
Leave of Absence Program Checklist

Requesting a Leave of Absence

Students on a leave of absence suspend their active study for an entire term or more and do not make progress toward their degree during that time. Students request a leave of absence, which is granted by Rackham when the request is in accordance with the [Leave of Absence Policy](#). The student is not registered during the term of a leave of absence yet remains in compliance with the Continuous Enrollment Policy.

There may be [alternatives to a leave of absence](#) to discuss with the student that enable him or her to remain registered.

The leave of absence process is designed to protect the student's privacy. Forms requesting sensitive information are submitted directly to Rackham. Information shared with the graduate program is for academic planning purposes only.

If a student requests a leave of absence, he or she is not required to disclose any personal details related to the request to the graduate program community (faculty, staff, and students). It is the student's decision whether to disclose any details about the reason for a leave to the graduate program community.

Staff members in Rackham are available to provide information and guidance about the leave of absence process. They can help graduate program faculty and staff understand the process, requirements, and alternatives to a leave of absence. If you have questions, please contact Rackham's Leave of Absence Coordinator (rackham.loa@umich.edu or call 734.764.4400).

Program Checklist:

- Refer students with a University of Michigan issued F-1 or J-1 visa to an [International Center](#) Student/Scholar Advisor to discuss how immigration regulations will impact the proposed leave of absence. An advisor from the International Center must enter a recommendation in the [Leave of Absence online system](#).
- The graduate program chair or director talks with the graduate student to:
 - Discuss [alternatives to a leave of absence](#)
 - Determine the appropriate type of leave of absence
 - Review the [implications \(academic and financial\) of a leave of absence](#):
 - The student will receive a "W" for each course that is not officially dropped after the first three weeks of a full term (or the first two weeks of a half term).
 - A term withdrawal can have implications in multiple areas including: visa status, tuition payment, loans, fellowships, employment and benefits.
 - **Students who hold an appointment as a GSI, GSRA or a GSSA will be responsible for tuition assessments for the current term, as the tuition waiver associated with their appointment will be terminated upon their withdrawal.**
 - Discuss how courses will be noted on the transcript if the student begins a leave after the first day of the term. When a student drops a course after the drop/add deadline, it remains on the student's academic record as a "W"

- Involve the student's faculty advisor in the leave of absence discussion
- Discuss a [tentative re-entry plan](#), which should include:
 - The student's progress in the Ph.D. program
 - The student's expected return date and term
 - The deadline for the student to inform the program of the student's intent for the next semester
 - Funding arrangements upon return
 - Work load expectations upon return
 - Plans to complete work from previous terms (if applicable)¹
- The graduate program chair or director submits a recommendation in the [Leave of Absence online system](#)
- Keep the student on department and program email lists while he or she is on a leave of absence
- Contact the student prior to the expected date of return to active study to confirm the return, as well as to initiate program and student planning for return

Rackham Staff will:

- Provide support to the graduate student, faculty, and staff in the graduate program
- Help the student navigate University services and resources
- A Rackham dean or designee will review the leave of absence request forms and documentation and the graduate chair's recommendation
 - If the student is requesting a leave of absence for medical reasons, a University health professional will review the application and contact the student's licensed health professional
- Make and communicate decisions – the graduate student and program will receive an email confirming the decision once all materials and recommendations have been received
- Ensure privacy and security:
 - We care about the student's privacy. The information we collect about him or her is private. Only people who have both the need and the legal right may see the student's information. Unless the student gives us permission in writing, we will only disclose his or her information for purposes of treatment, payment, business operations, appointment reminders, public health and safety, and when we are required by law to do so.
 - The student's personal information will be safeguarded. We are required to protect his or her personal information against reasonable anticipated threats and hazards to the security or integrity of the information.

¹ Students may complete work from previous terms, but they are not permitted to make forward progress toward the degree while on a leave of absence.