

Subject: **Leaves of Absence**

Applies to: Regular Full-Time and Regular Part-Time Staff and Faculty

Individuals represented by collective bargaining agreements receive benefits in accordance with those agreements.

I. Policy: The University of Rochester provides two types of Leaves of Absence for staff members.

A. Short-Term Leave of Absence

May be granted by departments for **up to 30 work days' unpaid leave** (not to exceed six weeks) in a calendar year for reasons such as family illness or urgent personal business.

B. University Leave of Absence

May provide staff with **up to 12 months' unpaid leave** for reasons such as education, dependent or elder care, or community service.

II. Guidelines:

A. Short-Term Leave of Absence

1. Regular full-time and part-time staff **may** be granted **one** Short-Term Leave **for up to 30 work days** (not to exceed six weeks) **in a calendar year** at the discretion of the department head for such reasons as non-FMLA family illness or urgent personal business when the staff member has insufficient PTO, if applicable, and vacation accruals and without the leave, the individual may have to resign.
2. During this leave the staff member is required to use PTO, if applicable, and vacation accruals which will be paid during regular pay period cycles until exhausted.
3. Short-Term Leaves of Absence should be approved by the staff member's department head.
4. Benefits will continue subject to any payroll deductions. When PTO, if applicable, and vacation accruals have been exhausted, benefit premiums will go into arrears. Upon your return to work, the benefit premiums will be deducted from your paycheck.

B. University Leave of Absence

1. Regular full-time and part-time staff who have completed at least two years of University service **may** be granted a University Leave for up to 12 months (1) for personal reasons such as education, dependent or elder care or community service, (2) as a reasonable accommodation for a qualified individual with a disability who is unable to return to work at expiration of short-term disability and who is ineligible for long-term disability, and (3) other exceptional circumstances as mutually agreed between the University and the employee.
2. University Leave of Absence **for up to 12 months** is granted when it is mutually beneficial to the staff member and the department and, therefore, is not granted automatically. In approving such a Leave, the department commits to retain a vacancy **in that position or a comparable position** for which the staff member is qualified unless otherwise mutually agreed between the University and the employee. The staff member must be informed of that commitment, and must give assurances of returning to active work **in that position or a comparable position** upon expiration of the Leave.
3. During this leave payout of PTO, if applicable, and vacation accruals will occur within the on cycle pay period following the date the request was processed by Leave Administration.
4. The University Leave of Absence must be requested by the staff member, approved by the staff member's department head, dean, director or vice-president (this includes verifying that the employee meets the eligibility requirements for a leave), and submitted to Leave Administration for processing.
5. A staff member taking a University Leave of Absence must complete two years of continuous active University Service before becoming eligible to be granted another University Leave of Absence.
6. Benefits during University Leave of Absence:
 - a. Medical and/or Dental Plan coverage will be continued unless the staff member signs a form canceling this coverage. Staff members who do not cancel this insurance will be billed for their normal share of the premium.
 - b. FSA participation stops as of the effective date of the unpaid leave. Upon return from a Leave, staff members may enroll in an FSA within 30 days.
 - c. University-paid Basic Term Life and University-paid Basic AD&D insurance will be continued. Group Universal Life (GUL)/Group Optional Term Life (GOTL) and Dependent Term Life insurance with

Securian Life also will be continued unless the faculty or staff member cancels the coverage by written consent. Faculty and staff members who do not cancel their GUL/GOTL or Dependent Term Life insurance will be billed by Securian Life and will need to pay their normal premiums.

- d. Vacation, holidays and sick leave do not accrue. Upon return from a Leave, vacation and sick leave accruals will begin again based on the staff member's service date. Service time continues to accrue during each type of Leave.
- e. An individual who becomes disabled within four weeks of the effective date of the Leave may qualify for statutory sick pay benefits during the period of the disability.
- f. Full and Limited Long-Term Disability (LTD) Insurance is suspended during a Leave unless an individual is on Leave for full-time study for an advanced degree or active work in education or research. Staff members on Leaves for these purposes who choose to continue LTD Insurance will be billed for their normal share of the premium.
- g. University contributions to the Retirement Program are suspended. In addition, any voluntary contributions would be suspended during a Leave since contributions to these portions of the University Retirement Program can only be made through salary reduction.
- h. Tuition benefits for a staff member are suspended. Tuition benefits for a spouse are suspended. Tuition benefits for dependent children are not interrupted.

