

From Office of the Provost:

The University's leave policy is stated in [Regulations Governing Graduate Study at the University of Pittsburgh](#) under *General Regulations, Statute of Limitations*. It applies to all graduate and professional students at Pitt and states:

"Under special conditions, graduate students may be granted one leave of absence. A maximum leave of two years may be granted to doctoral students or one year to master's students. The length and rationale for the leave of absence must be stated in advance, recommended to the dean by the department, and approved by the dean. If approved, the time of the leave shall not count against the total time allowed for the degree being sought by the student. Readmission following an approved leave of absence is a formality. "

The question of insurance coverage for a medical leave is in [Teaching Assistants, Teaching Fellows, and Graduate Student Assistants \(TA/TF/GSA\) Academic Regulations](#) under Accommodations. It is flexible by design since each illness or physical incapacitation is different:

"In the event a TA, TF or GSA needs an adjustment to the expectations of their appointment due to a serious illness or physical incapacitation, the TA, TF or GSA involved should receive their stipend and tuition for a length of time to be determined by the dean's office." Also note as stated in these regulations under Health Insurance Coverage, TAs, TFs and GSAs receive individual health insurance at no cost during the terms of their graduate appointment.

From Philippa Carter, DSAS Director of Academic Affairs/Ombudsperson

Approved leave of absence: requires a signed approval as noted above. During the leave of absence, because they are no longer registered students, they will not have access to University resources and benefits. This means that once on leave, they will not continue to receive university paid health insurance, but will have the option to continue the same health insurance through COBRA (though it would be at a slightly higher rate). The other option would be to find other health insurance coverage. Once a student is no longer registered, they should receive an email notification that the email system no longer recognizes their Pitt email address as primary. To continue to use and access that email a request must be processed by their department to have the account switched to a sponsored account. The Department Graduate Administrator can assist with this. Once re-registered as a student the account will automatically switch back to a primary account.

Upon completion of leave, unless returning within two terms, the student must reapply for readmission to the University of Pittsburgh. However, readmission is guaranteed if returning within the approved period of leave, and no application fee is charged. In addition, the statute of limitations is extended for the approved length of the leave. An approved leave of absence does not guarantee funding. Departments do honor the guaranteed years of funding to students who return from a leave of absence. Departments will generally give students on leave a date by which they must indicate they are returning so that they can plan accordingly for funding. It's important to reach out to the department Director of Graduate Studies and Graduate Administrator at this point. If a student does not return at the end of an approved leave, then their readmission is not guaranteed and is subject to approval from the department.

