

Vacation and Other Leave for School of Medicine Graduate Students:

Vacation: Graduate trainees in all programs cannot take vacation leave while their registered didactic coursework is ongoing. Graduate trainees in all programs should discuss any anticipated vacation time with their course directors and instructors for non-didactic courses as well as advisors and program directors as soon as the vacation time is being considered. Approval for vacation time should be coordinated on a case by case basis with the students' course directors, instructors, program directors and advisors.

Religious observations: Graduate trainees should coordinate with course directors, instructors, advisors and program directors at the earliest possible date to plan time away from training for religious observations.

General considerations for Ph.D. students supported by graduate assistantships:

Students supported by assistantships (i.e. stipends) are expected to work full-time toward their degree. These students are eligible for 20 days paid leave per year in addition to leave associated with designated VCU holidays. Leave days can be used for any combination of vacation, religious observation, wellness and sick leave. Leave is not cumulative from one appointment year to the next. Work performed on site on VCU holidays may be added to paid leave by arrangement with a student's advisor or supervisor. All leave for vacation purposes and religious observation must be approved in advance by the advisor and (as appropriate) course directors and instructors. If the supported student is not a U.S. citizen, travel outside the U.S. must be approved by VCU Immigration Services before the travel occurs.

The definition of a 'year' in this context is left to the student and advisor to define given that (i) inopportune time away from the research environment would interfere with the overall productivity of a laboratory as well as a student's progress on their dissertation project and completion of their degree and (ii) a more formal definition of a year could undermine the important spirit of a student-advisor relationship.

Parental leave for Ph.D. students supported by graduate assistantships: Students supported by assistantships (i.e. stipends) are eligible for up to 60 calendar days of paid leave for the adoption or birth of each child within 12 months of when the adoption or birth occurs. Both parents are eligible for the parental leave (assuming both are graduate students covered by this policy). Supported graduate students may use up to 20 days paid leave time (described above) to cover additional leave for the birth or adoption of a child. Supported graduate students must provide advanced notification to the advisor, supervisor, program director and the fiscal administrator of the relevant unit at least six weeks in advance of the anticipated first day of leave.

Emergency Leave: The need for unexpected time away from training will be handled on a case-by-case basis with course directors, instructors, advisors and program directors. See the School of Medicine policy on leave of absences or the VCU Bulletin for more information regarding extended leave periods.

Approved by the School of Medicine Graduate Programs Committee: 2024.01; revised 2024.06