School of Education Indiana University
Leaves for Graduate Students
Frequently Asked Questions
Effective date: 04/27/2011

GENERAL

What is a Graduate Student Leave?
The Graduate Student Leave provides students with an opportunity to take care of uncontrollable events that interfere with their ability to work towards a degree. Policy provides for two types of leaves:

- Family and Medical Leave provides for up to six weeks paid leave provided to students who have at least a 37.5 FTE academic appointment, including teaching assistants, research assistants, associate instructors, and faculty assistants who receive University-paid health benefits. Employment or study elsewhere while on leave without explicit written approval is prohibited and may be grounds for cancelling the leave or academic dismissal.

- Academic leave provides up to two years of relief from coursework taken in increments of full regular terms (fall, spring)

Is the Graduate Student Leave the same as the Indiana University Family and Medical Leave of Absence for Faculty and Staff?
No. The Graduate Student Leave policy is designed for graduate students and differs from the faculty and staff policy.

What are the benefits of an approved Graduate Student Leave?
If approved for a Graduate Student Leave, the academic benefits are worked out individually for each student with the guidance of their faculty advisors, departments/centers, and the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies. A student receives a written record of their absence and, in the case of Family and Medical Leave, may request an absence from student academic appointment, transfer of current credits to research, grades of Incomplete, a one-term extension of current grades of Incomplete, or complete withdrawal from coursework. If necessary, the student works with the Student Advocates Office regarding complete withdrawal from coursework. The Leave may also extend financial commitments that are contingent on continued progress towards a degree.

In the case of Family and Medical leave, The Office of Graduate Studies may approve extensions of milestones for Ed.D, Ed.S., MS and Certificate students. The Office of Graduate Studies also works with the University Graduate School regarding extensions of milestones for Ph.D students. A student may use documentation of an approved leave as support for their request for a milestone and time limits extension from the University Graduate School. A leave does not guarantee an automatic or immediate extension of milestones or standard limits by the University Graduate School.
**How does taking a Graduate Student Leave affect my student loan status?**

If you are a doctoral student and have been nominated to candidacy, you must be enrolled in at least 1 hour of dissertation credit, every fall and every spring, to keep your student loan repayment deferment.

If you are a pre-candidacy doctoral student or a master’s, specialist, or graduate teacher certification program student, you must be enrolled in at least 4 credit hours (half-time) to keep your student loan repayment deferment for most federal student loan programs. You are strongly advised to check with the IU Student Loan Administration office for the specific requirements for your loan (http://www.fms.indiana.edu/sla/home.asp).

**How long is a term extension?**

A term extension is equal to one Fall or Spring semester. A department/center may also determine a different length of time for their student, not to exceed one semester.

**When can a student request a Graduate Student Leave of Absence?**

In the case of Family and Medical leave, a student seeking a Graduate Student Leave should request the leave as soon as possible. If the leave is anticipated, this should occur prior to the beginning of the semester. If the leave is unanticipated, the request should be made no more than one week after the need for the leave occurs. Departments may submit paperwork on behalf of and with approval by the student. Leaves may be denied because of the failure of the Student to provide adequate notice of the request for leave. Leaves of absence may not be requested retroactively.

In the case of unpaid leave taken for personal reasons, the request for leave should be made prior to the start of the term in which the leave will occur

**What qualifies a student to receive an unpaid Academic Leave?**

Unpaid Academic Leaves of Absence are granted for students with unanticipated responsibilities that interfere with the ability to work towards a degree and at the discretion of the department/center. Leaves for military duty are coordinated in conjunction with the Indiana University Veteran Support Services.

**How long does it take to process a Graduate Student Leave request?**

If the request is complete upon submission, the typical process time is 7-10 business days. However, if the request is incomplete, the process may take up to 21 business days.

**FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE**

**What counts as a serious health condition?**

Under the Indiana University Family and Medical Leave policy, qualifying serious health conditions include any of the following: Chronic conditions (diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, etc.); Multiple treatments (chemotherapy, dialysis, etc.) Pregnancy & prenatal care; overnight hospitalization; permanent/long term conditions (Alzheimer’s, terminal disease); Incapacity of more than three calendar days requiring a continuous regimen of treatment (including injury).

**Is medical certification required?**

Medical certification is required for any serious health condition. A student should obtain a copy of the medical certification form and take it to the health care provider to have it completed. The medical certification should be submitted within in 15 days of the leave request.
Who qualifies as a health care provider under the Graduate Student Leave guideline?
Under the Indiana University Family and Medical Leave policy, persons authorized to provide health care services include podiatrists, psychologists, optometrists, chiropractors, dentists, doctors of medicine or osteopathy, nurse practitioners and midwives, clinical social workers, Christian Science practitioners, and any recognized IU health plan provider.

Who are the family members covered under the Graduate Student Leave guideline?
A student may use the Graduate Student Family and Medical Leave for his/her own care, the care of a spouse, dependent children under age 18, same sex domestic partner as qualified by the University Affidavit of Domestic Partnership, child of the same sex domestic partner, or the parents of the student.
STUDENTS

How do I apply for a Graduate Student Leave of Absence?

