

Graduate Student Leave Policies

Personal Leave of Absence

Students who find it necessary to interrupt their studies may apply in writing to their school's academic affairs office for a personal leave of absence. A "personal leave of absence" is defined as any leave of absence other than one granted for medical reasons or for military service. **Requests for personal leave must be submitted by the last day of the Add/Drop period. The granting of leave is contingent on approval by the student's department or program.** When properly approved, and officially entered on the transcript, a leave of absence satisfies the University's registration requirement. It may not, however, confer the registration or residency status necessary to qualify for financial aid or to meet visa requirements. International students should consult with their International Student Advisor in the Office of Global Services before requesting a leave, in order to ensure that their visa requirements will be satisfied.

A total of no more than four semesters of personal leave of absence are allowed in a student's graduate career at Georgetown University, whether taken at the master's or the doctoral level. Up to two semesters of leave may be granted at any one time. The length of time that would otherwise be permitted to complete all requirements for a degree and to graduate generally will be extended by one semester for each semester of approved personal leave of absence, but an approved personal leave of absence will not extend the period during which a student will receive promised funding. Leaves of absence for medical reasons and for military leave, when properly approved, will not be counted against the four-semester limit for leaves of absence.

No degree requirements can be completed during leaves of absence, nor can a student graduate during a leave of absence. However, personal leaves of absence do not alter deadlines relating to the completion of specific course requirements such as those for completing work in a course for which an "Incomplete" grade was received.

Once doctoral candidacy has been achieved, requests for a personal leave of absence will be considered only if the reasons for requesting the leave would otherwise prevent the student from making significant progress on the dissertation. Such reasons might include illness, family emergencies, and other unforeseen circumstances. Employment and related obligations are not themselves conditions that would normally warrant an exception. A personal leave of absence will not be granted simply for the purpose of extending the time permitted to complete the dissertation.

Medical Leave of Absence

Medical leaves are administered according to the University's Medical Leave of Absence Policy. To take a medical leave of absence (MLOA), students should contact the Dean of Students office in the Division of Student Affairs (dosstudentaffairs@georgetown.edu) or visit the Student Health Center (SHC). The Dean of Students, in collaboration with other university resources, manages the medical leave of absence process. Students facing physical or mental health issues that

significantly impact their ability to function successfully as a student may be eligible for an MLOA.

An approved MLOA will pause the student's time to complete degree requirements and to graduate, but a student cannot graduate while on MLOA. Additionally, an approved MLOA will not extend the period during which a student will receive promised funding.

Additionally, students on fellowship (non-service stipend) who have an approved voluntary MLOA through the University can extend the period of promised support by up to two semesters. The following conditions apply:

- if the leave is approved after the student receives payment on the full non-service stipend for the semester, the student is not eligible to extend the period of promised support unless they return the full stipend payment to the University.
- if a student is on a more extended voluntary MLOA through the University, funding may be extended beyond two semesters at the discretion of the program and school.

Students on an assistantship (service stipend) have the option of taking paid or unpaid MLOA through the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with GAGE-AFT, as stipulated in **Article XXIV Leaves of Absence from Assistantship, Section 2**. Leave through the CBA can be taken separately from or concurrently with the University's voluntary Medical Leave policy. The following conditions apply:

if such a student takes unpaid leave through the CBA and concurrent leave through the University, the semester of funding is deferred to a future semester consistent with the CBA.

- if such a student takes a more extended voluntary MLOA through the University, they would be eligible to extend the period of promised support by up to one additional semester. Any additional funding is at the discretion of the program and school.
- if such a student takes paid leave through the CBA, they are not eligible to extend the period of promised support.

U.S. Military Service Leave and Re-Enrollment Policy

Military Leave and Refund Procedures

Definition

For purposes of this policy, a "military service leave" is a University-approved withdrawal from all in-progress University classes that is necessitated by service, whether voluntary or involuntary, in the United States Armed Forces, including service by a member of the National Guard or Reserve, active duty, active duty for training, or full-time National Guard duty under Federal authority, for a period of more than thirty consecutive days under a call or order to active duty of more than thirty consecutive days.

Student Responsibilities

A student who is called to active duty or active service in a branch of the United States Armed Forces (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, Space Force, National Guard or Reserve) and wishes to take a military service leave must provide the University with advanced notice of the need to take a leave of absence in advance of beginning that leave by contacting their academic dean as soon as possible after they have received military orders that require withdrawal from

a program or course of study. Those orders or other appropriate documentation should be attached to the request. If military exigency prevents advanced notice, the student should initiate a military service leave by providing notice at the first reasonable opportunity, in writing, personally signed, and with a copy of the military orders attached.

