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MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION	Senate	DATE	June 15 2015
FROM	Peter Liljedahl, Acting Dean of Graduate Studies	No.	GS2015.19
RE:	GGR 1.4.3 Continuity of Enrolment GGR 1.8.4 Application to go on Leave GGR 1.8.5 Extended Leave of Absence		

At its meeting of June 8, 2015, SGSC reviewed and approved revisions to GGR 1.4.3 (Continuity of Enrolment), GGR 1.8.4 (Application to go on Leave) and GGR 1.8.5 (Extended Leave of Absence). These items are submitted together because the changes to continuity of enrolment should be considered in light of the changes to the leave of absence policy and the creation of the extended leave of absence policy. This gives rise to the following motions, effective **Spring 2016**:

Motion 1

That Senate approve the revisions to GGR 1.4.3 (Continuity of Enrolment)

Motion 2

That Senate approve the revisions to GGR 1.8.4 (Application to go on Leave)

Motion 3

That Senate approve the revisions to GGR 1.8.5 (Extended Leave of Absence)



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MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION SGSC Members
FROM Peter Liljedahl, Acting Dean of
Graduate Studies
RE: GGR 1.4.3 Continuity of Enrolment
GGR 1.8.4 Application to go on Leave
GGR 1.8.5 Extended Leave of Absence

DATE May 21, 2015
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Motion 1

That SGSC approve the revisions to GGR 1.4.3 (Continuity of Enrolment)

Motion 2

That SGSC approve the revisions to GGR 1.8.4 (Application to go on Leave)

Motion 3

That SGSC approve the revisions to GGR 1.8.5 (Extended Leave of Absence)

These items are submitted together because the changes to continuity of enrolment should be considered in light of the changes to the leave of absence policy and the creation of the extended leave of absence policy.

These graduate general regulations are being addressed to deal with inequities across programs/students, to clarify expectations for enrolment, to clarify and align leave of absence policies that are informed by circumstances beyond the control of the student, to make it easier for students and program administrators to understand both expectations for enrolment and the nature and types of leaves allowed, and the consequences of different types of leaves in terms of their program of study. These proposed changes have been informed by reviewing the practices across institutions and adjusting our policies to address problematic issues facing students, administrators and the institution in a fair and balanced way.

Revisions and Rationale

GGR 1.4.3 Continuity of Enrolment

The current regulation requires students in a per term fee program to be enrolled every term in courses, or on leave, until all the requirements for their degree have been fulfilled. This requirement does not apply to students in a per unit fee program which means those students also don't have the option of going on a leave of absence. This regulation has been revised so that all graduate students, whether in a term fee or unit fee program, are required to maintain continuous enrolment unless a leave of absence has been granted. A new leave of absence category titled "personal leave" is also being proposed which will give

all students the flexibility to take a leave when necessary. Students participating in an internship (or Co-op) that is required for their program will be able to maintain continuous enrolment because they should be registered in an internship (or Co-op) course during the term they are away.

The rationale for this revision is as follows:

- to be fair to all students by making the continuity of enrolment requirement the same for all students rather than having a different requirement for students who are charged tuition per unit than those who are charged tuition per term; there shouldn't be different requirements based on how the tuition fees are charged
- to give students in a per unit fee program the option of going on a leave of absence for extenuating circumstances which means the term will not count towards their time limit
- to allow programs to better manage their enrolment by knowing the status and intentions of their students; with the current practice of per unit fee students only needing to enrol in one out of three terms it's difficult to know if a student is planning on returning to their program or not until the third term of non-enrolment
- to be able to confirm whether the status of an international student is enrolled, on leave, or withdrawn every term for the purpose of reporting to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC); this report is a new requirement by CIC
- to be consistent since many cohort-based per unit fee programs expect students to maintain continuous enrolment
- to be aligned with other institutions where continuous enrolment for graduate students is required (i.e. UBC, UVIC, U of Calgary, U of Toronto, Waterloo)

Proposed revisions to GGR 1.4.3

FROM	TO:
1.4.3 Continuity of Enrolment Students in per term fee programs are required to enrol in every term until all requirements for the degree have been fulfilled. This includes students enrolled on leave. A student who does not enrol is considered to have withdrawn from the University. (See 1.8.4 Application to go on Leave for regulations on student leave.) Students in per unit fee programs enrol only in those terms in which they are taking courses or working on other requirements, such as a project or field exam. A student in a per unit fee program who does not enrol in at least one of three consecutive terms is considered to have withdrawn from the University. Enrolment in an undergraduate course or audit course only does not satisfy the requirement for continuity of enrolment.	<u>1.4.3 Continuity of Enrolment</u> <u>All graduate students are required to maintain continuous enrolment unless they have been granted a leave of absence from their program (see 1.8.4). Enrolment in an audit course only does not satisfy the requirement for continuity of enrolment. When a student is not enrolled and is not on an approved leave of absence from their program, the student is considered to have withdrawn from the University. Graduate students who are withdrawn from the University do not retain their award or scholarship.</u>

GGR 1.8.4 Application to go on Leave

This graduate general regulation is being revised to address a number of administrative issues for both the program/academic unit and Graduate Studies, to broaden the categories of acceptable leave to reflect life circumstances and the Canada Immigration policy, and to align our policies with those of other institutions across Canada (see Comparison of Leave of Absence policies below). Although some institutions do not count a leave of absence towards the time limit, it was decided to continue counting the time on a personal leave because this is consistent with the current practice and there have been no issues.

