



University of  
St Andrews

## Independent learning week (ILW)

<b>Document type</b>	<b>Policy</b>
<b>Scope (applies to)</b>	Staff and students
<b>Applicability date</b>	30/07/2018
<b>Review date</b>	30/08/2026
<b>Approved date</b>	26/07/2023
<b>Approver</b>	Learning and Teaching Committee
<b>Document owner</b>	Academic Policy Officer
<b>School / unit</b>	Education and Student Experience
<b>Document status</b>	Published
<b>Information classification</b>	Public
<b>Equality impact assessment</b>	None
<b>Key terms</b>	Academic policies/Learning and teaching/Independent learning week
<b>Purpose</b>	This policy relates to the principles of Independent Learning Week (ILA), activities permitted during ILA and communications with students during ILA.

<b>Version number</b>	<b>Purpose / changes</b>	<b>Document status</b>	<b>Author of changes, role and school / unit</b>	<b>Date</b>
1.2	Added Section 6.2 to account for programmes in the University that do not follow the academic year calendar.	Updated	Academic Policy Officer (Taught Degrees)	July 2023

# UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

## POLICY ON INDEPENDENT LEARNING WEEK (ILW)

### 1. Introduction

1.1 Independent Learning Week (ILW) is designed to allow appropriate time for students to consolidate their learning prior to the submission of coursework and December examination diet.

### 2. Principles

2.1 ILW is a learning week, not a holiday, and must be appropriately integrated into the curriculum.

2.2 No mandatory events should be scheduled during ILW.

2.3 ILW provides students with an opportunity to consolidate and catch up on their learning to date, as well as preparing and forward-planning for the rest of the semester.

2.4 Staff must set explicit tasks for ILW which reinforce and enhance learning and support assessments and examinations in the latter half of the semester.

2.5 ILW must reinforce or enhance learning, not reduce it. Schools may need to schedule extra classes at other points of the semester to ensure that this happens.

2.6 Students are expected to engage with the tasks set by their School and complete their usual 40 hours of study, or part-time equivalent.

2.7 Students are not required to stay in St Andrews, but the library and other University resources will remain open and students should be strongly encouraged to make the most of the opportunities available for effective academic study.

2.8 Staff are expected to undertake their usual duties, unless on approved leave.

2.9 Normal teaching (a full regime of lectures, tutorials, seminars, labs, etc.) should otherwise take place every week from the start of Week one to the end of Week 11.

2.10 Week 12 remains as Revision Week and no classes, assessments or deadlines may be scheduled during this week.

2.11 Schools should make use of the Thursday and Friday of Orientation Week for academic activities if additional contact time is required.

2.12 Staff meetings and events may be scheduled as usual during ILW.

### 3. Activities permitted during ILW

3.1 Independent learning set for completion during ILW can include revision and forward-reading, revision of work done to date, essay outlines and preparation, and extra-curricular opportunities.

3.3 Work set for completion during ILW must be in proportion to the credits associated with the relevant module.

3.4 Any work assigned during ILW can be assessed and can count towards students' grades in the usual way.

- 3.5 No mandatory classes or similar academic activities (labs, field trips, etc.) can be scheduled during ILW.
- 3.6 There will be no assessments or deadlines during ILW. Deadlines may be set on the Friday before or the Monday after: Schools are encouraged to spread out deadlines, and to be mindful that most students are taking modules in more than one School.
- 3.7 If optional sessions are scheduled, any new material taught during such sessions *either* will not be assessed, *or* will be delivered also by alternative methods (e.g., via Moodle). Specific information regarding optional sessions and their assessment must be made clear to students.

#### 4. Communications with Students

- 4.1 Module convenors must tell students what work they should do during ILW.
- 4.2 Schools must make clear to students how to contact members of staff for academic advice during ILW.

#### 5. Timing of ILW

- 5.1 ILW will normally take place in Week 6.

#### 6. Exceptions

- 6.1 Any exceptions to any of the above must be discussed with student representatives in the School and approved by the Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Learning & Teaching).
- 6.2 ILW normally applies only to courses following the academic year calendar. Any schools or programmes with different arrangements must inform students in School or Programme Handbooks.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1	Changes to titles/contact details to reflect decanal restructuring	Updated	-	February 2021
1.1	Changed review date to end of academic year	Updated	-	February 2023
1.2	Added Section 6.2 to account for programmes in the University that do not follow the academic year calendar.	Updated	Academic Policy Officer (Taught Degrees)	July 2023