

Leave of Absence Guide

Who does this guide apply to?

The guidance on this webpage applies to Residents and Fellows represented by the RFPU-NW CBA in ACGME- and CODA-accredited program.

Non-ACGME Fellows, Clinician Researchers, and Acting Instructors should inquire with their department HR contact on how to apply for a leave of absence.

What is this guide about?

This guide details the 10 steps that trainees must complete in order to finalize their leave of absence.

Questions?

If you have any questions about this guide or the leave of absence steps, please don't hesitate to reach out to Bre Smith, HR Manager in GME at smitbre@uw.edu or 206-543-2109. Bre is available to meet trainees and programs via Zoom, phone, or answer questions over email.

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Step 1- Review what protected leaves of absence are available and how to qualify.

- [Protected Leaves of Absence Comparison](#)
- [FMLA and PFML Information Summary](#) for academic personnel

Family and Medical Leave Act

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a [federal law](#) that entitles eligible employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave with benefit continuation, for specified family and medical reasons.

Most trainees are eligible after 1 year of UW benefit eligible employment. For a list of qualifying events and eligibility requirements, visit the [UW HR FMLA webpage](#).

Wages paid via stipend do not contribute to FMLA or PFML eligibility, meaning stipend funded trainees may not be eligible for leave under FMLA or PFML. However, other leave types may be available and the grant may provide a funding source. Stipend funded trainees should consult with their program and GME

Washington Paid Family and Medical Leave

The Washington [Paid Family and Medical Leave](#) (PFML) program is a statewide program that provides job-protected paid family and medical leave to eligible employees. The program is administered by the Employment Security Department (ESD). Washington's Paid Family and Medical Leave program does not replace the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). In many cases, PFML and FMLA will run at the same time.

Most trainees that are new to WA state become eligible on Jan 1. For a list of qualifying events and eligibility requirements, visit the [UW HR PFML webpage](#).

Wages paid via stipend do not contribute to FMLA or PFML eligibility, meaning stipend funded trainees may not be eligible for leave under FMLA or PFML. However, other leave types may be available and the grant may provide a funding source. Stipend funded trainees should consult with their program and GME.

UW Parental Leave

The University provides up to four 4 months of unpaid job-protected parental leave for birthing, non-birthing, adoptive, and foster parents. UW Parental Leave is available from day one of employment. You may take parental leave even if you are not eligible for leave under FMLA. If you qualify for FMLA, your parental leave and FMLA will run at the same time. Parental leave may extend up to six (6) months, including time covered by the FMLA, during the first year after the child's birth or placement. UW Parental leave can also run concurrently with PFML.

All trainees are eligible for parental leave on their first day of employment. For more information, visit the [UW HR Parental Leave webpage](#).

Disability Leave

Disability leave is an unpaid leave of absence that may be granted to an employee who is unable to perform the essential functions of their position – with or without reasonable accommodation –

because of their own medical condition. Disability leave is not a type of accrued time off but rather an approved leave of absence provided as a disability accommodation. Some, or all, of your disability leave may be covered by FMLA.

Disability leave requests should be sent to and approved by the [Disability Services Office](#). For more information, contact dso@uw.edu or 206-543-6450.

Other Protected Leaves

For more information, eligibility requirements, and how to apply please visit the respective Academic HR webpages:

- [Domestic Violence Leave](#)
- [Military Duty Leave](#)

Step 2- Review which payment options are available to apply to your leave of absence.

All UW-approved leaves of absence are unpaid on the UW side. However, you have the option to use your available UW Paid Time Off and/or apply for Paid Family and Medical Leave through the state to receive payment during your leave that would otherwise be unpaid.

Please note: Since residents and fellows do not accrue paid time off, they do not qualify for the Parental Shared Leave program.

UW Paid Time Off

You can choose to apply available UW Paid Time Off (PTO) including sick, vacation, or paid personal holiday, to receive payment for those days during your leave. The paid time off categories are outlined in the CBA and GME Leave Policy.

- Paid Sick Time Off
 - Trainees receive 17 days of paid sick time off at the start of each 1 year appointment period.
 - Any unused sick days carryover to subsequent training years while the trainee is appointed to a UW GME training program or if appointed within 2 years of the end of a previous UW GME appointment.
- Paid Vacation Time Off
 - Trainees receive 20 weekdays and 8 weekend days of paid vacation at the start of each one 1 year appointment period.
 - Unused vacation time does not rollover to subsequent appointment periods.
- Paid Personal Holiday
 - Trainees are entitled to 1 paid personal holiday per calendar year.
 - Unused paid personal holidays do not rollover to subsequent calendar years (unless a holiday request was denied by the program and could not be rescheduled within that calendar year).

