

Continuous Registration Policy

All graduate students must maintain continuous registration each fall and spring semester from the time of first enrollment until the degree is awarded. A student who fails to maintain this registration continuity and who has not requested and received a leave of absence (Form xxx) will be notified by the Graduate School after the first day of classes in the semester that (s)he is first missing that (s)he must register for the current semester or risk termination from the Graduate School. The student's graduate program director will be likewise informed. If the student does not register, (s)he will be dismissed from the Graduate School at the end of the semester for failure to comply with the continuous registration requirement.

Leave of Absence

In recognition of the effects that life circumstances (e.g., childbirth, military service, illness, care for infirmed family members, etc.) may have on the time and energy that graduate students have to devote to their educational programs, UALR allows students in such circumstances to apply for a leave of absence of up to two semesters (not including summer) during which time they do not intend to make academic progress toward the completion of their degree. During this time, the student will not be using UALR resources in pursuit of his/her degree. The time taken on an approved leave of absence is not included in the time limitations for degree completion. Stated differently, approved leaves stop the student's *time-to-degree clock*.

Application for a leave of absence may be made on a one- or two-semester basis. A leave of absence ordinarily will not be granted for more than one academic year. Leaves requested for a longer period are approved only in exceptional circumstances. An approved leave for one semester will be extended to two semesters as needed, if so requested by the applicant prior to the expiration of the approved one-semester leave of absence.

A leave of absence for legitimate reasons normally must be requested and approved prior to the beginning of the academic term for which it is being requested. Graduate School Form XXX must be completed and should provide a detailed explanation of the circumstances leading to the request and a justification of the time requested (one semester or one year). The request must be approved by the student's faculty advisor and graduate program director prior to submission to the Graduate School. The faculty advisor, graduate program director, and/or Graduate School may request relevant documentation (e.g., doctor's statement, military documentation, etc.).

Note to students - Issues to be considered prior to taking a leave of absence

Registration Requirements. Students on approved leaves of absence are not registered at UALR and therefore, do not have all of the rights and privileges of registered students. Students must be registered during a semester in which they fulfill a University or departmental degree

requirement, such as taking a comprehensive examination or submitting a dissertation/thesis. In addition, students must also be registered in order to be eligible for any form of University financial aid (e.g., a teaching or research assistantship) and to be certified as full-time students.

Impact on Funding. When contemplating a leave of absence, graduate students are advised to consult with the sources of their funding to determine if and to what degree a leave might involve a long-term financial loss. Because academic programs and financial aid packages may be constructed and sequenced over a period of years, individual interruptions to the normal sequence of academic progress and scheduled employment may result in a loss of future funding and a slower time to completion of degree. In some programs, a leave of absence may mean that students may have to join a new project upon return, with the likelihood that their research may take longer to complete. Whenever a leave of absence is being considered, a student should meet with the advisor to develop a plan for resumption of study and gain a clear understanding of future funding opportunities. Some outside funding agencies frown upon interruptions to a degree program. Some only allow leaves for medical reasons or military service. Others require prior approval of the funding agency.

Students with outstanding educational loans need to consider the effect of taking a leave of absence on their loan status. For some student loans, a grace period for repaying the loan begins once the student stops registering. If the leave period is longer than the grace period, then the student may have to begin repaying the loan while on a leave of absence. Prior to taking a leave, students should arrange to meet with a Student Financial Aid officer, and/or contact their lenders.

International students. Non-immigrant F-1 and J-1 students and their dependents must maintain legal immigration status at all times. Students with F-1 or J-1 visas must be enrolled full-time every semester at UALR while they remain in the U.S. The only possible exception that might allow a student to remain in the U.S. while on an approved leave of absence might be a serious illness or medical condition. Students are advised to consult with the staff of the Office of International Services for more information when considering a leave of absence.

Student Accounts. Students are advised to check with the Office of Student Accounts prior to taking an approved leave of absence in order to determine the status of their student accounts and the impacts of a leave of absence on these accounts.

Degree Status Terminated

Students who do not formally withdraw and do not register for course credits, research/thesis, or continuous registration by the appropriate registration deadline, or do not return from an approved leave of absence, will be dismissed from the Graduate School. Graduate students and their graduate program directors are notified by the Graduate School when this administrative

action is taken. Graduate students are required to apply for reinstatement or readmission if they subsequently desire to resume their academic program.

Reinstatement

Students who have their degree status discontinued for failing to maintain continuous enrollment may petition the Graduate School for reinstatement as long as the semester that the degree status was discontinued has not ended. Such a petition will be honored contingent upon payment of an application fee, plus current semester charges and any late fees that may have accrued. If the semester in which the student's degree status was discontinued has ended, the student must then petition the Graduate School for readmission. Both forms can be found on the Graduate School's forms page at <http://www.xxxxxxxx>.

Readmission

Students who withdrew or who had their degree status discontinued and subsequently desire to resume their academic program are required to apply for readmission. Readmission forms are available at www.xxxxxxxx. Students who are applying for readmission are required to pay an application fee plus, if readmitted, any accumulated continuous registration fees for the period during which they have been inactive. Students are not guaranteed readmission and may be evaluated in competition with current applicants to the program. The time during which the student had withdrawn from UALR will count toward time to degree.