

LEAVE OF ABSENCE POLICY

UNIVERSITY DECISION

The Health Science Center recognizes that students may find it necessary to request a leave of absence. On the recommendation of the program director or school designee, the Dean's Office may grant up to a year leave of absence at any one time to students in good academic standing.

A Leave of Absence essentially creates a university placeholder which allows the student's matriculation record to remain active. It will not, however, afford an individual the status of an officially enrolled student. The breaks in enrollment which are formally recognized as leaves of absence fall into one of these categories:

- Leave of absence while in good standing;
- Involuntary Leave of Absence
- *In Absentia*

Upon return from a leave of absence, students must submit official transcripts from institutions they may have attended while on leave from the Health Science Center. Students who decide not to return to the university must formally withdraw from the institution. To do so, students should contact their respective Dean's Office prior to the end of the first week of the semester the withdrawal is to begin. At the time of withdrawal, students are advised of the conditions under which they might resume their studies in the university should they change their minds at a future date.

PERTINENT INFORMATION

In absentia status provides an opportunity for graduate students to engage in approved study in a location away from the University campus during the academic year while continuing to work under the guidance of the University.

Graduate students whose research or study requires them to remain outside the university for the duration of a full semester can take advantage of *in absentia* registration. The research or study must be directly related to the student's degree program and of a nature that makes it necessary to be completed outside of the university. This includes students holding a fellowship, internship, or having a graduate student researcher appointment.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Leave of Absence

Students who must interrupt the regular academic program may be granted a one-year leave of absence. The leave of absence is approved by the Dean's Office. While the student is on leave of absence, the student will not have student status which may affect student loan deferment and access to campus facilities and services.

In Absentia

- **Graduate and Professional students:** *In absentia* status is a type of registration that allows the students to maintain student status at the university while completing research elsewhere. *In Absentia* may also allow students who have completed all requirements for graduation

to enroll for purposes of a degree conferral. Registration *In Absentia* is designated as a zero credit hour and the student is assessed a fee.

- **Undergraduates:** *In absentia* may only be considered for undergraduate students on a case by case basis.

UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES

Leave of Absence While in Good Academic Standing

Students in good academic standing will normally receive permission to take a Leave of Absence for up to one academic year.

Involuntary Leave of Absence

A student who fails to register for two or more consecutive semesters and does not elect to take a leave of absence or to enroll *In Absentia* will be considered for dismissal from the program.

Students may be dismissed, suspended, dropped from the academic rosters, and refused readmission at any time if circumstances of a legal, moral, health, social, or academic nature are considered to justify such action.

In addition to dismissal due to academic deficiencies, questions of scholastic dishonesty and other infractions of the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Regents of the University of Texas System or the procedures and regulations governing Student Conduct and Discipline of the Health Science Center may be grounds for dismissal. Taking a leave of absence without permission, failing to return at the appointed time from a leave of absence, and failure to pay tuition and fees may lead to a student's termination.

Eligibility Criteria for Enrollment *In Absentia*

The Graduate Dean is responsible for determining that following criteria has been met:

1. Research or coursework must be directly related to the student's degree program as evidenced by faculty approval.
2. Research or coursework must be of a nature that makes it necessary to be completed outside of the university for the full academic semester.
3. Doctoral students must be advanced to candidacy by the time the *in absentia* status would begin.
4. Master's and graduate professional students must have completed at least one year of coursework by the time the *in absentia* status would begin.

Applying for Readmission

Students who have exceeded the one year approved leave will be involuntarily withdrawn. Students who have been withdrawn from the university are required to re-apply for admission with the burden of proof for eligibility resting on the student. He or she will be competing for admission against:

1. Students who have formally applied and been granted a bona fide leave of absence by the respective school prior to their absence; and/or
2. All new applicants for admission.

Terms and Conditions of *In Absentia* Registration

- **Financial Support:** Students enrolled *in absentia* are not eligible for university fellowship support, university research grants, and financial aid.
- **Academic Appointments and Employment at Health Science Center:** While enrolled *in absentia*, students are not eligible to hold apprentice or other student appointment titles.
- **Graduate Student Researcher Employment:** While enrolled *in absentia*, students are not eligible to hold a Graduate Student Researcher appointment.
- **Health Insurance:** While enrolled *in absentia*, students are not covered by student health insurance through the institution.
- **Library Privileges:** Students enrolled *in absentia* maintain borrowing privileges at the Library.
- **International Students:** International students are required to secure OIS approval to enroll *in absentia*.