

Leave of Absence FAQ

What is a leave of absence?

The University recognizes that there may be times when students have compelling reasons to interrupt their studies to focus on other activities, such as attending to a serious health issue, caring for a new child, or completing mandatory military service. In these instances, students should consult the Dean of Students Office, who will help them determine whether a voluntary leave of absence is appropriate. All leaves of absence must be approved by Dean Lumpkin in advance of the student's break in their studies.

Students who are approved for a voluntary leave of absence may qualify for a full or partial tuition refund according to the [schedule](#) published by the Office of the Bursar).

Availability of student health insurance (U-SHIP) during a leave of absence will be governed by the student health insurance policies at the time the leave is taken. Other University privileges, facilities, and services are not available to students on leaves of absence, unless otherwise indicated. Students on a voluntary leave of absence cannot hold work-study or maintain University student employment positions.

Why should I take a personal leave of absence?

Students may request a personal leave of absence for any reason at any time. Students may take a leave of absence for up to four (4) academic quarters.

Why should I take a medical leave of absence?

Students may request a medical leave of absence if temporarily unable to continue in their program due to illness or injury. A student may be approved for a medical leave of for up to four (4) academic quarters.

Can I take a parental leave of absence?

A student who becomes a parent during their program may request a one-quarter Parental Relief Leave of Absence to care for a child. Pregnant students may request a Parental Relief Leave of Absence during pregnancy. Such leaves should be submitted to the Dean of Students Office. Students are eligible for University privileges during a Parental Leave of Absence. (For more information, refer to the Graduate Student Parent [Policy](#).)

Can I take a military leave of absence?

Students may apply for a military leave of absence in order to fulfill service in armed forces.

What happens if I am pursuing another degree program that is integral to my PhD?

Students may apply for a leave of absence to pursue another degree program that is integral to their Ph.D. The appropriateness of this must be approved by the student's advisor and Committee on Degree through a Minor Petition. Once approved, the student will request curricular leave of absence through the Dean of Students Office. Doctoral students will not receive Divinity School funding while on curricular leave.

Students must be admitted to the second degree program and may be eligible for scholarship assistance from that program during the terms of residence.

A student may take a curricular degree leave of absence for up to three years.

What happens if I receive an external fellowship?

You do not need to take a leave of absence if you receive an external fellowship.

How does a leave of absence affect my maximum registration limit (doctoral students)?

For Ph.D. students who matriculated prior to Summer 2016, leaves of absence do not extend their eligibility to register beyond the total of twelve years from entry into the Ph.D. program. For students who matriculated in Summer 2016 or later, leaves of absence stops the maximum registration clock. The clock resumes when the student returns from the approved leave of absence.

Can I take a leave during a quarter that I have a milestone due (doctoral students)?

Having a milestone due does not prevent a student from taking a leave of absence. The milestone will be due the quarter that the student returns from leave.

What happens to my privileges when I take a leave of absence?

Leave of Absence status carries no tuition charges and confers no privileges such as registering for courses, accessing the libraries, holding on-campus jobs, holding teaching positions, borrowing loans, or deferring loans payments. Access to health insurance (USHIP) or the Student Health and Counseling Service is only available to students on medical or parental leave of absence. This access is suspended for students on personal leave. Access to University e-mail accounts is maintained in leave status.

Students who do not return from the Leave of Absence in the quarter following the approved leave will be withdrawn from the program.