

Graduate Leave of Absence

A graduate student must apply for an official leave of absence from graduate study in cases of illness or personal concern. The application can be made for a maximum of one year (three terms) for master's students or two years (six terms) for doctoral students. The length and rationale for the leave of absence must be stated in advance and recommended to the dean by the designated department faculty member. The leave can only be approved by the dean. Students are permitted to take multiple leaves as long as the length of the total leave of absences does not exceed the maximums listed above. If the leave of absence has been approved, the statute of limitations for the degree is extended by the length of time of the leave.

If the leave of absence is related to a medical condition, a letter from the student's medical provider needs to accompany the request. A medical release letter permitting the student to return to their program will also need to be submitted before the student can return to the program. This letter must acknowledge that the student is able to return to all normal activities associated with being a graduate student, including such work as: completing coursework, teaching, researching and writing as applicable. Both letters should be written on official letterhead and contain the original signature of their medical provider.

Doctoral students will not be permitted an extension of the 7-year limit on the Ph.D. comprehensive exam. Doctoral students must retake the comprehensives if they do not successfully defend within 7 years of the exam date. Master's students will not be permitted an extension of the 4-year limit on the MA/MS/MFA comprehensive exam. Master's students must retake the comprehensive exam if it is more than 4 years old. No exceptions are made to this policy.

While on leave, students are not permitted to use university facilities or faculty time. If a student is on an approved leave and needs to be registered in the term(s) to use university facilities, faculty time, or needs to be registered to defer loans or to maintain visa status, they must cancel their leave. An approved leave only holds a student's place in their class, it does not guarantee funding. Depending on the length of time of the leave, a student may have to reapply for admission. If the student returns immediately after the approved leave, they do not have to pay an application fee and readmission is automatic. If the student does not return immediately after the approved leave, it is at the department's discretion to charge an application fee and readmission is subject to departmental approval. A copy of the readmission application can be obtained from 5141 Sennott Square.