WITHDRAWALS AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Withdrawal from a Course
A graduate student who desires to withdraw from a course may do so, with the approval of the student’s advisor or department head, during the period allowed for dropping a class. It is the student’s responsibility to review the UA Academic Calendar for the specific date by which one may drop a course.

No notation of courses attempted will be made on the permanent record of a student who withdraws from the university by the last day to add classes in a particular semester. After that, the withdrawal from a course will be noted on the student’s permanent record. It is the student’s responsibility to consult the Academic Calendar for the specific date by which one may withdraw without receiving a grade notation. From the end of that period until the end of the tenth week of a regular semester or the equivalent in a five-week summer session or three-week Interim session, a student may withdraw from a course, and a grade of "W" will be assigned. Graduate students are not permitted to drop a course after the tenth week.

In extraordinary circumstances beyond the student’s control, a student may petition the department chair to drop a course after the tenth week of class. If the department chair agrees that there are extraordinary circumstances and supports the petition, it is forwarded to the college dean. If the college dean supports the petition, it is sent to the Graduate School for approval. After the tenth week, the student’s academic status at the time of the withdrawal will be noted on the record ("W" for courses passing, "F" for courses failing).

Withdrawal from a course may affect several elements linked to registration and class loads, including (but not limited to) graduate fellowships, assistantships, tuition awards, financial aid, withholding taxes, etc. Before dropping a course, the student should contact all aspects of enrollment that may be affected.

Withdrawal from All Courses (Withdrawal from the University)
A graduate student may withdraw from the university (i.e., withdraw from all courses in the semester), either for non-medical or medical reasons, as long as this is done prior to the last day of classes. The first thing a student considering withdrawal should do is to consult with his or her academic advisor.

It is the student’s responsibility to initiate a withdrawal through myBama and provide the information necessary to complete the withdrawal process. Academic Bankruptcy (described in the Undergraduate Catalog) is not available to graduate students.

Withdrawal from the university requires approval from the Office of the University Registrar (206 Student Services Center) and dean of the Graduate School.

Please visit this page for more information about the financial effects of withdrawing, including information on how federal financial aid, loans, and scholarships may be affected.

Leave of Absence
Under compelling circumstances beyond the student’s control, a graduate student may request that the department petition the Graduate School with the rationale for granting a leave of absence. If granted by the Graduate School, a leave of absence will cover one or more upcoming semesters rather than any prior semester(s). A leave of absence is not a method of avoiding continuous registration requirements, and it does not lengthen the time limit. When a student returns from a leave of absence, the Graduate School must be notified and will work with the department and student to determine the number of semesters remaining on the time limit and the degree requirements that remain.

Continuous Doctoral Enrollment Leave
A Leave of Absence is a temporary cessation of study for one or more semesters.

Semesters of non-registration do not lengthen the time limit for the degree program and are not a method of avoiding the dissertation research (699) continuous enrollment requirement.

Although no formal Leave of Absence is required for students in the coursework phase of their degree programs, it is recommended that the student confers with their advisor and/or departmental Director of Graduate Studies. It is also recommended that the student confers with any other relevant offices (e.g. Financial Aid, Health Insurance, Graduate Assistantship, VISA) regarding the impact of a Leave of Absence on their financial, academic, work-related, and personal circumstances.

Please note that if a student fails to register for three years, the student will need to re-apply to the program, and previous coursework may be out of date.

Exceptions to the continuous doctoral enrollment requirement will only be considered in the case of substantial limitations relating to a disability. The exceptions may only be granted through a review and recommendation by the Office of Disability Services (ODS). If granted, the Office of Disability Services will send the recommendation to the Graduate School Registrar, Department Chair, Graduate Program Director, and student’s dissertation chair. All information provided to the Office of Disability Services will remain confidential between the student and that office.

Students requesting a Leave of Absence from the continuous doctoral enrollment requirement should understand that:

• Since currency in the field is essential at the doctoral level, a doctoral Leave of Absence does not extend the total number of years allowed for completion of a doctoral degree.

• Students on a doctoral leave of absence do not have access to university resources that are limited to enrolled students, such as library resources, laboratory access, or other physical or electronic types of access.

• Students on a doctoral leave of absence may not seek research guidance from UA faculty during the Leave of Absence. This includes the submission of manuscript drafts or conversations about the future direction of the doctoral research. Students should stay in contact with their dissertation chair about the timing of their projected return to 699 enrollment, and once they are again enrolled in at least three credit hours of 699, they will be able to resume progress on their doctoral research and will again work under the direction of their dissertation chair.

• For students on a doctoral leave of absence, it is neither advisable nor appropriate to continue to gather data, write drafts, or otherwise try to move the dissertation project toward completion, since any
such work might have to be redone upon re-initiating the official advising relationship.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE PETITION PROCESS:

1. The student confers with their dissertation chair, Graduate Program Director, and Department Chair about the intent to request a Leave of Absence and discuss any ramifications for degree completion.
2. The student confers with other relevant offices (e.g. Financial Aid, Graduate Assistant employment) regarding the impact of a Leave of Absence on financial, academic, work-related, and personal circumstances.
3. The student initiates a Dissertation Research (699) Leave of Absence petition with the Office of Disability Services (ODS).
4. ODS reviews the petition and makes a recommendation to approve or deny. ODS will forward the recommendation to the student, the Graduate School Registrar, and the Associate Dean for Graduate Academic Affairs.
5. If ODS makes a recommendation to approve the petition, the Graduate School Leave of Absence Form must be completed. Formal approval from the student’s dissertation chair, Graduate Program Director, and Department Chair is required at this time. This form will be initiated by the Graduate School Registrar.

RETURNING FROM A LEAVE OF ABSENCE - When a student returns from a leave of absence, the student will notify the department. In turn, the department will notify the Graduate School so matriculation can be reactivated.

Military Leave

A student who has been admitted to or enrolled in The University of Alabama Graduate School may ask for military leave to fulfill a U.S. military obligation. The student should notify the dean of the Graduate School of a call to military service and provide documentation. Upon return from military service, the student also should notify the dean of the Graduate School of the intent to return to graduate school and provide documentation of honorable discharge.

A student called to active military duty, unless dishonorably discharged, and eligible for readmission as defined by law, will receive an extension of the degree time limit equal to the term of eligible service, with a cap on the number of years in the extension. The extension is subject to the 5-year limit as applicable to readmission provisions in the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 (Section 484C of the HEA) and implementing regulations in 34 CFR Section 668.18.