

**Graduate Student Leaves: Policies and Practices**  
UCLA Linguistics Department  
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**0. INTRODUCTION**

The goal of this document is to help you determine whether you are eligible to take a leave, and if so, what sort of leave you should take. Depending on the type of leave, it is governed by University policy or departmental practice. Where University policy is concerned, more details are to be found [here](#), in the UCLA/UAW contract document titled "Article 17: Leaves". The acronym "ASE" stands for "Academic Student Employee," and applies only to TAs, not Graduate Student Researchers (in our department, this includes all first-year PhD students).

You should consider taking a leave if you anticipate needing to miss more than a week of coursework and/or instruction. Students who miss coursework or employment expectations without taking an official leave run the risk of failing those courses and having their employment terminated.

A student's Academic Leave of Absence (pertaining to their coursework and/or research) must be applied for independently of their Payroll Leave of Absence (pertaining to their employment).

**1. ACADEMIC LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

**Short-term ( $\leq 4$  weeks) Academic LOA.** Pending approval from the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and their individual instructors, a student can take a department-internal Academic Leave for up to four weeks without academic penalty. This means that a student can in principle work with the DGS and their instructors to come up with ways to make up the course requirements for those four weeks, usually by taking an Incomplete for the course. Other options include dropping the class(es) or modifying the student's enrollment in the class.

**Long-term ( $> 4$  weeks) Academic LOA.** If a student needs to take more than four weeks' leave, they must work with the Graduate Student Affairs Officer (GSAO) to complete the university's Academic LOA Form. This must happen as soon as the student decides to take a long-term LOA. The Academic LOA Form will un-enroll the TA from their classes that quarter. If the department has paid the TA's fees for that quarter, the student will be billed for them (prorated to the date that the Academic LOA form was submitted). While Academic LOAs do not interrupt the TA's time-to-degree calculation for the University's purposes, the department tends to take these things into account when determining conformity to internal deadlines (i.e. the DYF application requirement).

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The following sections are addressed to graduate students of different employment statuses:

2. Graduate students employed as TAs or Graduate Student Instructors
3. Graduate students employed as an RA (including first-year PhD students)

**2. PAYROLL LEAVES OF ABSENCE: Teaching Assistants and Graduate Student Instructors**

Graduate student TAs are considered Academic Student Employees (ASEs) and are thus protected by the UAW contract. This means that the university provides paid leave of the following types:

- military leave for military obligations (Article A): "paid to the extent required by applicable law"
- pregnancy disability leave (Article B): six weeks paid leave and up to four months unpaid leave
- bereavement leave (Article E): up to three days paid bereavement
- jury duty leave (Article F): paid leave when summoned
- miscellaneous leave (Article G): granted with or without pay at the University's discretion
- medical or family-related leave (Articles C & D): up to four weeks of paid leave "due to the ASE's serious health condition... or to care for a family member of the ASE" or to bond with the ASE's newborn, adopted, or foster child

*These days of leave are calculated by business days, not by active working days. So even if an ASE is only actively working on Fridays (i.e. only teaching Friday sections), they will still receive e.g. three business days of paid bereavement, not three active working days, amounting to three weeks' pay.*

**Short-term ( $\leq 4$  weeks) Payroll LOA.** Pending approval from the DGS, school-year TAs may be granted up to four weeks' paid Payroll Leave, as determined by the allowances above. This means that the ASE will continue to get compensated for the course of their paid leave; the department will find and fund a temporary replacement for the ASE's teaching duties; and the ASE will remain officially in charge of the sections or course (for the purposes of evaluations, etc.). To take a short-term TA Payroll LOA, the ASE must have a discussion with the DGS and get prior approval (based on the criteria outlined in Article 17). The department will also likely request that the ASE grant access to their course material and help with any administrative forms.

**Long-term ( $> 4$  weeks) Payroll LOA.** If a graduate student TA needs to take more than four weeks' leave (assuming this is more than their UAW-approved leave), they must work with the Graduate Student Affairs Officer (GSAO) to complete the university's Payroll Leave of Absence form. The Payroll LOA Form will terminate the TA from their appointment. Termination of this appointment means the student will stop receiving a payroll salary from the department for the applicable quarter, minus the paid leave guaranteed to them in the UAW contract. The department will find and fund a replacement for them.

*The department considers these leaves to be two independent options, so will not fund short-term paid leave for students who (also) end up taking long-term leave.*

**Summer ASEs:** If a summer TA or graduate student instructor needs to take a leave of absence of any length, the department will find and fund a replacement for them, and will request that the ASE grant access to their course material. The graduate student must work with the DGS and the Graduate Student Affairs Officer to complete the proper paperwork.

The salary for summer TAs or graduate student instructors comes from two sources: a base salary from the University, and a supplemental stipend from the department itself. The ratio is currently roughly two-thirds base salary and one-thirds supplemental stipend.

The base salary is calculated under the terms of the UAW contract, so a summer ASE who takes leave will be paid for the work they've completed plus the additional days' leave the contract entitles them to. In some cases, depending on timing, this might mean that they are paid their full salary and then later billed for a portion of it from the university.

The stipend is determined by the department. The department will pay 50% of the stipend to summer ASEs who have taught 1-2 of the session weeks and 100% of the stipend to summer ASEs who have taught 3-6 of the session weeks. In some cases, depending on timing, this might mean that they are paid their full stipend and then later billed for a portion of it from the department.

### **3. PAYROLL LEAVES OF ABSENCE FOR GSRs**

GSRs, or RAs (which in our department include all first-year PhD students) are not protected as Academic Student Employees under the UAW contract. This means that the terms of a GSR's employment and salary need to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis with the DGS (for first-years) or a combination of the DGS and the GSR's faculty supervisor (for other GSRs). Ideally, in the case of non-first-year GSRs, these negotiations would result in the negotiation of some way the GSR can complete at least some portion of the expected work on an extended timetable. But, especially in cases of long-term leave, it could also result in the proportional reduction of a GSR's stipend.