If you have questions or need assistance calculating a current UW PTO balance, please reach out to Bre Smith (smitbre@uw.edu).

For more details:

- [Resident & Fellow Physician Union – Northwest \(RFPU – NW\) Collective Bargaining Agreement \(CBA\)](#)
- [GME Leave Policy](#)
- [GME Leave Entry Guidelines](#)

Washington Paid Family and Medical Leave

You can apply to receive paid leave benefits through the Washington Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) webpage, managed by the WA State Employment Security Department (ESD). Qualified employees can receive up to 90% of their weekly pay– up to a weekly maximum of \$1,427 in 2023. The weekly PFML benefit payment amount is calculated by ESD, and they provide a [benefits calculator](#) on their website to estimate the amount you will receive.

Applying for PFML with ESD is a separate process from taking a leave of absence from the University. If you apply for PFML, you must also submit a Leave Request Form to UW HR (see Step 7).

- To apply for PFML: <https://paidleave.wa.gov/apply-now/>
- PFML Help Center: <https://paidleave.wa.gov/help-center/>
- PFML Help Line: (833) 717-2273
- PFML Benefit Guide: https://paidleave.wa.gov/app/uploads/2022/04/Benefit-Guide-V.13_FINAL-1.pdf

Important PFML reminders:

- Claims can take up to 2-3 weeks to process.
- A claim can be backdated up to 30 days from the day you file your application. If you want to backdate farther, you will need a good cause reason (ex: a serious health condition, a period of incapacity, or a natural disaster).
- A claim must be submitted to ESD each week that you are seeking payment during your leave.
- You are able to create your online PFML account prior to your qualifying leave event, but you are not able to submit your weekly PFML claim until the qualifying event has happened. For example, you can create your online PFML account before the birth of your child, but you cannot actually submit a weekly claim until after your child has been born.
- If you're taking medical leave to care for yourself or family leave to care for a family member, the first week of your approved leave is your waiting week. You will not be paid for it, but you still need to file a weekly claim. There is no waiting week for parental bonding leave, medical leave taken during the "postnatal period", and military exigency.
- An employee must work a minimum of 820 hours in WA state to become eligible to apply to receive payments from the Paid Family and Medical Leave program. Eligibility is determined on a quarterly basis. You become eligible to apply for payments after the quarter you became eligible in has closed. Most trainees that are new to WA State become eligible on January 1.

- Employer reported hours are not due until the end of the month following the closed quarter. This means it could be possible for you to receive a denial for a claim even though you are eligible. If this happens, submit a “Request for Review” or contact the state for assistance.
 - Q1: January – March (employer reported hours due April 30)
 - Q2: April – June (employer reported hours due July 31)
 - Q3: July – September (employer reported hours due October 31)
 - Q4: October – December (employer reported hours due January 31)
- UW PTO (sick, vacation, paid personal holiday, paid holiday) are considered “Supplemental Benefits” to PFML payments, and should not be reported on weekly claim submissions. You should only report any hours actually worked on your weekly claims.
- Wages paid via stipend do not contribute to PFML eligibility, meaning stipend funded trainees may not be eligible for leave under PFML. However, other leave types may be available and the grant may provide a funding source. Stipend funded trainees should consult with their program and GME.

UW PTO as Supplemental Benefit to PFML

The University has designated UW PTO as supplemental benefits to PFML payments. This means trainees can choose to use UW PTO to supplement the money they receive as partial wage replacement from ESD while on a PFML leave. Trainees can receive both paid time off from the UW and the PFML benefit funds from ESD for the same period. Trainees are not required to take UW PTO before, in place of, or at the same time as PFML benefits. Employees decide whether or not to use supplemental benefits.

UW PTO categories that can be designated as supplemental benefits:

- Paid Sick Time Off
- Paid Vacation Time Off
- Paid Personal Holiday Time Off
- Paid Holiday Time Taken

When trainees use accrued or awarded paid time off designated as a supplemental benefit during an approved PFML leave, they do not report that time off to ESD on the weekly application for benefits. The trainee receives the full amount of paid time off from the UW and the PFML benefit from ESD.

