

## Graduate and Postdoc Leave of Absence Policy

*Revised – November 2012*

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 towards 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 his/her 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:

- All requests for a leave of absence due to health, familial or parental reasons must be accompanied by a medical certificate.

- 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.
- 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 insurance plans. For information about the PGSS supplemental health and dental coverage, click [here](#). For information about international health insurance, click [here](#).
- A postdoc requesting a personal health or parental leave will extend his/her five-year eligibility term for registration. If granted, the leave must not exceed an eligibility window of 10 years from the date the PhD degree was awarded.

#### **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 in the eCalendar at: <http://www.mcgill.ca/study>

#### **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: [www.mcgill.ca/gps/postdocs/becoming/leave](http://www.mcgill.ca/gps/postdocs/becoming/leave)

See "Information on the Funding Council Leave Policies for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Fellows".

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### Procedure:

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

- complete the *Leave of Absence Request web form* available at: [www.mcgill.ca/students/records/forms](http://www.mcgill.ca/students/records/forms),
- 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 to Enrolment Services, Management of Academic Records, via email.

The student or postdoc will be notified once his/her 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 his/her academic duties, with start and end dates;
  - if the request is submitted during a term for which the leave is requested, a clear explanation as to why the health conditions in question did not prevent the normal performance of academic duties at the beginning of the semester.
- Requests without supporting documentation will not be considered.