



**Category:** Graduate Medical Education  
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**Title:** Vacation & Leave of Absence Policy for **Graduate Medical Education**

**References:** UTRGV Handbook of Operating Procedures – <https://www.utrgv.edu/hop/handbook/index.htm>

I. **Purpose**

This policy outlines Residents' (where "Residents" refers to both residents and fellows participating in the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine [UTRGV SOM] Graduate Medical Education [GME] programs) eligibility towards time off, and provides an overview of UTRGV guidelines and procedures on paid leave and leave of absences, and to inform the effect any leave may have on the completion of the GME program and the impact of the leave on the learner's eligibility for board certification.

II. **Leave:**

Residents are responsible for taking the leave for which they are eligible. Leave requests should be submitted at least **60** days in advance (or sooner if specified by individual program policies), except when the leave request was unanticipated and involves matters other than leisure (i.e., family illness, bereavement, etc.).

The Resident must submit leave requests to their program leadership (as specified in program policies) explaining type of leave, dates, and other pertinent information. It is the Resident's responsibility to ensure all documentation is provided based on type of leave taken.

III. **Vacation:**

Residents are entitled to **15** days paid vacation leave per academic year, July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>. Vacation is not carried over from one academic year to the next. Unused vacation benefits will not be paid upon termination or end of appointment. Vacation is defined as occurring Monday through Friday during normal business hours. Scheduling time off for Saturdays, Sundays, and university holidays do not require use of vacation leave.

IV. **Paid Sick leave:**

Residents are entitled to up to **12** paid sick days per academic year. Paid sick leave is not carried over from one academic year to the next. Sick leave should be used to attend medical, mental health, and dental care appointments, and for illness of the Resident or the illness of a family member. Residents shall report sick leave to their program as soon as it is known that sick leave will be taken. The UTRGV sick leave policy must be followed:

<https://www.utrgv.edu/hop/policies/adm-04-603.pdf>

Information on use of short- and long-term disability benefits should be referred to the UTRGV Benefits Program. Unused sick leave will not be paid upon termination or end of appointment.

V. **Medical, Parental, and Caregiver Leave:**

Residents are entitled to up to **12** weeks of approved medical, parental, and caregiver leave(s) of absence for qualifying reasons (i.e., reasons that would typically qualify an employee for leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)) that are consistent with applicable laws at least once and at any time during an ACGME-accredited program, starting the day the resident is required to report. This entitlement for Residents differs from standard FMLA leave for non-Resident employees in that Residents are eligible to take this leave beginning with their first day of official employment as a Resident with UTRGV.

Residents are provided with 100% salary support for the first six (6) weeks of the first approved medical, parental, or caregiver leave(s) of absence taken, including (but not restricted to) any time taken as part of FMLA. Paid sick leave shall be used first, followed by vacation time, when taking medical, parental, and caregiver leave. After the first six (6) weeks, any remaining medical, parental, and caregiver leave will be unpaid. The UTRGV sick leave policy must be followed: <https://www.utrgv.edu/hop/policies/adm-04-603.pdf>

While Residents are on an approved medical, parental, or caregiver leave of absence, health and disability insurance benefits for Residents and their eligible dependents will continue.

When submitting a request for approval, Residents will follow the procedures as identified in the UTRGV family and medical leave policy: <https://www.utrgv.edu/hop/policies/adm-04-608.pdf> along with program policies.

VI. **Paid Time Off.** Residents will be ensured of receiving at least one week (5 business days) of paid time off after the first approved medical, parental, or caregiver leave of absence is taken. Such paid time off shall be in the form of available balances of vacation or sick leave, as appropriate. If insufficient leave balances are available, the resident shall be provided with sufficient paid time off to cover five business days.

VII. **Other Leave Types:**

As employees of UTRGV, Residents are entitled to other types of leave. In the event that other forms of leave are requested, relevant UTRGV policies must be followed.

- Emergency Leave - <https://www.utrgv.edu/hop/policies/adm-04-606.pdf>
- Jury Duty Leave - <https://www.utrgv.edu/hop/policies/adm-04-613.pdf>
- Military Leave - <https://www.utrgv.edu/hop/policies/adm-04-607.pdf>

VIII. **Effect of Leave of Absences on program completion and board eligibility:**

Residents should be aware that graduation from a GME program and Board eligibility depend on the completion of a specified amount of spent as a Resident. Each program must provide

information regarding the specific educational requirements for the program and the relevant specialty Board.

If cumulative absences for medical, parental, and caregiver leave to care for a seriously ill family member negatively impact the number of months of education for a Resident (with respect to the number of weeks or months required to satisfy the criteria for completion of the GME program), the Program Director must assess the Resident's ability to fulfill his/her educational obligations and may require additional time spent in the program.

Residents should be aware that any extended leave may require prolongation of the educational program as required by individual residency review committee (RRC) and/or specialty board certification requirements. Leave or vacation time may NOT be used to reduce the total amount of required time spent in a GME program or to make up deficiencies in their education, unless approved in writing by the GME office.