

# LEAVE OF ABSENCE STATUS

## Graduate and Postdoctoral Leave of Absence Policy

A leave of absence may be granted for reasons such as:

- maternity or parenting
- personal or family health
- professional development (graduate students only)
- required military service (graduate students only)
- employment that precludes progress toward the degree (graduate students only)

A leave must be requested on a term by term basis and may be granted for a period of up to 52 weeks.

Students and postdocs must submit a request, by completing the appropriate web form, to their department along with supporting documentation justifying the leave. The department shall forward the request for approval to Enrolment Services, Management of Academic Records.

A status of "leave of absence" will display on the records of students and postdocs during the specified period of the authorized leave.

It remains the student's responsibility to verify their record; in particular, as it pertains to term and course registration to ensure that the accurate information is reflected.

During a **leave of absence for parental or familial reasons**, a student will **not** be eligible to take courses but he/she may request and expect guidance on thesis and research work. Students and postdocs will have free access to the University's academic facilities. Library services will continue to be available by registering at the Humanities and Social Sciences Library (McLennan-Redpath).

During a **leave of absence for personal health reasons**, a student will **not** be eligible to request guidance on thesis and research work or to take courses. Students and postdocs will not have access to the University's academic facilities but library services will normally continue to be available by registering at the Humanities and Social Sciences Library (McLennan-Redpath).

### NOTES:

- Requests for a leave of absence due to health, familial, or parental reasons must be supported by a medical certificate.
- Requests for a leave of absence due to professional development are for activities that preclude progress toward the degree.
- A request for leave without proper justification and supporting documents will **not** be considered.
- A request for retroactive leave of absence will **not** be considered.
- No tuition fees will be charged for the duration of the authorized leave.
- A Leave of Absence may have an impact on a student's fee status once they re-enroll after their approved leave. For more information, refer to the Break in Enrolment section on the Student Accounts webpage.

- Research supervisors are not obligated to remunerate students and postdocs on leave.
- In order to be covered by the graduate supplemental health insurance and/or international health insurance during a leave, The Post Graduate Student Society (PGSS) and/or International Student Services must be contacted to make arrangements. Additional student society fees must be paid in order to be considered as a member and to be eligible for the PGSS supplemental health and dental coverage and international health insurance plan, respectively.
- A postdoc requesting a personal health or parental leave will extend their five-year eligibility term for registration. If granted, the leave must not exceed an eligibility window of 10 years from the date the Ph.D. degree was awarded.
- If you have concerns about disclosing your medical condition, you may contact the Associate Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies for advice before submitting your request for leave.
- For a maternity or parental leave, the eligibility period of a maximum of 52 consecutive weeks is determined based on when the child is born; if the leave is interrupted for one or two terms, the eligibility period cannot be extended.

## Leave vs. Residency Requirements

A leave in a residency term may be requested; however, upon return and re-registration in the program, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the missing residency requirements are completed. A leave indicates a break in the program.

For more information on residency requirements refer to the Program Requirements page.

## Applying to Graduate Following a Leave

If on leave of absence during the Fall term, the student must register for an active term of study in the Winter term (at least) in order to apply for graduation.

If on leave of absence during the Winter and/or Summer terms, the student must register for an active term of study in the Fall term (at least) in order to apply for graduation.

## Funding Council Leave Policies for Graduate and Postdoctoral Fellowships

A summary table of various leave policies (paid or unpaid) for students and postdocs paid from the Federal and Quebec Councils through fellowships or research grants is available at [mcgill.ca/gps/funding/getting-paid](http://mcgill.ca/gps/funding/getting-paid); see information on the "Funding Council Leave Policies for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Fellows".

## Procedure for Requesting a Leave

To submit a request for leave to the department, the student or postdoc must:

- complete the *Request for a Leave* web form available at: [mcgill.ca/student-records/forms](http://mcgill.ca/student-records/forms); and
- submit the necessary supporting documents (e.g., a medical certificate, proof of employment, proof of mandatory military service) to the graduate department.

Once the department has received and reviewed the request and supporting documents, if the request is justified, a recommendation for

approval will be sent via email to Enrolment Services, Management of Academic Records.

The student or postdoc will be notified once their record has been updated to indicate the leave.

**NOTES:**

- A medical certificate must contain at least the following items:
  - the student or postdoc's name, as well as complete contact information for the physician;
  - a clear statement by the physician justifying the student or postdoc's inability to perform their academic duties, with start and end dates; and
  - if the request is submitted during a term for which the leave is requested, a clear explanation as to why the health condition(s) in question did not prevent the normal performance of academic duties at the beginning of the term.
- Requests without supporting documentation will **not** be considered.