Specifically, the revisions to GGR 1.8.4 are for the following reasons:

- to accommodate the change to 1.4.3 (continuous enrolment for all students)
- to clarify the reasons for a leave of absence for both students and staff
- to accommodate new regulations and a new category of leave (i.e. academic break) from CIC (Citizenship and Immigration Canada) regarding international students' eligibility for off campus work
- to clarify the registration status of students when on leave
- to remove the reference to an on leave fee (this is consistent with other institutions)
- add information regarding the effect on scholarships/awards

NOTE: It is expected that the changes to the continuity of enrolment and on leave policies will result in an increase to the number of leaves to be processed per term. There is a plan to develop an eform to help with processing time but in the meantime, if an academic unit has a large number of students that need to go on leave for a particular term, a process will be implemented to allow academic units to submit this information to the DGS office via a spreadsheet.

A leave of absence has been separated into four categories:

Category	Reason	Characteristics	Limit
Personal Leave	Any reason other than those defined below	- no fee - counts towards time limit - departmental approval - SFU scholarships/awards are interrupted during leave; duration of the award will not be changed	Maximum 3 terms
Parental	Childbirth or adoption	- no fee - doesn't count towards time limit - dean of graduate studies approval - requires supporting documentation	Maximum 3 terms for each childbirth or adoption (including twins, triplets, etc.)
Medical/Compassionate	Medical Bereavement Family care	- SFU scholarships/awards are interrupted during leave; duration of the award will not be changed	Normally a maximum of 3 terms per reason.
Academic Break (or scheduled break)	- Course availability (no courses offered for program within that term) - scheduled break within a program (i.e. summer term)	- no fee - doesn't count towards time limit - departmental approval - SFU scholarships/awards are interrupted during leave; duration of the award will not be changed - international students may be eligible to work full-time off campus	Maximum 1 term per year with no consecutive academic breaks. Students in a thesis program are not eligible for an academic break.

Comparison of Leave of Absence policies from other institutions

Institution	Category	Reason	Characteristics	Limit
UBC	Personal	Any reason	- approved by depart. and DGS office - doesn't count towards time limit - on-leave fee	One year
	Parental	Bearing a child or has primary responsibility for the care of an infant or young child		
	Medical	Medical – must include a medical note; exemptions from submission of a medical note are approved on a case by case basis		
	Concurrent	To pursue another program - student is responsible for both on-leave fees and tuition fees for second program		May exceed one year
UVIC	Personal	Any reason	- counts towards time limit - approved by supervisor - no tuition fees	Doctoral – 6 terms Master's – 3 terms One year Master's – 1 term (unless 2 approved by DGS office) Diploma – 2 terms Certificate – 1 term
	Parental	Bearing a child or has primary responsibility for the care of a child immediately prior to or following birth or an adoption.	- doesn't count towards time limit - approved by GS office - no tuition fees - request must include documentation (letter from student, letter from doctor, letter from supervisor/adviser)	One year (3 terms)
	Compassionate /Medical	Illness, victim of an accident, or suffered grave events	- student retains UVIC scholarships (reinstated with return)	No limit
U of Calgary	Leave of Absence	- bereavement - care-giving - medical - military service - parental	- doesn't count towards time limit - funding is cancelled - no mention of fees	Normally one year but may be renewed up to a maximum of 5 years

		- political - exceptional circumstances		
U of Saskatchewan	Leave of Absence	- compassionate - medical - maternity - adoption - parenting * Leaves are not available for personal reasons	- doesn't count towards time limit - funding is cancelled - no tuition fees - approved by Graduate Chair	One year - retroactive leaves or extension are approved by DGS office
U of Toronto	Leave of Absence	- serious health or personal problems - parental leave (for birth, adoption, caregiving within first year)	- doesn't count towards time limit - funding is cancelled - no fees - approved by GS office	Three sessions (when both parents are grad students the combine total of parental leave cannot exceed four)
U of Alberta	Leave of Absence	- parental or other documented compelling reason (i.e. serious illness)	- doesn't count towards time limit - no mention of fees - approved by GS office (detailed documentation required)	One year
U of Waterloo	Leave of Absence	- illness - maternity/parental - limited external research or work opportunity - financial difficulties	- approved by dept. - no mention of fees - no mention of time limit	Two terms (maternity up to three terms)

