

Medical Leave Instructions

A medical leave is intended for students to take time away from the Institute to focus on recovery from documented health conditions so that graduate studies can be resumed.

Students are responsible for obtaining signatures and recommendations prior to submitting the final petition for approval to the Graduate Studies Office. Electronic signatures or approvals by email are accepted.

Medical leaves are granted for a fixed duration from one term up to a maximum of one year. Initial leaves shorter than one year can be extended by filing a [Medical Leave Extension](#) petition. Extensions beyond one year total require documentation of exceptional circumstances.

Students must consult with Caltech's Student Wellness Services before submission of the petition and prior to return.

Prior to going on leave, students must discuss with their Option and Caltech faculty advisor the return plan and academic expectations upon return. This discussion should be summarized in an attachment to the leave petition. Depending on the student's situation, this discussion can address the following points:

- Schedule for remaining coursework
- Completion of candidacy
- Research milestones
- Meetings with advisor and thesis advisory committee

Medical Leave Process: Step-by Step

Step 1: Reach out to Caltech Student Wellness Services to schedule an appointment to discuss your medical leave. Please bring your medical leave petition form with you to this meeting.

Step 2: After obtaining a signature from Student Wellness Services, meet with your advisor to obtain their signature of approval for your leave. The meetings with the advisor and Option representative should include the return plan, which should be attached to the leave petition.

Step 3: Meet with your Option Representative to obtain their signature. The meetings with the advisor and Option representative should include the return plan, which should be attached to the leave petition.

Step 4: Email your completed petition form to the Graduate Office (gradofc@caltech.edu) for review. Note: Review and approval of petitions may take up to 2 weeks.

While on Medical Leave

We expect students on medical leave to continue to seek treatment and follow the recommendations of health care providers.

Graduate students on medical leave are eligible for coverage on Caltech's Health Care Benefit plan for up to one year. Students are responsible for enrolling in the plan, paying the student portion of the premium, and making copayments. If the medical leave continues for more than one year, Caltech will no longer subsidize the cost of the health care insurance.

Coursework not completed at the time of departure from Caltech will be recorded on the transcript as Withdrawn "W" if the leave began before Drop Day or as an Incomplete "I" or an Extension "E" if the leave begins after Drop Day. It is the student's responsibility to work with the instructor(s) of the course to make up any incompletes prior to Add Day of the term in which studies are resumed.

While on leave, students may not work on any academic projects or attend classes at Caltech. Students on leave are not permitted to access laboratory facilities within the effective dates of the leave. Similarly, while students on leave may attend activities that are open to the public, they are ineligible to continue using Caltech facilities, property or resources. In this regard, students must return their Caltech ID card and all keys to the Building Administrator. These items will be re-issued upon approved return.

Students on leave are not eligible to remain in Institute housing. It is the students' responsibility to notify the Housing Office of their plans, plan for the removal and shipping of personal belongings, and return any keys. To complete the check-out process, students must fully vacate the current housing assignment and submit the [Notice of Intent to Vacate](#). Please note that housing charges will be incurred until the last day of residence. Fees may be waived for students leaving housing early, or who need to break their housing contracts due to medical leave.

If an extension of leave or exemption from any of the above requirements is needed, a [petition](#) should be submitted 6 weeks prior to the end date. Medical leaves beyond one year are approved in exceptional circumstances and requires evidence that the student has been following a recommended course of treatment from health care providers. If the leave expires without an approved extension, the student will be separated from the Institute and must formally apply for reinstatement.

Return from Leave

Return from leave requires an approved [Return from Medical Leave](#) petition at least 6 weeks before the anticipated return date. It will be important to meet with the Assistant or Associate Graduate Dean to discuss progress and plans for returning from medical leave. The return is

subject to the final approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies in conjunction with the recommendation of Student Wellness Services.

Return from Leave: Step-by-step instructions

Step 1: Six weeks prior to your scheduled return date, email the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and your contact at Student Wellness Services to inform them of your intent to return or your intent to extend your leave.

Step 2: Meet with the Associate Dean to discuss your return.

Step 3: Meet with your contact at Student Wellness Services to discuss your return and obtain their signature on your petition.

Step 4: Meet with your advisor and your Option representative to obtain their signatures on your petition.

Step 5: Email your completed petition to the Graduate Studies Office (gradofc@caltech.edu) for review and approval. Note: This step may take up to two weeks.

International Students

International students must meet with International Student Programs (ISP) to discuss visa implications and obtain a signature acknowledging such prior to review and approval of the medical leave by the Graduate Dean. Please note that a signature from ISP does not constitute approval of the petition. ISP will not act on the petition until notification is received from the Graduate Studies Office, so please allow adequate time and plan accordingly.

Students with External Funding

Students holding an external fellowship (e.g., NSF) must check that their fellowship guidelines allow periods of non-enrollment before taking medical leave.

Questions

Please review the [Leave Policy](#) for graduate students or contact the [Graduate Studies Office](#).

CALTECH GRADUATE STUDIES OFFICE
M/C 230-87, Room 230 Center for Student Services, gradofc@caltech.edu

Medical Leave

Caltech UID:

Last Name:

First Name:

Option:

Year of Study (ex. G1):

Current Degree (MS, ENG, PhD):

Expected Completion Date (mm/yyyy):

Advisor:

Email:

Forwarding Address:

Do you hold a current visa (international student):

☐

Yes

☐

No

Are you funded by an external fellowship:

☐

Yes

☐

No

If yes, which one?

Effective date of the leave (mm/dd/yyyy):

NOTE: Please attach the return plan, which can be a brief, bulleted list.

Student Signature _____ Date:

Recommended ☐ Option Representative Signature _____ Date:

Recommended ☐ Advisor Signature _____ Date:

If there are academic concerns, the advisor should discuss the conditions of return with the Graduate Deans. The advisor should be aware of the proposed return date and be prepared to continue support for the student.

Recommended ☐ Student Wellness Services Signature _____ Date:

Information Only ISP Signature (International Students) _____ Date:

Approved. ☐ Dean of Graduate Studies Signature _____ Date:

Not Approved ☐