



Unpaid Leave Policy for Graduate Assistants
The University of Georgia
College of Family and Consumer Sciences
Effective December 1, 2012

Graduate Assistants in the College of Family and Consumer Sciences qualify for unpaid leave from assistantship duties for one or more of the following reasons:

- The employee's own [serious health condition](#), including an on-the-job injury or occupational disease covered by Worker's Compensation, which causes the employee to be unable to perform the functions of his or her job.
- The care of an immediate family member with a serious health condition.
- The pregnancy, birth, and care of a newborn child.
- The legal placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care.
- Elder care and other significant family and personal circumstances.
- A spouse, son, daughter, or parent being on active duty or having been notified of an impending call or order to active duty in the Armed Forces. Leave may be used for any "qualifying exigency" arising out of the service member's current tour of active duty or because the service member is notified of an impending call to duty in support of a contingency operation.

Departmental Conditions of Leave for Graduate Assistants

- Unpaid leave cannot exceed 12 weeks. During that time, the student is not on a graduate assistantship.
- The terms of the original assistantship contract will resume upon the return of the student to his/her normal duties following the approved leave period depending on available funding. Depending on the nature of the original assistantship duties, it may be necessary to assign another individual to those duties during the leave period. In that case, it may be necessary to reassign assistantship duties to the returning student at the end of the approved leave period. This will occur at the discretion of the Department Head.
- The student must request leave in writing to the Department Head. The signed request must include the specific reason for leave. An email note is not acceptable. For planned leave, students must make this request to the Department Head in writing prior to the end of the semester preceding the semester in which leave is requested.

- The leave request must also include a return to work (RTW) date. If the student does not return on the stated RTW date, the graduate assistantship appointment will be terminated.
- The Department Head, Department Graduate Coordinator, and the graduate student will meet to review the request. The Department Head will review and approve/deny (1) leave request and (2) the return to work date. Upon agreement of the terms of the request, the Department Head and the student will both sign and date the document.

An Important Note

- This policy outlined above pertains to paid graduate assistants only. Students who are enrolled in classes will need to contact their instructors to negotiate what, if any, accommodations can be made regarding missed classes and coursework during the leave period. These agreements must be determined prior to taking leave and the student and faculty member will put the agreement in writing. Taking an incomplete in a class should be carefully considered because accumulating these outstanding obligations often impede satisfactory progress toward degree completion.
- Graduate School policy on Leave of Absence <http://www.grad.uga.edu/academics/registration.html> provides a mechanism for students experiencing unusual circumstances. In such instances, the student should contact the department Graduate Coordinator, who will work with the Department Head and the Graduate School to address an unusual circumstance.
- Leave may affect your tuition waiver. A tuition waiver is granted only for students who are on at least .33 assistantship assignment, and taking at least 12 credit hours for the entire semester. For the waiver to stay in place the student must work the assistantship for at least 60% of the time during the semester. For example, for the fall semester 2012, 60% time can begin August 10 and go through October 25; or can begin during the semester, October 1 and continue through December 14. For the 2013 spring semester, the 60% time can begin January 4, and continue through March 21; or begin during the semester, February 25 and continue through May 10. Consequently taking leave before this 60% rule is met will void the tuition waiver.

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