

To Whom the Policy Applies

Doctoral students who have achieved candidacy, and thus have a continuous enrollment requirement during long (fall and spring) semesters, may take an approved Leave of Absence during graduate study under certain conditions and for certain periods of time. A Leave of Absence must be approved by both the student's graduate advisor and the dean of The Graduate College. A Leave of Absence cannot be approved retroactively for a previous semester and must be submitted no later than the 12th class day of the semester for which the leave is being requested.

Pre-candidacy doctoral students and master's students are not required to complete Leave of Absence paperwork if stopping out; however, it is recommended that they do so as the process provides a vehicle for more easily resuming their studies. Leave of Absence forms are located here (<https://www.gradcollege.txst.edu/forms.html>).

Purpose and Limitations

Students may need to discontinue their studies ("stop out") for a short period of time for reasons of personal or family exigency. Students who do not receive an approved Leave of Absence may be denied readmission to their program when attempting to reenter the program. Students who do not receive an approved Leave of Absence but are still readmitted may experience delays in registration and/or face additional fees. An approved Leave of Absence preserves the student's status in their degree program. Leaves of Absence may not be granted for the student to avoid exceeding the state doctoral hour limit, to avoid paying tuition, to avoid the regulation on continuous enrollment of doctoral students, or to avoid the full-time requirement for international students.

Access to University Resources During a Leave of Absence

Because the Leave of Absence is intended to be taken for reasons of personal or other exigency as opposed to degree progress, there is no support – whether faculty or university resources (library, office space, etc.) – provided to the student during the Leave of Absence period; students must register if making use of university resources or faculty time. A Leave of Absence does not extend a student's time-to-degree requirement. Discontinuing studies for a semester or more, with or without a Leave of Absence, may affect the student's eligibility for other university areas beyond The Graduate College's domain (such as financial aid, health insurance, etc.), and the student is responsible for consulting with those offices about the impact of not maintaining enrollment in the degree program.

Length Limitations of a Leave of Absence

A Leave of Absence can be granted for no more than three long semesters (fall and spring) total. The exact length of the Leave must be made explicit in the Leave of Absence request. A rationale for the Leave must be documented by the applicant.

Process for Requesting a Leave of Absence

Doctoral students who have advanced to candidacy must fill out the Doctoral Candidate Leave of Absence form (https://www.gradcollege.txst.edu/docs/Leave_of_Absence_Form_for_Doctoral_Degree_Candidates.pdf), which will require justification from the appropriate graduate advisor. The form

must be submitted to The Graduate College for the dean's review and approval.

Process for Returning to the University after an Approved Leave of Absence

Upon resuming graduate studies after a semester of non-enrollment, all students must submit reentry paperwork, regardless of whether or not an approved Leave of Absence form is on file. If the student is returning after an absence of one long semester, only the Update Enrollment form is required. If the student is returning to studies after an absence of more than one long semester it is necessary to reapply to the program.

Depending on the length of time the student is away from the university, a new graduate catalog and/or program degree requirements may be in effect. With an approved Leave of Absence, the student may opt to complete their degree under the previous degree requirements or the new requirements with the approval of the graduate advisor; if the student was away from the university for a semester or more without an approved Leave of Absence on file, the student must complete their degree under the new degree requirements.