O'Neill School PhD Student Leave of Absence Guide

This guide explains how PhD students in the O'Neill School can request a leave of absence or modify their academic and Student Academic Appointee (SAA) responsibilities when medical, personal, family, or other significant circumstances affect their ability to make academic progress or fulfill work responsibilities.

Option 1: Full Leave

Pause Academic Progress and Student Academic Appointee (SAA) Responsibilities

A Full Leave is appropriate when you are unable to continue both your academic program and your Student Academic Appointee (SAA) responsibilities for three weeks or longer.

Step 1: Determine Your Eligibility

You may qualify for a Full Leave if you are unable to perform essential academic and/or work responsibilities because of circumstances such as:

- Physical or mental health conditions
- Disability-related needs
- Bereavement or family emergencies
- Financial or housing instability
- Safety-related concerns
- Immigration or visa-related issues
- Other significant personal hardship

Step 2: Consult the Appropriate Offices

Before submitting your request, you are encouraged to discuss your situation with:

- Your faculty advisor
- The O'Neill Graduate Office
- Student Care and Resource Center (if appropriate)

International students: Contact the **Office of International Services (OIS)** before submitting your request to discuss any visa implications.

Step 3: Complete the Graduate Student Leave of Absence Form

Step 4: Submit Required Documentation

- Medical leave requests require medical documentation submitted confidentially to the O'Neill Human Resources Department.
- Other requests may require supporting documentation, depending on the circumstances.

Step 5: Department and School Review - Your leave request will be reviewed and approved by your department and the O'Neill School.

Step 6: Human Resources Processing - If approved, the O'Neill Human Resources Department will initiate the required eDoc to process your leave.

What Happens During a Full Leave?

- Academic progress is paused.
- Teaching, research, and other SAA duties stop.
- Health insurance eligibility may be affected. See SAA Leave of Absence Insurance Information.
- Financial aid may be affected.
- International students should work with OIS regarding visa requirements.

Option 2: Partial Leave

Continue Coursework with Reduced Academic and Work Responsibilities

A Partial Leave allows you to remain enrolled while reducing both your coursework and your Student Academic Appointee responsibilities.

Step 1: Determine Your Eligibility - You may request a Partial Leave if personal or medical circumstances require a reduced academic and work schedule.

Step 2: Consult the Appropriate Offices

Discuss your situation with:

- Your faculty advisor
- Your department
- The O'Neill Graduate Office

International students: Contact the Office of International Services (OIS) before requesting a reduced course load or modified appointment.

Step 3: Submit a Modified Leave Request - Submit a modified leave request through your department explaining the adjustments you are requesting.

Step 4: Provide Supporting Documentation - Supporting documentation may be required depending on the reason for your request.

Step 5: Obtain Required Approvals - Your advisor and department must approve both your reduced coursework and your modified Student Academic Appointee workload.

Workload adjustments must comply with VPFAA guidelines for Student Academic Appointees.

What Happens During a Partial Leave?

- You remain enrolled.
- You continue making academic progress.
- Your coursework and work hours are reduced.
- Financial aid may be affected.
- Health insurance eligibility may change depending on your enrollment and appointment.

- International students should verify any visa implications with OIS.

Option 3: Academic Continuation Only

Continue Coursework While Taking Leave from Student Academic Appointee Duties

This option is appropriate if you are able to continue your academic program but are temporarily unable to fulfill your Student Academic Appointee responsibilities.

Step 1: Determine Your Eligibility - You may request this option if you can continue making academic progress but cannot perform your SAA responsibilities.

Step 2: Consult the Appropriate Offices

Before submitting your request, speak with:

- Your faculty advisor
- The O'Neill Graduate Office

International students: Contact the **Office of International Services (OIS)** before requesting this leave.

Step 3: Complete the Graduate Student Leave of Absence Form - Submit the official Graduate Student Leave of Absence Form.

Step 4: Submit Documentation - Medical documentation is required if your request is based on a medical condition.

Step 5: Department and School Review - Your request must be reviewed and approved by your department and the O'Neill School.

Step 6: Human Resources Processing - The O'Neill Human Resources Department will initiate the eDoc to remove your Student Academic Appointee responsibilities.
What Happens During Academic Continuation Only?

- You continue coursework.
- Your SAA duties are suspended.
- Financial aid funding may be reduced or discontinued.
- Health insurance eligibility may change.
- International students should consult OIS regarding visa implications.

Returning from Leave

When you are ready to return:

1. Contact your faculty advisor.
2. Notify your department.
3. Coordinate with the O'Neill Graduate Office regarding enrollment and academic progress.
4. If applicable, coordinate with O'Neill Human Resources to resume your Student Academic Appointee responsibilities.

Documentation confirming your readiness to resume academic and/or work responsibilities may be required before returning.

Additional Considerations

All leave requests:

- Require approval by both the department and the O'Neill School.
- May affect financial aid.
- May affect health insurance eligibility.
- May affect time to degree.
- May affect visa status for international students.

Additional Resources

- Indiana University Graduate School
- O'Neill Graduate Office
- O'Neill Human Resources
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Office of International Services
- Office of Civil Rights and Compliance
- VPFAA Information for Graduate Student Appointments
- Student Care Resource Center

Disclaimer: SAA's that select Option 2 or Option 3 (Partial Leave or Academic Continuation Only) are NOT eligible for health insurance benefits through the university. If you have questions, contact O'Neill HR.