

Clarifying grounds for granting “leaves of absence”

Background: Graduate Studies policy states: *“A student...may petition the Graduate Division through the department for a leave of absence during either the pre-or post-comprehensive period to pursue full-time professional activities related to the doctoral program and long-range professional goals. Leaves of absence also may be granted because of illness or other emergency...”*

The GSC discussed grounds for granting a leave of absence. The Office of Graduate Studies policy is permissive in the sense that leaves MAY be granted, but there is no requirement that they be. Nevertheless, having some reasonable basis for denying a leave seems prudent. The GSC advises departments and the Graduate Division that if conditions are such that a student’s completion of degree requirements would be impossible subsequent to the leave, granting a leave would be inappropriate—regardless of the reason for the requested leave. (effective date: June, 2011)

At any given time, a graduate student is categorized in one of 4 statuses: (a) regular enrollment, (b) leave of absence, (c) discontinued (voluntary resignation from the program—return from which requires reapplication), or (d) dismissed. If a student is not enrolled during one of the regular academic semesters, the department must determine whether the student’s status is (b) (c) or (d). Failure to make satisfactory academic progress may be grounds for placing the student in the dismissed status. A student’s taking a leave of absence (not enrolling) without the approval of the department may be understood as indicating the student’s discontinuance of her/his program of studies, but is a determination best made by the department in consultation with the student’s program advisor.