

Subject: **Leaves of Absence**

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

Leaves of Absence for individuals represented by a collective bargaining unit will be granted in accordance with those agreements.

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

- The first, a **University Leave of Absence**, may provide staff with **up to 12 months' unpaid leave**.

During this leave PTO, if applicable, and vacation accruals will be paid out on the staff member's last payday following the effective date of the Leave (including Leaves that convert to a University Leave of Absence).

- Under the second provision, a **Short-Term Leave of Absence** may be granted by departments for **up to 30 work days' unpaid leave** in a calendar year.

During this leave the staff member is required to use PTO, if applicable, and vacation accruals which will be paid out during regular pay period cycles during short-term leave or until exhausted.

- **In no case shall total time off from work exceed 12 months.**

A Leave of Absence, which is defined as an excused absence, may be granted to staff under the following circumstances:

- A. **University Leave of Absence for up to 12 months** for reasons such as education, dependent or elder care or community service;
- B. **Short-Term Leave of Absence for up to 30 work days** (not to exceed six weeks) for such reasons as family illness or urgent personal business.

The Leave of Absence must be requested by the staff member, approved by the staff member's department head (this includes verifying that the employee meets the eligibility requirements for a leave), dean, director or vice-president and the Leave Administration division of the Office of Human Resources. (Short-Term Leaves of Absence need only be approved by the staff member's department head and need not be sent to Human Resources.)

In recommending a University Leave of Absence, the department must retain the **staff member's position or a comparable position**. Similarly, the staff member must give assurance of returning to active work upon expiration of the Leave.

II. Guidelines:

- A. **University Leave of Absence for up to 12 months:** 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 for personal reasons such as education, dependent or elder care or community service.

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. 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.

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.

- B. **Short-Term Leave of Absence for up to 30 work days:** 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.

C. General Conditions:

1. A Leave may **not** be granted for the primary purpose of enabling a staff member to maintain employment elsewhere.
2. 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.
3. Benefits during Paid Portion of Leave: For regular full-time and regular part-time staff and faculty, during a paid portion of a Leave under the short term leave, benefits will continue subject to any payroll deductions.
4. Benefits during Unpaid Portion of Leave: An unpaid Leave will have the following effect on an individual's benefits:
 - a. University-paid single or family Dental Assistance premiums will be continued.

- b. Medical Plan coverage will be continued unless the staff member signs a form canceling this coverage. Staff members who do not cancel this insurance during a Leave will be billed for their normal share of the premium.
- c. Medical/Dental Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs) through the University of Rochester Plan may be continued. Staff members on Leaves who choose to continue Medical/Dental FSAs will be billed for their premiums on an after-tax basis. Since Dependent Care FSAs are established to allow the employee to work, they will be suspended during a Leave.
- d. 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 during a Leave will be billed by Securian Life and will need to pay their normal premiums.
- e. Vacation, holidays and sick leave do not accrue during a University Leave of Absence. 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.
- f. 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.
- g. 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.
- h. University contributions to the Retirement Program are suspended during a Leave. 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.
- i. Tuition benefits for a staff member are suspended. Tuition benefits for a spouse are suspended. Tuition benefits for dependent children are not interrupted.

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.

D. Return from Leave

1. A staff member returning from a **University Leave of Absence** is assured of returning to the **same or a comparable position**.
2. 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.

A staff member's failure to return from a Leave will result in termination of employment.

3. 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 on the River Campus or in the Medical before notifying the staff member.
4. Staff members on Leave are subject to employment activity which would normally have taken place during the course of the Leave.

III. Procedures:

- A. A staff member must submit a "Request for Leave" 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.
 1. In the case of a Short-Term Leave **for up to 30 work days** (not to exceed six weeks), the staff member must submit a written request to the department head for 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.
- B. Following a disability absence under the Sick Leave Plan for Short-Term Disability, a staff member who wishes to take additional time off must request a Leave for which the staff member is eligible.
- C. 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" form to the Leave Administration division, Office of Human Resources for review and signature. (Short-Term Leaves of Absence need only be approved by the staff member's department head.)

