

# LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

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A leave of absence is granted for degree-seeking graduate students in active status who must be away from their studies for one or more semesters for personal, family, financial or other compelling reasons. Prior to applying for a leave of absence, students should consider its potential implications for such matters as funding (including assistantships and veterans benefits), loan repayment, immigration status, health insurance, university housing and time-to-degree completion.

International students should contact the Office of Global Education before the initiation of a leave of absence and before returning to campus to ensure compliance with immigration regulations and visa restrictions.

To be eligible for a leave of absence, a student must be seeking a graduate degree, have completed at least one full term of enrollment prior to the date a leave is to begin, be in good academic standing and be making reasonable progress toward the degree. Leaves will not be granted to students who fit one of the following criteria:

- Completed less than one full term of enrollment
- Not in good academic standing
- Received an extension of the degree time limit

Leaves of absence are granted for a maximum of three consecutive terms (e.g., fall, spring, summer).<sup>1</sup> Students may request an extension for maximum one additional term. Although a leave may be taken for as many as 12 months, students are encouraged to return to graduate study as soon as is reasonably possible to minimize the impact of the leave on degree progress. The time taken on an approved leave of absence is not included in the time limitations for degree completion and advancement to candidacy, with the exception of the Doctor of Podiatric Medicine degree.

<sup>1</sup> Refer to the College of Podiatric Medicine section in the University Catalog for leave of absence time limits and procedures for requesting a leave of absence for the Doctor of Podiatric Medicine degree.

The Request for Leave of Absence form should be submitted prior to the start of the term for which the leave is requested, when the necessity for leave is foreseeable. If the need for a leave is not foreseeable, the request should be submitted as soon as possible, but no later than the last day of classes in the term during which the leave has been taken. A retroactive leave of absence will not be granted.

When a department/school grants a leave of absence, it implies the program will be willing to re-admit the student. A plan for re-admission, including any conditions that must be met, should be put in writing and clearly understood by all parties prior to the start of the leave.

Students who are registered for courses must drop or withdraw from all courses prior to taking leave. Course withdrawal does not negate a student's financial obligation, and students will be held responsible for all balances due to the university. Any applicable refunds will be processed per university policy 7-06 regarding student fee refunds, see the Policy Register. Students are advised to check with the Office of the Bursar prior to taking an approved leave of absence in order to determine the status of their student accounts. Accounts that are overdue will be

subject to regular procedures in accordance with university guidelines, notwithstanding any approved leave of absence.

Course withdrawal is not permitted after the tenth week of the fall and spring semesters (or the prorated deadline for flexibly scheduled sections and summer terms). Students applying for a leave of absence after the course withdrawal deadline should address grading and course completion issues with their individual instructors. To consider any variation from this rule for reasons of extenuating circumstances, the student must submit a Petition for Exception to Registration to the University Registrar.

Students on a leave of absence are not registered and, therefore, do not have the rights and privileges of registered students, including course pre-registration and access to the libraries, recreational center and health services. They cannot fulfill any official department or university requirements during the leave period, such as taking qualifying exams or submitting a dissertation/thesis. Students on an approved leave must complete the Application for Graduate Re-Enrollment form in order to register for classes and have the rights and privileges of registered students.

If a student does not return to the graduate program within the approved period for which the leave of absence was granted, he or she will be considered as having permanently withdrawn from the university. To be reconsidered for graduate study, students who have permanently withdrawn must formally apply to their program of interest, including the submission of an application, the non-refundable application fee and any necessary application materials.