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Deans and Department Chairs

Revising UCLA’s Leave of Absence (LOA) Policy

The current University of California Fee Policy for Graduate Student on In Absentia Registration became effective in Fall 2009. Under this policy, students who have advanced to candidacy or who study or conduct research outside of California can register in absentia and pay only 15% of the tuition and student services fees. In absentia status has significant benefits that do not apply when a student takes a leave of absence (LOA) and pays no tuition or fees:

- The University receives state support for students registered in absentia
- Students have unrestricted access to university resources (library, mentoring, etc.)
- Students maintain their UCLA insurance coverage
- Continuous enrollment leads to shorter time-to-degree
- Students can receive merit and need-based financial support (fellowships, GSRs)
- The duration can be up to two years

The University of California also has a long-standing policy on continuous registration, as stated in Standards and Procedures. To enforce this policy, the 2009 in absentia policy required UC campuses to eliminate the provision for research leaves that were being granted to some doctoral students. UCLA did not do this in 2009 and must do so now.

The Graduate Division revised its leave of absence policy both to be in compliance with the in absentia policy, and to better align with the other UC campuses. Under the new policy, effective Fall 2012, graduate students may take LOAs for up to three quarters for medical reasons, to care for family members or cope with emergencies, to comply with military orders to take outside (non-UC) employment. LOAs will no longer be granted to students who plan to use the time to carry out research within California, prepare for exams, or write their dissertations or theses. Please see http://ucla.in/I3WtrA for charts comparing 1) current and new LOA policies with changes highlighted in yellow, and 2) LOA, in absentia and withdrawal status.

The new LOA policy will bring UCLA into compliance with Standards and Procedures and the UC in absentia policy.

With best regards,

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