University Procedures

Upon receiving notice of a student's request to withdraw from the University or a program or drop all enrolled courses because of military obligations, the school dean's office shall promptly contact the campus registrar. The campus registrar will review the request and initiate the military service leave of absence by notifying the Office of Student Financial Aid and Billing & Receivables or equivalent offices at the Law School and Medical Center. The Office of Student Financial Aid (or equivalent) will review the student's eligibility for financial aid funds received before the time of withdrawal and inform the student about the status of their financial aid and actions required to defer loan repayments based on military obligations. Students who are granted a military service leave will receive a 100% refund of tuition and fees charged for the semester or academic term in which they withdraw, but they will be charged for housing and meal plan expenses already incurred. If the University determines that it is appropriate to award academic credit for work completed in the semester or academic term in which a student takes military service leave, the student shall not receive a refund for the portion of the course of study for which academic credit is awarded. No refund will be provided until the University receives a copy of the military orders necessitating the withdrawal. Students who are granted a military service leave may be on leave for up to five academic years, after which an extension may be granted with their dean's approval. To apply for an extension, students must contact their dean. Students who do not request an extension will be withdrawn from the University and at a later date may choose to seek readmission. To seek readmission at a later date, students must contact their dean.

Military Re-Enrollment Procedures

Definition

For purposes of this policy, a "military re-enrollment" is a University-approved re-enrollment after a military service leave.

Student Responsibilities

A student who has taken military service leave from the University or has had studies interrupted because of active duty or active service in a branch of the United States Armed Forces and wishes to re-enroll must notify the University of the intent to return to resume a course of study upon conclusion of duty or service and present appropriate documentation prior to the semester in which the student is requesting re-enrollment. To qualify for military re-enrollment, a student must provide notice to the University of the intention to re-enroll within three years of the time they are discharged from military service or are placed on inactive duty. Notice should be provided in writing to the appropriate academic dean in accordance with the program's re-enrollment leave of absence process and should include documentation (including an official certificate of release or discharge, a copy of duty orders, or other appropriate documentation) to confirm/verify the student's withdrawal was related to service in the uniformed services and that the student is able to resume studies.¹ Military re-enrollment guarantees a student who meets these requirements access to the same course of study they were in at the time of withdrawal without incurring a re-enrollment fee, unless a student receives a dishonorable or bad conduct discharge or has

been sentenced in a court-martial.² Any student who, because of military necessity, did not give written or oral notice of service to their academic dean or the campus registrar prior to withdrawal, may, at the time the student seeks readmission, submit documentation that the student served in a branch of the U.S. Armed Services that necessitated the student's absence from the University.

- ¹ The University shall determine the adequacy of documentation with reference to 34. C.F.R. Sec. 668.18(g).
- ² The appropriate point in a course or program for a student to resume studies, the timing of re-enrollment, and the determination of the "same course of study" will be determined by the University, taking into account the unique characteristics and requirements of that course or program and the modes in which it is offered (e.g., non-degree vs. degree, evening vs. day program, special program vs. standard program). If the program in which the student was enrolled has been discontinued or is no longer offered, the University will enroll the student in the program that it determines to be most similar to that program or in a different program for which the student is qualified. If the student is admitted to a different program, and for subsequent academic years for a student admitted to the same program, the University shall assess tuition and fee charges that are no greater than other students in the program are assessed for that academic year.

University Procedures

A student who meets the notice requirements set forth herein will be granted military re-enrollment in the semester following the notice of intent to return, or, if the student chooses, at the beginning of the next full academic year. Upon returning to the University, the student will resume their course of study without repeating completed coursework and will have the same enrollment status and academic standing as before the military leave. If the student is readmitted to the same program, during the first academic year in which the student returns, the student will be assessed the same tuition and fee charges that the student was or would have been assessed during the academic year in which the student left the institution.¹ However, for the first academic year in which the student returns, the University may assess an amount up to the amount of tuition and fee charges that other students in the program are currently assessed for that academic year if the student's veterans' education benefits² or other service member education benefits will pay the amount in excess of the tuition and fee charges assessed for the academic year in which the student left the institution.

If, in the judgment of the University, a student is not academically prepared to resume a course of study in which they were previously enrolled, or is unprepared to complete a program, the University will determine whether reasonable means are available to help the student become prepared. The University may deny the student re-enrollment if it determines that reasonable efforts are not available, or that such efforts have failed to prepare the student to resume the course of study or complete the program. A student who has been away from the University on military service for more than five years (including all previous absences for military service obligations after initial enrollment but including only time the student spends actually performing service in the uniformed services) will not be guaranteed military re-enrollment, but they may petition their dean for consideration of military re-enrollment.³ A student who chooses at the conclusion of military service to enroll in a different course of study than the one the student was in at the time of military withdrawal must

complete the regular admission and enrollment process for that course of study.

