than 8 weeks consecutive session break at a time between courses or institutions (pre and post arrival session break bookings)
- U18 students (regardless of visa type) cannot take session break throughout their course unless a parent, guardian or direct relative is with them.