Directors of Graduate Study:  
Points to Consider Regarding Graduate Student Leaves of Absence

The College Graduate Student Leave of Absence policy provides graduate students the opportunity to take care of uncontrollable events that interfere with progress towards a degree. During a leave, students are not expected to make progress towards their degree. Although students can complete coursework from previous terms during a leave, they may not attend class or use the leave to catch up in current coursework. If a student in your program is considering a leave of absence, please schedule a meeting or phone call with them to discuss the following:

- Is the student eligible for a College leave? To be eligible, students must:
  - Be enrolled full time in a College graduate program and be in good academic standing (students on academic probation are not eligible)
  - Have completed at least one semester (a minimum of nine credit hours) in a College Graduate program

- Is there an alternative to a College leave of absence that will accommodate the student’s needs?
  - Students should expect faculty to reasonably accommodate brief illnesses or medical hardship during a term.
  - In some circumstances, it may be possible for students to schedule medical appointments around their normal work and class schedule and arrange informally for department approval of foreseeable absences.
  - Master’s students, and doctoral students in the pre-candidacy stage, are not required to continuously enroll, and can take up to two years away from their programs before the department can require that they re-apply. In these circumstances, an informal departmental leave may be appropriate. If students feel they will not be able to meet degree milestones or time limits due to time away, a formal leave is appropriate.

- If a College leave of absence is the appropriate option for a student, review their current enrollment and discuss the best way to proceed given their course progress to date.
  - Depending on the point in the semester when students request leave, they may need to fully withdraw from all coursework. This can have ramifications on financial aid (student loans or fellowships), loan repayment, student health insurance, and international student visas. Students should contact Student Advocates (if domestic) or International Services (if international) to pursue this option.
Students may be able to take incompletes for current coursework. Please note that a grade of incomplete may be given only when the completed portion of a student’s work in the course is of passing quality (https://www.indiana.edu/~vpfaa/academicguide/index.php/Policy_H-31).

Students can use a College approved leave of absence as support for requests for term extensions of existing incompletes (students should contact professors of those courses to make such requests), and for requests for extensions of degree milestones (students should contact the University Graduate School to make this request).

- If the student is in a funded position, determine the status of the funding commitment when they return.
- The Director of Graduate Studies is expected to make an informed recommendation to the College Graduate Office, approving the leave, or explaining why the leave request is not appropriate.
- If approval is granted by the DGS, the DGS and student need to create a Leave Return Plan. This plan should document student progress in the program up to the current term, note any funding agreements for the student’s return, identify a return date, and provide an outline of the academic work that will be completed when the student resumes studies (including plans to resolve incompletes). A Leave Return Plan template is available at http://college.indiana.edu/graduate/office/leave.shtml#l7.