Leave of Absence from a Graduate Program

In unusual circumstances it may be necessary for a student to request a leave of absence from graduate study. A student wishing to take a leave of absence from a degree seeking program should adhere to the following procedure:

1. Secure the agreement of the graduate program director and the advisor for the proposed leave.
2. Complete the Request for a Leave of Absence form, obtain the signatures of the graduate program director, research advisor and other signatures as shown on the form. Submit the completed request to the Director of Enrollment. The request must include: starting and ending dates of the proposed leave, the reason for the request*, and any additional information which might be needed for an understanding of the implication of the proposed leave on completion of the degree program.
3. The Director of Enrollment will notify the student in writing of approval or disapproval of the Request for a Leave, and will notify the student’s program director and other officials as needed.*
4. It is the student’s obligation to be in communication with the program director and Director of Enrollment in advance of the leave of absence return date regarding whether or not a return to academic study will occur as planned. If the leave expires without such communication to the Director of Enrollment, it will be concluded that the student has withdrawn from the program. Reapplication would be required if the student wishes to resume a degree program at a later date.
5. Accumulated time away from a program may not exceed one year. Foreign Nationals are subject to visa restrictions at all times.
6. Health, Dental and Vision monthly premiums become the responsibility of the student and must be pre-paid monthly.

Wisconsin Family Medical Leave available for Full Time Research Assistants

All full time PhD seeking graduate students are considered research assistants, a unique part time employment category of the Medical College of Wisconsin. The status of graduate students in terms of their academic/employee designation can be complex and confusing. Research assistants ‘work’ 20 hours per week and receive stipends funded primarily via GSBS for the first year and a half. Stipend continuation is provided through training grant support or departmental funds throughout the degree program. Research assistants are governed by graduate school policies and procedures and are covered by a student health insurance plan.

Wisconsin law provides part time employees who have worked at least 1000 hours in the preceding 52 consecutive weeks, the opportunity to take a leave of absence for

- Serious Health Conditions
- Parental Leave

Generally research assistants in their second year or beyond of their graduate programs qualify for Wisconsin’s Family Medical leave. First year full time PhD seekers do not qualify.

**Serious Health Condition:** Up to two weeks for your own serious health condition or that of a parent, child or spouse. Serious health condition means a disabling physical or mental illness, injury, impairment or condition involving inpatient care in a hospital, nursing home or hospice, or out-patient care that requires continuing treatment of supervision by a health provider.

**Parental Leave:** Following childbirth or adoption of an infant, the primary care giver (whether male or female) would be allowed to take 30 work days (6 weeks) of parental leave with full stipend and continued health insurance overage. Vacation days are to be used concurrently beginning with the
first day of the leave. This leave can be viewed as composed of the 30 calendar days allowed by NIH training grant policy for parental leave per year. In the event of a graduate student wishes to extend the leave beyond this period she/he has the option of leave without pay, however he/she will need to pre-pay MCW’s portion of the health care premium, along with monthly premiums for dental and vision insurance.

To request Family Medical Leave follow the steps for “Leave of Absence from a Degree Program” as above except at step 2 you must talk/meet with the Director of Enrollment in the Graduate School to discuss your leave request. If conditions are met to also apply for Wisconsin’s Family Medical Leave you will be provided with information and guided through the remainder of the process by Human Resources. Steps 3 and 4 remain the same as above.

Foreign Nationals are subject to visa restrictions at all times.