Summary of differences between institutions:

Leave not counting towards time limit	- 6 out 7 institutions don't count a leave of absence towards the time limit - UVIC counts a "Personal" leave towards the time limit but no other types of leaves
On-leave fee	- 4 do not have a fee; 3 don't mention fees - UBC charges a fee for any reason
Funding	- 3 state that all funding is cancelled; 4 don't make any reference to funding - UVIC students retain UVIC funding
Time limit	- for 5 institutions the time limit is generally one year (with some exceptions) - Waterloo is 2 terms (3 for maternity) - UVIC has a variety of limits based on the program
Types of leave	- 5 institutions have only one category of leaves (all treated the same) - UVIC has three categories; UBC has four categories
Personal leave (any reason)	- 5 institutions do not have a personal leave category - UBC and UVIC allow personal leave for any reason
Approval	- 3 mention Graduate Studies approval in all cases; 2 approved by dept.; 1 makes no mention of approval level

	- "Personal" leave at UVIC is approved at the departmental level; everything else by Graduate Studies
Extensions	- UVIC has no limit on the compassionate/medical leave - Calgary allows extensions for up to 5 years - Saskatchewan allows extensions - UBC allows extensions for concurrent leave - Toronto allows extension for parental leave - Waterloo allows extension for maternity leave

Proposed revisions to GGR 1.8.4

FROM

1.8.4 Application to go on Leave

In this section, exceptional circumstances for interrupting a student's graduate program normally means illness, accident, disability, pregnancy, or parenting responsibilities. Students in such circumstances are expected to present documentation for those reasons when applying to go on leave.

Students in per unit fee programs are not required to maintain continuous enrolment, and so are not eligible to enrol on leave. Students in per unit degree programs are required to register for courses in at least one term out of every three, and failure to do so will result in the student being considered to have withdrawn from the University (see 1.4.3 Continuity of Enrolment). If a student in a per unit fee program is unable to undertake course work in a term for exceptional circumstances, and by not registering in courses for that term, would be withdrawn automatically from the University, s/he should discuss the situation with the dean of graduate studies, who will advise on processes for readmission under such circumstances.

Students in per term fee programs are expected to maintain continuous enrolment (see 1.4.3). However, a student may apply to go on leave if both of the following conditions are satisfied.

- a) a situation arises which makes it necessary to interrupt the graduate program; and*
- b) no substantial use will be made of University facilities.*

Permission to enrol on leave must be approved by the student's senior supervisor and the chair of the student's graduate program committee. When the situation necessitating the interruption of the student's graduate program is due to exceptional circumstances, permission to enrol on leave will not normally be denied. Students who apply for a leave due to exceptional circumstances and have permission denied for that leave should apply to the dean of graduate studies for consideration of their application.

Students on leave are required to enrol during the normal enrolment period for each term by indicating on leave status when enrolling, and they will be assessed an on leave fee (see On Leave in the Graduate Fees section). This fee will be waived for students enrolled on leave due to exceptional circumstances.

Enrolling on leave may impact upon a student's ability to complete their degree within the maximum time allowed (see 1.12). For students in master's degree programs, no term or enrolment on leave will count toward the maximum 12 terms of enrolment allowed for the completion of their degree requirements.

Further to this, each term of on leave enrolment for exceptional circumstances will extend, by four months, the six calendar year period of time from the student's initial enrolment in their graduate program in which they must complete their degree requirements. Terms of enrolment on leave for other reasons will not extend that six calendar year period.

For students in doctoral programs (see 1.12.3), each term of on leave enrolment for exceptional circumstances will extend, by four months, the eight calendar year period of time from the student's initial enrolment in their graduate program in which they must complete their degree requirements. Terms of enrolment on leave for other reasons will not extend that eight calendar year period. Further, no term of on leave enrolment, regardless of the reasons for enrolment on leave, will count toward the minimum of five terms the student must spend enrolled in their program (see 1.7.3).

Students who wish to enrol on leave for more than three sequential terms must submit a written explanation for all subsequent on leave enrolments. Such applications require approval from the dean of graduate studies.

TO:

1.8.4 Leave of Absence

Graduate students are required to maintain continuous enrolment. When students find it necessary to interrupt their studies, they must apply for a leave of absence. During a leave of absence graduate students are not enrolled and normally should not use any of the University's facilities or resources, or undertake academic or research work related to the program from which they have taken a leave of absence. Typically a leave of absence begins on the first day of an academic term and approval for the leave is obtained before the term begins. Students in their first term should apply for an admission deferral rather than a leave of absence. A retroactive request for a leave of absence will not be allowed unless there are documented extenuating circumstances (see GGR 1.8.3).

