

**Indiana University College of Arts & Sciences  
College Graduate Student Leave of Absence  
Frequently Asked Questions**

**GENERAL**

***What is a College Graduate Student Leave of Absence?***

The College Graduate Student Leave of Absence provides students with an opportunity to take care of uncontrollable events that interfere with their ability to work towards a degree. The College Graduate Student Leave of Absence is available to all graduate students in the College of Arts and Sciences and provides up to two years of relief from coursework and degree milestones. Most Leaves of Absence are granted to students who need to be away from their studies for family or medical reasons. Discretionary leaves for reasons other than family or medical are also available on a case by case basis. Students who have at least a 37.5 FTE academic appointment are eligible for up to six-weeks of paid Family & Medical Leave. This includes 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.

***Is the College Graduate Student Leave of Absence the same as the Indiana University Family and Medical Leave of Absence for Faculty and Staff?***

No. The College Leave of Absence policy is designed for graduate students and differs from the faculty and staff policy.

***What are the benefits of an approved College Graduate Student Leave of Absence?***

If approved for a College Graduate Student Leave of Absence, the academic benefits are worked out individually for each student with the guidance of their faculty advisors and the College Graduate Office. A student receives a written record of their absence and may request an absence from student academic appointment, transfer of current credits to research, receive grades of Incomplete, a one-term extension of current grades of grades of Incomplete, or completely withdraw from coursework. The College Graduate Office works with the Student Advocates Office regarding complete withdrawal from coursework. The Leave of Absence may also extend financial commitments that are contingent on continued progress towards a degree.

The College Graduate Office also works with the University Graduate School regarding extensions of milestones. 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 of absence does not guarantee an automatic or immediate extension of milestones or standard limits by the University Graduate School.

***How long is a term extension?***

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

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

A student seeking a College Graduate Student Leave of Absence 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.

***What qualifies a student to receive an unpaid Discretionary College Graduate Student Leave of Absence?***

Unpaid Discretionary College Graduate Student Leaves of Absence are granted for students with reasons other than family or medical that may interfere with the ability to work towards a degree and at the discretion of the department. Employment or study elsewhere while on leave requires explicit written approval. Discretionary leave provides a written record of the student's absence. Leaves for military duty are coordinated in conjunction with the Indiana University Veteran Support Services.

***How long does it take to process a College 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 (Alzheimers, terminal disease); Incapacity of more than three calendar days requiring a continuous regiment 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 College Graduate Student Leave of Absence guideline?***

Under the Indiana University Family and Medical Leave policy, persons authorized to provide health care services include podiatrists, psychologists, optometrist, chiropractors, dentist, doctors of medicine or osteopathy, nurse practitioners and midwives, clinical social workers, Christian Science practitioners, and any recognized IU health plan.

***Who are the family members covered under the College Graduate Student Leave of Absence guideline?***

A student may use the College 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 College Graduate Student Leave of Absence?***

Requests for a College Graduate Student Leave of Absence can be made by the student to his or her faculty advisor, DGS, or directly to the College Graduate Office by completing the leave request form in either hardcopy or online format.

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

A complete unpaid College Graduate Student Leave of Absence request form will have the student's and either the Faculty Advisor or the Director of Graduate Studies (per department guidelines) signatures. A student requesting a paid Family & Medical Leave **must** have the Department Chairperson's signature.

***What if I need more than the 6-weeks provided under a paid College Graduate Student Leave of Absence?***

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.

*What do I receive on a paid College Graduate Student Leave of Absence?*

A student on a paid Family & Medical Leave under the College Graduate Student Leave of Absence 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 approved College Graduate Student Leave of Absence?*

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 often receive a one-term extension of all major degree milestones and time limits such as qualifying exam deadlines and the number of years between advancing to candidacy 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 College Graduate Student Leave of Absence? May I take a College Graduate Student Leave of Absence on an intermittent basis?*

Although most students will be granted no more than one semester of unpaid Leave during their graduate career, the leave may provide for up to two years of relief from coursework and degree milestones. 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 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, and both myself and my spouse/domestic partner are graduate students in the College, 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 College expects each department to cover the cost of paid Graduate Student Leaves of Absence in much the same way as it does for other employees. A department's chairperson's signature on the leave request acknowledges the department's awareness and understanding of its financial responsibility. If the costs present a major hardship, the department should contact the College Graduate Office 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 College leaves it to each department 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.

*May a student use the College Graduate Student Leave of Absence on an intermittent basis?*

Yes, a student is eligible, with department approval, to the College Graduate Student Leave of Absence intermittently. The College asks departments to work closely with the student to craft a Leave request that best accommodates both the student's and the department's needs.