C. General Conditions:

- 1. In no case shall time off from work due to a Leave of Absence exceed 12 months.
- 2. A Leave may **not** be granted for the primary purpose of enabling a staff member to maintain employment outside of the University.
- 3. Extension of Leave: Leaves granted for less than 12 months may be extended, if requested prior to expiration, for a total absence of up to 12 months.
- 4. If during a University Leave, a department cannot hold a position for the staff member; the department must discuss this with the Office of Human Resources before notifying the staff member.
- 5. Work at the University while on Leave: A staff member on Leave may work on a Time-As-Reported (TAR) basis at the University without interruption of benefits as outlined above.

6. Staff members on Leave are subject to employment action which would normally have taken place during the course of the Leave (e.g., layoff, termination for misconduct or cause, termination of grant funding, etc.).
7. A staff member's failure to return from a Leave will result in termination of employment except where additional leave has been granted as a reasonable accommodation for a qualified individual with a disability and it is not an undue hardship to continue to hold the individual's position.

III. Procedures:

A. Short-Term Leave of Absence

1. The staff member must submit a written request to the department head for a short-term excused absence without pay including specific dates of the expected absence. The department head will confirm in writing to the staff member the exact dates the staff member is excused, defining how much of the leave time will be covered by PTO, if applicable, or vacation accruals and how much is excused time without pay.
2. For hourly paid staff no paperwork is needed. The department would simply not report hours during the approved departmental leave.

For salaried paid staff, a Personnel Action Form (PAF) is necessary to ensure pay is turned off during the approved departmental leave. On the PAF note the effective date of the leave as the first day out. Note the end date of the leave under "Planned exit/end date". The end date is the last day of the leave. The form must be submitted prior to the Time & Labor approval date to ensure that the pay has been turned off.

3. All **PTO, if applicable, and vacation** accruals will be paid out during regular pay period cycles until exhausted.

B. University Leave of Absence

1. A staff member must submit a [Request for Leave of Absence](#) form to the immediate supervisor no less than thirty (30) days prior to the beginning date of the Leave. However, in the case of an emergency, this time period may be waived.
2. The supervisor and department head or appropriate dean, director or vice-president concerned will evaluate the request. If approved, the department will send the "Request for Leave of Absence" form to Leave Administration for review and processing.

3. If approved, Leave Administration will notify the staff member and department in writing and place the staff member on Leave in HRMS. A Personal Action Form (PAF) is not required.
 4. When a Leave of Absence is granted, the staff member should contact the Benefits Office to discuss benefits coverage. Any coverage for which the staff member retains eligibility and is enrolled in will be continued unless the individual signs a form canceling their coverage. The staff member will be required to pay his/her normal share of the premiums.
 5. During this leave payout of **PTO, if applicable, and vacation** accruals (up to the maximum allowance) will occur within the on cycle pay period following the date the request was processed by Leave Administration.
 6. The staff member should contact the supervisor or department head two weeks prior to the specified date of return to confirm arrangements for return to active status.
 7. Upon return from leave, the staff member's department must submit a [Return from Leave of Absence](#) form to Leave Administration in order to return the employee to active status.
- C. In order to extend a Leave beyond its original term, but not to exceed a total absence of 12 months, a staff member must complete a new request form. The staff member's department is responsible for advising the staff member, in writing, of any changes in the terms of the Leave of Absence including the approval of extensions.
- D. Unapproved Leaves: A staff member who requests a Leave of Absence and whose request is denied may elect to resign; however, if the staff member is rehired, he/she may have service time reinstated if criteria as set forth in [Policy #134](#) (Reinstatement of Previous Service Time When Rehired) are met.

The University reserves the right to modify, amend, or terminate any or all of the benefit plans at any time, including actions that may affect coverage, cost-sharing, or covered benefits. A paper copy of this information is available for free from Leave Administration.