Awards for which the terms and conditions are established by SFU will be interrupted at the onset of the leave of absence and will resume at the termination of the leave period, provided the student returns to full-time study at that time. The duration of the award will not be changed from the time the award was initiated. Awards for which the terms and conditions are not established by SFU will be paid according to the terms and conditions established by the donor or granting agency.

There are four types of leave:

1. Personal Leave
2. Parental Leave
3. Medical/Compassionate Leave
4. Academic Break

Personal Leave

A personal leave can be taken for any reason, other than those defined below, but the time taken will be counted towards the maximum time allowed for program completion. All program requirements, academic unit expectations, and deadlines will remain the same. Responsibility for approving a personal leave resides with the student's senior supervisor (or faculty advisor) and the chair of the student's

graduate program committee. The maximum number of terms that are permitted for a personal leave is three.

Parental Leave and Medical/Compassionate Leave

The time taken for a parental or medical/compassionate leave will *not* be counted towards the maximum time allowed for program completion. The maximum time limit will be adjusted accordingly but all other program requirements and academic unit expectations will remain the same. Students are required to submit supporting documentation. Responsibility for approving a parental or medical/compassionate leave (including family care) resides with the dean of graduate studies and should have the support of the student's senior supervisor (or faculty advisor) and the chair of the student's graduate program committee.

The maximum number of terms that are permitted for a parental leave is three for each childbirth or adoption (including twins, triplets, etc.). The maximum number of terms that are permitted for a medical/compassionate leave is normally three terms per reason. A student may apply for an extended leave of absence for a medical reason (see 1.8.5).

Before students return from a medical leave, documentation from their clinician may be requested to confirm that they have recovered sufficiently to return to their course of study. If medical documentation is submitted for reasons related to a physical or mental disability, the student has a legal entitlement to disability accommodation.

Academic Break

An academic break (or scheduled break) can be taken when no courses are offered for a student's program within a particular term, or there is a scheduled break within a program (i.e. summer term). Students in a thesis program are not eligible for an academic break. The time taken for an academic break will *not* be counted towards the maximum time allowed for degree completion. The maximum time limit will be adjusted accordingly but all other program requirements and academic unit expectations will remain the same. Responsibility for approving an academic break resides with the student's senior supervisor (or faculty advisor) and the chair of the student's graduate program committee. The maximum number of terms that are permitted for an academic break is one term per year with no consecutive academic breaks.

SUMMARY TABLE

Category	Reason	Characteristics	Limit
Personal Leave	Any reason other than those defined below	- no fee - counts towards time limit - departmental approval - SFU scholarships/awards are interrupted during leave; duration of the award will not be changed	Maximum 3 terms
Parental	Childbirth or adoption	- no fee - doesn't count towards time limit - dean of graduate studies approval - requires supporting documentation	Maximum 3 terms for each childbirth or adoption (including twins, triplets, etc.)
Medical/Compassionate	Medical Bereavement Family care	- SFU scholarships/awards are interrupted during leave; duration of the award will not be changed	Normally a maximum of 3 terms per reason.

Academic Break (or scheduled break)	- Course availability (no courses offered for program within that term) - scheduled break within a program (i.e. summer term)	- no fee - doesn't count towards time limit - departmental approval - SFU scholarships/awards are interrupted during leave; duration of the award will not be changed - international students may be eligible to work full-time off campus	Maximum 1 term per year with no consecutive academic breaks. Students in a thesis program are not eligible for an academic break.
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Proposed creation of GGR 1.8.5 Extended Leave of Absence

Rationale:

This new regulation was created to offer an extended leave option and to clarify what the process is for students who experience long term medical/health problems. Most other institutions do allow for extensions to a leave of absence.

1.8.5 Extended Leave of Absence

Graduate students may apply for an extended leave of absence, beyond the three term limit, for medical/health reasons. It is recommended that students discuss with their supervisor/faculty advisor whether it is in their best interest to temporarily discontinue their program and then apply for readmission when their circumstances have been resolved. Responsibility for approving an extension to a leave of absence rests with the dean of graduate studies and should have the support of the student's senior supervisor (or faculty advisor) and the chair of the student's graduate program committee.

Students completing the requirements for a master's program past the normal completion time, as the result of an extended leave, may be required to repeat courses or complete additional courses at the discretion of their graduate program committee. Responsibility for approving these additional degree requirements rests with the dean of graduate studies and the chair of the student's graduate program committee.

Students completing the requirements for a doctoral program past the normal completion time, as the result of an extended leave, may be required to repeat courses, complete additional courses, and/or repeat their comprehensive/candidacy examinations at the discretion of their graduate program committee. Responsibility for approving these additional degree requirements rests with the dean of graduate studies and the chair of the student's graduate program committee.