

Leave of Absence - Graduate Students

Key Terms

Leave of Absence

The student anticipates a need to discontinue enrollment for one or more semesters.

Active Duty Leave or Withdrawal

Students who are members of the US Military (e.g., Reserve or National guard) may be called into active duty by the government. As a result of the assignment, the student may need to request an active duty leave or may decide to withdraw from the University.

Contact Advisor and Director of Graduate Studies

Students considering a leave of absence that will result in a break in enrollment of one or more semesters must first contact their graduate advisor and the academic program's director of graduate studies to inform them of their intent, the reason requesting leave and the expected duration.

Letters to the Graduate School

If leaves are requested for pregnancy, parenting, or other caregiving reasons or once a doctoral student has reached candidacy (post-comprehensive examination), the request must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. After approval of the leave at the academic program level, the director of graduate studies and the student will submit letters to the Dean of the Graduate School. The director of graduate studies' letter will verify that the academic program has been informed and that a leave of absence has been approved. The letter from the student will provide an explanation for the request as well as the anticipated departure and return date. All leaves for pregnancy, parenting, and other caregiving reasons will be granted according to the policy established by the Graduate Faculty Senate.

Resolving Financial Support Responsibilities

It will be the responsibility of students to resolve all issues pertaining to their support (e.g., research or teaching assistantship, scholarship) with their advisor or other relevant authority before departure. These issues include the date when support will be terminated and whether or under what conditions the student will be reinstated for support upon their return.

Notification for Re-Entry

Before the completion of the Leave of Absence, the student must notify the academic program's director of graduate studies and the Graduate School so that the re-entry process can be initiated.

Contact with the University During Leave

Students on a Leave of Absence may not make significant use of University resources and services or engage in significant consultation with the faculty.

Extension of Degree Time, Continuous Enrollment

Time spent on leave does not automatically extend limits for completion of the graduate degree but can be considered in a request for an extension. Extensions for parenting, pregnancy, and care giving reasons will be granted at the time of the leave request.

Doctoral students who are required to maintain continuous enrollment may petition for an exception to this policy while they are on an approved Leave of Absence. Students who are on leave due to pregnancy, parenting, or other care giving reasons will not be required to petition for an exception and will not be required to be continuously enrolled during the leave.

International Students

International students in F-1 and J-1 non-immigrant status must also obtain authorization from the International Center before the initiation of a Leave of Absence and before returning to campus to ensure compliance with current SEVIS regulations and visa restrictions.

F-1 and J-1 students approved for a leave of absence may not remain in the United States during the leave period unless authorized by the International Center. For students who must depart the United States, leave periods exceeding five months will necessitate updated student immigration documentation for re-entry.

All international students considering a leave of absence should meet with an international student advisor to determine the appropriate steps to safeguard their immigration status.