

BGS Leaves of Absence (including Parental Leave)

The University allows graduate students to take leaves of absence with the permission of the school only during the period prior to dissertation status (see the *Graduate Catalog-Rules and Regulations* for more details). Exceptions may be made for dissertation level students, most notably for medical reasons¹ and for parental leave in association with the birth of a child (of up to one year)². Student stipends are suspended during the leave period and are guaranteed upon return from leave under the conditions of the original award guarantee, i.e., as long as the student remains in good academic standing. Note that students who have passed the prelim may need to arrange fellowship support from a mentor in order to return. Students receiving NIH NRSA support in the form of a training grant appointment or individual fellowship must also obtain permission for a leave from NIH.

¹Medical Leaves of Absence

Students who wish to take a medical leave are expected to arrange for a letter from the treating professional(s) justifying the leave. Students on medical leave are expected to seek and follow the advice of the graduate group chair or his/her designate to remediate any incomplete coursework and to devise a course of study for re-enrollment. Such students are also expected to make appropriate financial arrangements to continue any necessary treatment during the leave (e.g., payment for the Student Health Insurance plan), to continue treatment, and to arrange for an appropriate support system. In order to return from medical leave, students must arrange for treating professional(s) to provide documentation of treatment and progress. Students who take a leave for psychological reasons are expected to arrange evaluation with Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) four weeks prior to the sought return date.

²Parental Leaves of Absence

BGS students are eligible to receive, upon request, full pay for new child leave from the same source as the stipend for 30 calendar days. In addition, students may apply their two weeks of annual vacation leave to extend the paid new child leave to approximately 45 calendar days.

This policy is designed to provide roughly the same benefit as the NIH policy for students who receive NIH NRSA support, which is as follows: *Trainees may receive stipends for up to 15 calendar days of sick leave per year. Sick leave may be used for the medical conditions related to pregnancy and childbirth pursuant to the Pregnancy Discrimination Act (42 USC 2000 e(k)). Trainees may also receive stipends for up to 30 calendar days of parental leave per year for the adoption or the birth of a child when those in comparable training positions at the grantee institution have access to paid leave for this purpose and the use of parental leave is approved by the program director.* (Note that BGS provides two weeks of vacation leave to all students, but no sick leave.)