

Attendance

All officially enrolled students are expected to attend classes regularly and promptly. Students who are absent from classes or laboratory periods are still responsible for completing course requirements. Students with extenuating circumstances that prohibit their adherence to the course calendar may seek permission from their instructors to complete outstanding course requirements, examinations, etc. Students who neglect to seek permission or whose requests are denied will receive the grade earned as determined by the course instructor.

Leave of Absence for Exceptional Family Circumstances

In recognition of the effects that childbirth, adoption, illness, disability, caring for incapacitated dependents (such as children, ill or injured partners, or aging parents), military service, or similar circumstances may have on the time and energy that graduate students have to devote to their educational programs, the University allows students in such circumstances to apply for a leave of absence.

A. Length of Leave - Students who apply for a leave of absence should indicate the length of the requested leave of absence and explain why their circumstances warrant a leave of that length. Leaves of absence in excess of four semesters are disfavored and will not be granted absent extraordinary circumstances or as required by law. Time to degree will not be impacted by an approved leave of absence. Approval can only be obtained by the Graduate School with support of the students' graduate program Chair and/or Director of Graduate Studies.

B. Application Procedures - A leave of absence for childbirth, adoption, illness, disability, dependent care, or similar circumstances normally must be requested and approved prior to the beginning of the academic term for which it is being requested. A letter of request should provide a detailed explanation of the circumstances leading to the request and a justification of the length of the requested leave. Each student should describe the progress they have made in their graduate program, and indicate if the requested leave of absence is expected to affect the time-to-degree, courseviability, or course-restoration limitations set forth elsewhere in these Rules. The letter of request should be sent to the Dean of the Graduate School and, in cases of disability, the Office of Student Services. The letter of request must also state whether the request is supported by the student's faculty advisor and Director of Graduate Studies, and include supporting documentation. The faculty advisor, Director of Graduate Studies, Office of Student Services, and/or the Graduate Dean may request a doctor's statement to document any limitations arising from a student's disability or illness.

C. Special Considerations

1. Registration Requirements

Students on approved leaves of absence are not registered at the University and, therefore, do not have the rights and privileges of registered students. Upon the conclusion of an approved leave of absence, a student may register without applying for readmission to the University. Students must be registered during a semester in which they fulfill a University or departmental degree requirement, such as taking qualifying exams or submitting a dissertation/thesis. In addition, students must also be registered in order to be eligible for any form of University financial aid (e.g. a teaching or research assistantship) and to be certified as full-time students.

2. Impact on Funding

When contemplating a leave of absence, graduate students are advised to consult the sources of their funding to determine whether a leave might involve a long-term financial loss. Because academic programs and

financial aid packages may be constructed and sequenced over a period of years, individual interruptions to the normal sequence of academic progress and scheduled employment may result in a loss of future funding and a slower time to completion of degree. In some programs, a leave of absence may mean that students may have to begin a new project upon return, with the likelihood that their research may take longer to complete. Whenever a leave of absence is being considered, a student should meet with the advisor to develop a plan for resumption of study and gain a clear understanding of future funding opportunities. Some outside funding agencies frown on interruptions to a degree program. Some only allow leaves for medical reasons or military service. Others require prior approval of the fellowship agency. Students with outstanding educational loans need to consider the effect of taking a leave of absence on their loan status. For some student loans, a grace period for repaying the loan begins once the student stops registering. If the leave period is longer than the grace period, then the student may have to begin repaying the loan while on a leave of absence. Prior to taking a leave, students should arrange to meet with a Student Financial Aid officer, and/or contact their lenders.

3. International Students

Non-immigrant F-1 and J-1 students and their dependents must maintain legal immigration status at all times. Students with F-1 or J-1 visas must be enrolled full-time every semester at the University while they remain in the United States. The only possible exception that might allow a student to remain in the United States while on an approved leave of absence might be a serious illness or medical condition. Students are advised to consult with the staff of the Office of International Educational Services for more information when considering a leave of absence.

4. Student Accounts

Students are advised to check with the Enrollment Management Office prior to taking an approved leave of absence in order to determine the status of their student accounts. Students are advised that accounts that are overdue will be subject to regular procedures in accordance with University guidelines, notwithstanding any approved leave of absence: specifically, late fees and finance charges will continue to accrue, students will be blocked from future registration upon their return, and accounts will be referred for collection, with the imposition of additional collection charges, for non-payment in accordance with regular timeframes.

5. University Housing and Other Resources

The University's general policy is that students must be registered to be eligible for University housing. For specific information about continued eligibility for University housing during an approved leave of absence, students are advised to contact the Department of Resident Life. Students who are on a leave of absence do not have a valid Howard University identification card and therefore are not entitled to use University resources, such as the libraries, shuttle buses, and other services covered by mandatory fees.

Section 4. Temporary Interruption of Student's Program for Other Reasons

Students who are readmitted to the Graduate School are subject to the rules and regulations in place at the time of readmission.