

BGS Leaves of Absence

The University allows graduate students to take leaves of absence with the permission of the graduate group chair and the graduate dean. Students must write to the graduate group requesting the leave; if the chair approves, the request will be forwarded to the graduate dean (i.e., the BGS Director) for approval. The main types of leave are medical, family, and paid time off for the birth or adoption of a child. Under medical and unpaid family leaves, 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 candidacy exam may need to arrange fellowship support from a mentor in order to return; there is no guarantee that the original mentor will be able to provide financial support when the student returns from leave. 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.

Medical 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. The letter should be sent to the BGS Director. Students on medical leave are expected to seek and follow the advice of the graduate group chair or his/her designate to remediate any work 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.

Other Leaves of Absence

BGS abides by the University's policies for Family Leave and Time Off for Childbirth or Adoption. The University policies can be found at:

http://www.upenn.edu/provost/academic_rules.