Requests for Family and Medical Leave can be made by the student to his or her faculty advisor, center director, or department chair by completing the Leave Request Form.

Requests for Academic Leave should be made by the student to the department chair for the student's major program. Approved leaves will be reported to the Graduate Studies Office and recorded in the student's file.

What signatures do I need on Graduate Student Leave of Absence request form?

A complete unpaid Academic Leave request form will have the student's and the Faculty Advisor signatures. A student requesting a paid Family & Medical Leave must have the Department Chairperson's or Center Director's signature in addition to the advisor's.

What other documents need to be submitted in addition to the Graduate Student Leave of Absence request form?

If the student holds a Student Academic Appointment (SAA) at the time of a requested leave, a memo from the department and/or campus employer describing the specific arrangements, if any, pertaining to timeline, SAA responsibilities and budget adjustments is required with the form. If the student has multiple appointments, memos are required for all appointments. A memo is only required for students holding an SAA.

What if I need more than the 6 weeks provided under a Family and Medical Leave?

Although very few students are granted Leaves of Absence for more than one semester, a student may request a leave of up to two years. The two years may include 6 weeks of paid leave and the remainder in unpaid leave. For a mixed leave, the student should fill out both the Family and Medical leave Request and the Academic Leave Request.

What do I receive on a paid Family and Medical Leave?

A student on a paid Family & Medical Leave receives continuing full support including stipend, health insurance, and any fee remission for up to 6 consecutive weeks of leave or to the end of the semester, whichever comes first. Students on eligible summer appointments shall receive continuing full support for up to 2 consecutive weeks. Students on other eligible appointments may receive a number of leave days proportionate to the total duration of their appointment.

What happens to my coursework when I am on an Family and Medical Leave?

The details of each Leave of Absence are worked out for each individual student in consultation with their faculty advisors. Students approved for a family or medical leave (paid or unpaid) often apply for and receive a one-term extension of all major degree milestones and time limits such as qualifying exam deadlines and the number of years between passing the oral qualifying exam and obtaining the degree. Students who are enrolled in G901 during the leave or who have incomplete grades from previous terms may also be eligible for extension of the standard limits. It is necessary to work with the student's faculty advisors and University Graduate School to determine eligibility and approval for milestone extensions.

How often may I take a Graduate Student Leave of Absence? May I take a Graduate Student Leave of Absence on an intermittent basis?

Academic Leave may provide up to 104 weeks total relief from coursework in a given program of study. Each graduate student with at least a 37.5 FTE academic appointment is eligible for paid family or medical leaves in up to two terms of every five calendar years, but must be enrolled full-time for at least one semester in between leaves. Extended or intermittent leaves may be granted for students with chronic serious health conditions or ongoing treatments (i.e., chronic asthma,
chemotherapy or dialysis treatments, care of a qualifying family member). Students should 
schedule foreseeable appointments around their normal work schedule and seek 
department/center approval on foreseeable absences. We encourage students to work with their 
faculty advisors to craft a Leave request that best suits their needs.

*In the event of child birth or adoption, if both I and my spouse/domestic partner are graduate 
students in Education, are we able to take paid Family and Medical Leave at the same time?*

Yes. Requests for leave are treated on an individual basis. If both parents meet all necessary 
conditions, they may request and be approved for leave at the same time.
FACULTY AND DEPARTMENTS

Who pays for an approved Family and Medical Leave?
The School expects each department/center to cover the cost of paid Graduate Student Leaves in much the same way as it does for other employees. A department chairperson’s or center director’s signature on the leave request acknowledges their awareness and understanding of their financial responsibility. If the costs present a major hardship, the department/center should contact the Office of Graduate Studies as soon as possible to discuss alternatives.

Who covers for the student’s academic appointment duties and academic load while the student is on leave?
The School leaves it to each department/center to work out the details of a replacement. Some departments have hired temporary instructors; others temporarily shift the work responsibilities to faculty or other staff. A memo from the department and/or campus employer describing the specific arrangements, if any, pertaining to timeline, SAA responsibilities and budget adjustments is required with the form. If the student has multiple appointments, memos are required for all appointments. A memo is only required for students holding an SAA.

May a student use the Graduate Student Leave on an intermittent basis?
Yes, a student is eligible, with department/center approval, to the use Graduate Student Leave intermittently. The School asks departments/centers to work closely with the student to craft a Leave request that best accommodates both the student’s and the department’s/center’s needs.

May a part time graduate student request Graduate Student Leave?
Yes, if you are a part time graduate student wanting to sit out of your program for personal reasons you may request unpaid leave of up to 104 weeks total during one program of studies. Speak directly with an advisor or with program/department head about outstanding grades of incomplete and other timeline issues that may affect you during an unpaid leave taken for personal reasons.

Graduate students studying part time are not eligible for paid leave or timeline extensions.
**Summary of Leaves**

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<td>NO</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES – if extension of paid leave or requesting timeline extensions NO – if standalone leave for personal reasons</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>2 years (104 weeks)</td>
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**Example of multiple leaves in one program of study**

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