While filing, UW employees should use Employer UBI # 178019988. When asked if employer offers supplemental benefit, for UW employees, answer yes.

ACGME Institutional Requirement: IV.H. Vacation and Leaves of Absence

Depending on UW PTO balance and WA PFML eligibility, you may be eligible for additional UW PTO during your leave. The most common example is a trainee who takes a leave of absence within the first six months of UW employment and is not eligible for PFML payments yet. If you have questions about this or think you may be eligible, please reach out to Bre Smith (smitbre@uw.edu).

For more details:

- [ACGME Institutional Requirement IV.H Vacation and Leaves of Absence](#)

Step 3- Notify your program of your upcoming leave of absence and discuss how much time off is permitted before a training extension is required.

An important consideration unique to trainees, is how much time off is permitted before an extension of training is required. This is not a uniform answer since it varies based on ACGME, specialty board, and program graduation requirements.

Trainees should talk with their program to understand if their leave will require an extension or not.

ABMS Member Boards with training programs of two or more years in duration may allow for a minimum of six weeks away once during training for purposes of parental, caregiver, and medical leave, without exhausting time allowed for vacation or sick leave and without requiring an extension in training.

It is important to note that irrespective of time away from training, training is expected to be extended when the clinical competency committee has determined that competency has not been achieved.

For more details:

- [American Board of Medical Specialties Policy on Parental, Caregiver, and Medical Leave During Training](#)

Step 4- Review how to maintain your benefits during a leave of absence.

It is recommended that a minimum of 1 paid day is applied per calendar month during a continuous leave of absence to avoid an interruption to benefits.

Benefits during FMLA leave and PFML

If your leave is covered by FMLA, or if your PFML covered leave has at least one day of overlap with leave taken under FMLA, then the University will continue to pay its employer portion of your health insurance. You will still be responsible for any portion of your benefits that you normally pay.

To see what you are currently paying for your benefits, log into Workday, select “Menu” on the lefthand side, select “Benefits”, and in the box labeled “Current Cost” you will see the monthly amount you are currently responsible for paying.

You can choose to pay your portion by interspersing enough UW Paid Time Off (sick, vacation, or paid personal holiday) per calendar month to cover the cost of your employee portion that is automatically deducted through payroll deductions each paycheck. In most cases, applying 1 paid time off day per calendar month is enough to cover the cost of the employee portion of benefits.

If you choose not to apply UW Paid Time Off during your leave, the portion of benefits that you remain responsible for will go into an arrears account and you would be responsible for paying that balance once you return, or once your 12 weeks of FMLA have been exhausted- whichever is sooner.

Benefits when FMLA leave and PFML are exhausted

Once your 12 weeks of FMLA have been exhausted and if you are going to be absent from work for a full calendar month or longer, the University will continue paying its portion of your health insurance if you remain in pay status for at least eight hours that month.

To remain in pay status, you must do one of the following:

- Work at least 8 hours
- Use at least 8 hours of available paid time off (sick, vacation, personal holiday paid)

If you are not able to remain in pay status, you also have the option to self-pay the full monthly premium to continue your benefits. The full monthly premium includes both the employee and employer portions, meaning you would need to pay the amount you are normally responsible for each month plus the amount the University was responsible for each month.

For more information on self-paying to continue your insurance: <https://hr.uw.edu/benefits/life-events/self-pay-continue-your-insurance/>

For any benefit questions, please contact ISC and your question will be routed to the correct individual that can help: <https://isc.uw.edu/contact-us/>

Step 5- Understand that 7 days per week must be recorded in MedHub during a continuous leave of absence.

During a continuous leave of absence, all 7 days per week, including the weekends, for the duration of the leave must be assigned to a UW Paid Time Off of Unpaid Leave category in MedHub. All approved leaves of absence are unpaid unless you choose to use your available UW Paid Time Off during your leave. Anytime during your leave you are not applying UW PTO to needs to be marked as Unpaid Leave.

UW Paid Time Off Categories in MedHub

- Sick
- Vacation
- Personal Holiday – Paid
- Paid Holiday

Unpaid Leave Categories in MedHub

- Other Leave of Absence – Unpaid
 - (For programs): Use if the trainee will be taking unpaid leave and they have not applied for or do not qualify for UW Parental Leave, FMLA, or PFML
- FMLA – