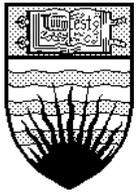


THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



SENATE POLICY:  
V-302.4

VANCOUVER SENATE  
c/o Enrolment Services  
2016 - 1874 East Mall  
Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6T 1Z1

**Number & Title**

V-302: *Graduate Student Leaves of Absence*

**Effective Date:**

1 December 2020

**Approval Date:**

18 November 2020

**Review Date:**

This policy shall be reviewed two (2) years after approval and thereafter as deemed necessary by the *responsible committee*.

**Responsible Committee:**

Vancouver Senate Academic Policy Committee

**Authority:**

*University Act, S. 37(1)*

*“The academic governance of the university is vested in the senate and it has the following powers:*

*...(p) to deal with all matters reported by the faculties, affecting their respective departments or divisions; ...”*  
*and,*

*S. 40*

*“A faculty has the following powers and duties:*

...(g) to deal with and, subject to an appeal to the senate, to decide on all applications and memorials by students and others in connection with their respective faculties;

(h) generally, to deal with all matters assigned to it by the board or the senate...”

### **Purpose and Goals:**

This policy provides a mechanism for graduate students to temporarily interrupt their *course of study* and remain registered in the program for reasons including: parental responsibilities; health reasons; professional and employment reasons; personal reasons; or, to pursue a second *course of study*. The goal is to support students as they balance their academic pursuits and the other demands of life, as well as to ensure consistency of approach.

### **Applicability:**

This policy applies to students currently registered in graduate programs at the University of British Columbia, including those administered by faculties other than the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

### **Exclusions:**

This policy does not apply to:

- 1) Students enrolled in the Pharm.D. program; and,
- 2) Students in undergraduate programs including the M.D., J.D. and D.M.D. programs. N.B. – Students in dual degree programs (e.g., M.D./Ph.D.) may be eligible, through discussion with both programs.

### **Definitions:**

For the purposes of this policy and in all other policies in which they are not otherwise defined:

- *Clinician* shall mean a physician, psychologist, or a registered clinical counselor.
- *Course of study* shall mean the academic program in which the student is registered.
- *Leave of Absence* shall mean a period of time during which a student has received permission to suspend his or her *course of study*.
- *On-leave* shall mean the registration status of students while on an approved *leave of absence*.

**Policy:**

- 1) A graduate student who finds it necessary for parental, health, personal, professional or academic reasons, as outlined later in this policy, to interrupt his or her studies may apply for a *leave of absence*. Responsibility for approving a *leave of absence* rests with the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies; or, in the case of programs not administered by the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, with their respective Deans.
- 2) A *leave of absence* will normally begin on the first day of September, January, or May.
- 3) *Leaves of absence* will be granted for periods of four (4), eight (8), or twelve (12) months.
- 4) The total duration of all *leaves of absence* granted in a graduate program is normally limited to 24 months for a doctoral student and to 12 months for a master's student, except for Leave to Pursue a Second Program of Study.
- 5) While on a *leave of absence*, graduate students are expected to not undertake any academic or research work related to the program for which they have taken a *leave of absence*. Access to the University's facilities and resources, including faculty supervision, while on a *leave of absence* may be limited. Consult the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies website for current information in that regard.
- 6) Graduate students must inform their program of their intent to return from a *leave of absence* prior to recommencing their studies.
- 7) Time spent on *leave of absence* is not counted as part of the allowed time to complete a degree.

***Awards and Fellowships for Students with On-Leave Status***

- 8) A graduate student granted a *leave of absence* retains the full value of any fellowship or other award for which the terms and conditions are established by the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies; award payments will be suspended at the onset of the *leave of absence* and will resume at the termination of the leave period, provided that the student returns to full-time study at that time.

- 9) Awards for which the terms and conditions are not established by the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies will be paid according to the terms and conditions established by the donor or granting agency.

### ***Categories of Leaves of Absence***

#### ***10) Parental Leave***

- a. A graduate student who is bearing a child or who has primary responsibility for the care of an infant or young child is eligible for parental leave. Appropriate supporting documentation may be required.
- b. Parental leave is normally limited to 12 months per childbirth or adoption (including multiples).
- c. Where possible, a student enrolled in coursework should coordinate his or her *leave of absence* to coincide with the first day of September, January, or May.

#### ***11) Leave for Health Reasons***

- a. A graduate student who encounters a health problem that significantly interferes with the ability to pursue his or her *course of study* is eligible for a leave for health reasons.
- b. Requests for a leave for health reasons must be accompanied by appropriate supporting documentation from the *clinician* providing primary care for the health problem.
- c. A leave for health reasons is normally limited to 12 months.
- d. Prior to being allowed to return to his or her studies, a student returning to study after a leave for health reasons may be required to produce specific documentation from his or her *clinician* confirming that he or she has recovered sufficiently to return from leave and resume his or her *course of study*.

#### ***12) Professional Leave***

- a. A graduate student who wishes to suspend his or her *course of study* in order to take a relevant work or professional development experience may be eligible for professional leave. Appropriate supporting documentation may be required.

- b. Professional leave is normally limited to 12 months.

13) *Personal Leave*

- a. A graduate student who encounters personal circumstances that significantly interfere with the ability to pursue his or her *course of study* may be eligible for personal leave.
- b. Requests for a leave for personal reasons must be accompanied by appropriate supporting documentation.
- c. Personal leave is normally limited to 12 months.

14) *Leave to Pursue a Second Program of Study*

- a. Following consultation with his or her program advisor and graduate supervisor, a graduate student may apply for a *leave of absence* from one program to pursue a second *course of study*.
- b. While on a leave to pursue a second *course of study*, the graduate student is responsible for any tuition or other fees associated with the second program.
- c. Leave to pursue a second *course of study* may exceed 12 months.

**Calendar Statement:**

As per the Applicability, Exclusions and Policy Sections above.

**Consultations**

The following groups have been consulted during the development of this policy:

Access & Diversity, Counseling Services, Enrolment Services, Faculties, Legal Counsel, Office of the Ombudsperson for Students, Office of the Vice-President, Academic

**History:**

The policy on graduate student On-Leave Status has been subject to amendments from time to time as exhibited in the archive of Academic Calendars. At the 11 September 1991 meeting of the Vancouver Senate parental leave was added as a special leave category for graduate students and regular leave for doctoral students was reduced from two years to one. The policy was again revised in 2012 to clarify the types of leave available and add information about the total duration of

leaves granted in a graduate program. At this point, it was also renamed “Graduate Student Leaves of Absence.” In 2015, the policy was revised in order to clarify the denial of access to University facilities and resources while on a leave of absence in order to be in line with current practice and intent. Notation was added to indicate that appropriate supporting documentation may be required for all types of leave. The definition of a professional leave was expanded and clarified. In 2019, the policy was revised to remove the reference to the requirement that graduate students pay a fee while on leave. In 2020, the policy was revised to remove a leftover reference to the on-leave fee.

### **Related Policies:**

Academic Concession

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,329,0,0>

Academic Leave

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,289,0,0>

Letter of Permission to Study at another Institution

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,47,0,0>

Graduate Student Parental Accommodation Policy

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=12,204,342,1510>

Senate Appeals on Academic Standing

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,53,0,0>

### **Appendix:**

There is no appendix to this policy.