

# Applying for a Leave of Absence Procedure

Taking a break from teaching for at least 6 months –  
information for early childhood and K-12 teachers

October 2025

## What is a Leave of Absence?

If you are taking a break from teaching for at least 6 consecutive months and a maximum of 5 years, you may apply for a Leave of Absence to put your accreditation on hold. This means the timeframe for meeting your accreditation requirements is adjusted by the period of time you are away from teaching.

## How do I apply for a Leave of Absence?

You need to apply to NESA for a Leave of Absence in advance in your [NESA online account \(eTAMS\)](#). Leave from your employer as a teacher is separate from a Leave of Absence with NESA. You cannot backdate a Leave of Absence.

You cannot work as a teacher in a NSW school or service while you are on a Leave of Absence.

## How long can I put my accreditation on hold?

Minimum Period	Maximum period
6 months	5 years

# Overview of a Leave of Absence application

## At a glance



## 1. Applying for leave with your employer (if applicable)

Follow your employer's internal procedures to apply for leave before you apply for a Leave of Absence from your accreditation with NESAs. A Leave of Absence with NESAs must be a minimum of 6 consecutive months and maximum of 5 years away from teaching.

## 2. Applying for a Leave of Absence with NESAs

Apply for a Leave of Absence from accreditation in your [NESAs online account \(eTAMS\)](#).

You will need to identify:

- your start date (this must be the day you apply or a future date). You cannot backdate the start of your leave
- your end date (the period away must be a minimum of 6 consecutive months and a maximum of 5 years).

You will be able to amend your end date in your NESAs online account (eTAMS) (as long as the total time away remains between 6 months and 5 years). You can also cancel your Leave of Absence at any time if you return to teaching within 6 months of the start date.

NESAs regularly reviews Leave of Absence applications. NESAs may request further documentation from you or cancel a Leave of Absence application if it does not meet the requirements.

Teachers who have conditions on their accreditation, or whose accreditation is being reviewed by NESAs must contact NESAs before applying for a Leave of Absence.

### Applying for a Leave of Absence when suspended

If you are suspended due to failure to provide an updated WWCC clearance and/or outstanding fees, you may apply for a Leave of Absence (if eligible). Apply using the [NESAs application for leave of absence for suspended teachers form](#).

You cannot apply for a Leave of Absence if your accreditation is suspended due to:

- failure to complete maintenance of accreditation by the end of your timeframe (you should apply for an extension instead)
- an interim bar or bar on your WWCC
- a decision that your practice does not meet the relevant Standards.

### 3. During your Leave of Absence

While on a NESA-approved Leave of Absence from your accreditation:

- you are not required to complete professional development (PD). However, if you choose to, you can continue to engage in and log PD
- your name will not appear on the NSW Public Register of Teachers
- you cannot teach in a NSW school or service.

### 4. Return to teaching

If you wish to return to teaching, you must:

- ensure you have a current Working with Children Check clearance and update it in your NESA online account (eTAMS)
- pay any outstanding NESA fees.

When your Leave of Absence ends, your accreditation timeframe will be reactivated and you will be able to return to teaching in a NSW school/service.

You can check your PD hours in eTAMS and plan to meet your requirements by the end of your accreditation timeframe.

Once your accreditation has reactivated, your name will appear on the NSW Public Register of Teachers again.

## **‘What if’ scenarios**

### **What if I am taking a Leave of Absence – do I still have to pay my annual accreditation fee?**

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NESA may waive your annual accreditation fee if you are taking continuous leave for more than 6 months of the current calendar year. To qualify for a fee waiver, you must apply for your Leave of Absence in your NESA online account (eTAMS) by the designated date of the year you are taking leave and meet the other requirements, as listed on the [NESA website](#).

### **What if I am currently overseas and have taken the maximum Leave of Absence of 5 years and I am unable to renew my Working with Children Check clearance?**

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You will need to apply to voluntarily cancel your accreditation. You can apply for [re-accreditation](#) at a later date when you have renewed your Working with Children Check clearance.

### **What if I’ve been away from teaching and didn’t apply for a Leave of Absence with NESA?**

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You can’t apply for a backdated Leave of Absence. If you have had limited opportunities to meet your accreditation requirements you may apply to NESA for an [extension](#) of your accreditation timeframe of up to 2 years. You can apply in the final 6 months of your timeframe and you will be required to supply evidence of your time away from teaching to support your application.

### **What if I plan to be away from teaching for more than 5 years?**

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You may apply to voluntarily cancel your accreditation. You can apply for re-accreditation at a later date. You may also consider remaining connected to the teaching profession by choosing [Non-practising teacher accreditation](#).

### **What if I need to take more than one Leave of Absence in the same accreditation period?**

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You can take a maximum of 5 consecutive years as a Leave of Absence from your accreditation. If you return to teaching, you can apply for another Leave of Absence. You will be required to provide evidence of your return to teaching, for example a statement of service or service history from your teaching employer(s).

### **What if I want to return to teaching earlier than planned?**

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You can adjust your end date in your NESA online account (eTAMS) at any time during your Leave of Absence.

If your period away from teaching is less than 6 consecutive months, you can cancel your Leave of Absence in your NESA online account (eTAMS). Your accreditation due date will revert to the original date before the Leave of Absence.

## **What if I don't have a current Working with Children Check clearance when my Leave of Absence ends?**

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If you do not provide NESAs with the details of a current Working with Children Check clearance before the end of your Leave of Absence, your accreditation will be suspended when your leave ends. You will need to provide a new Working with Children Check clearance in your NESAs online account (eTAMS) to be accredited.

## **What if I want to be an Accreditation Supervisor or a HALT Assessor but am on a Leave of Absence?**

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You can fulfil the role of Accreditation Supervisor or Highly Accomplished or Lead Teacher (HALT) Assessor while on a Leave of Absence.

However, you cannot make Proficient Teacher accreditation recommendations or HALT maintenance verifications.

## **What if I want to move straight from a Leave of Absence to Non-practising teacher accreditation?**

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If you are eligible for [Non-practising teacher accreditation](#), you first need to end your Leave of Absence in your NESAs online account (eTAMS), so that you return to an active accreditation status at Proficient Teacher or higher.

You must ensure that you pay all outstanding fees and have a current Working with Children Check clearance.

Log into your NESAs online account (eTAMS) to end your Leave of Absence and change your accreditation to Non-practising.

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# NSW Education Standards Authority

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