

## **School of Medicine Guidelines for Full time Employment as a Graduate Assistant**

Graduate students pursuing the doctoral degree in the basic science departments are typically paid as full time Graduate Research Assistants (GRAs) through IPIBS fellowships, research grants, or other fellowship support. They receive benefits and are treated by the University as non-hourly (exempt) employees while maintaining full time status as students. These guidelines clarify what is expected in terms of attendance and time away from the university.

### *Types of Absences:*

**Sick Days:** Unplanned typically short term absence. Students should communicate with the lab supervisor or course directors as appropriate in the first two years of the program to meet all responsibilities. The number of sick days available is up to the discretion of the supervisor or Director of Graduate Studies.

**Vacation:** Should be planned in advance with the supervisor, or in the first year of the program with the Director of Graduate Studies, and limited to 10 business days per year as directed by guidelines from SIGS.

**University holidays:** Typically 13 per year, including breaks. Students should discuss taking time off with the lab supervisor after the first year, and not assume that absence (during Spring break for example) is acceptable.

**Family Leave:** Either parent is eligible for paid leave of 6 weeks after the birth or adoption of a child. Time in excess of 6 weeks must be approved by the supervisor or Director of Graduate Studies, and will be counted as sick leave or vacation. Further details are provided in the IPIBS student handbook.

**University related travel:** Typically this is to attend a scientific conference or other meeting relevant to the training of the student. The meeting dates should correspond closely with the planned absence, and excess time will be counted as vacation. The laboratory supervisor or Director of Graduate Studies should be notified of the dates during which the student will be away. **Please note** that all international travel requires additional authorization by Dr. Russell Salter and pre-approval by the Provost before purchasing tickets or making reservations for travel. As of April 1, 2017, travel insurance must also be purchased for any international travel for university business.

**Personal travel to country of origin by international students:** The Director of Graduate Studies should be notified of plans for any such trips even if personal in nature. Due to the unpredictable nature of visa renewals, such trips often extend beyond the time period originally planned. The student should discuss with the lab supervisor when he/she is scheduled to return. If the student is unable to return on that date and must extend the absence, personal vacation days should be used. Salary support may be stopped if the student is unable to return after using all available vacation time. \*

**Extended medical or personal leave:** The University recognizes that students may need to interrupt their studies for medical or personal reasons. The student must apply for such leave by submitting the request on a variance request form to the Unit Dean, Dr. Russell Salter, as per SIGS guidelines. Both pay and student registration is suspended during this time, and students may not be enrolled in classes. Further details are described in the Graduate Catalog on the SIGS website.

*\*Please refer to the International Center for specific concerns regarding international travel- <http://louisville.edu/internationalcenter>*