An approved military leave of absence will not extend the period during which a student will receive promised funding.

- ¹ The appropriate tuition and fee amounts will be reflected on the bill that the student receives.
- ² As defined in section 480(c) of the HEA.
- ³ This cumulative leave of absence restriction shall be interpreted and applied with reference to 34 C.F.R. Sec. 668.18(c) and (e), which set forth rules for calculating cumulative absence due to military service.

Parental Leave Policy for Graduate Students

The University offers support for graduate students who need to take leave in connection with the birth of, or full-time care of, a new child during their period of enrollment. The goal in offering this support is to allow graduate students to continue their studies with as little disruption as possible. Parental leave is intended to enable the graduate student to continue to make progress toward their degree. Consequently, it does not grant additional semesters of funding, although under certain circumstances funding may be deferred. Nor does it change the length of time permitted to complete degree requirements and to graduate. This policy requires communication and cooperation in good faith between the student seeking the leave, the faculty, and the student's department.

The terms of the policy are as follows:

1. To be eligible for parental leave, the graduate student must be the primary and full-time caregiver of a newborn child or a child five years old or younger newly placed in the home.
2. The graduate student must submit a written request no less than three months before the expected date of the start of the leave to the School's academic affairs office.
3. Graduate students may take up to six weeks of parental leave within the first six weeks immediately following the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child. The six weeks of parental leave must be taken consecutively immediately following the birth or placement of the new child. Students seeking parental leave shall provide documentation to the School's academic affairs office sufficient to demonstrate that they are the full-time primary care provider of the child.
4. During parental leave, the graduate student may attend classes and work on course assignments to the extent possible, but their program director should advise the professors in these courses to be flexible about attendance and assignment deadlines during the period of leave. Upon the student's request, they will be granted Incompletes in these courses, with the understanding that the courses should be completed by the end of the following semester.
5. Graduate students may request a Medical Leave of Absence (MLOA) instead of, or in addition to, parental leave. Taking either MLOA or a parental leave may have implications for a student's health insurance. Students should consult with the Student Health Insurance office prior to requesting either option. Approved periods of medical leave will extend the time permitted to complete requirements for the degree and to graduate.

6. International students should consult with the Office of Global Services about the visa consequences of receiving either MLOA or parental leave. This consultation should occur prior to the submission of the request for parental leave to the School's academic affairs office.

Students supported by external research grants, fellowships, or awards must follow the policies of their funding agency. Many funding agencies and organizations defer to the institutional policies of the student's university, but if a funding agency or organization has its own policy, the rules of the granting agency or organization will prevail. If fellowship benefits are suspended or deferred during this period, and the appropriate documentation is submitted, the School will assume funding responsibility for the period during which the student is on an approved parental leave.

Leave Policies for Graduate Research Assistants, Teaching Assistants, and Teaching Associates

Under the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) (<https://grad.georgetown.edu/financial-support/gage-aft-resources/>) with the Graduate Alliance of Georgetown Employees, in-unit graduate assistants are entitled to the following Holidays, Personal Days, and Leaves:

Holidays and Personal Time Off

1. The University's academic holiday schedule applies to graduate assistants. The requirements for notice on the part of both supervisor and student in cases where work is essential on holidays are spelled in detail in the CBA.
2. Supervisors may not deny a graduate assistant's request for a reasonable number of days off. The specifics of this provision are set forth in the CBA (<https://grad.georgetown.edu/financial-support/gage-aft-resources/>).

Medical Leave from Assistantship

1. A leave of absence is defined as any period of longer than five days during which the University excuses a Graduate Student Assistant from their Graduate Student Assistant responsibilities.
2. A doctoral Graduate Student Assistant may elect to continue to receive their assistantship stipend during a medical leave of absence of up to six weeks in length in one continuous academic year, or take unpaid leave for an entire semester and defer funding to an additional semester.
3. If a student is enrolled in health insurance, it will continue during the period of leave.

Parental Leave

1. A doctoral Graduate Student Assistant may elect to continue to receive their assistantship stipend for up to eight weeks of paid leave within four months following the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child of five years or younger.
2. Alternatively, a doctoral student can take unpaid leave and defer funding for one semester.

Family Leave

1. A doctoral Graduate Student Assistant will not continue to receive their assistantship stipend during a period of family leave, as

defined in the CBA, but they will receive an extension of their period of support equal to the duration of their family leave.

Tuition, health and dental insurance will be part of the benefits package for Ph.D. Graduate Assistants.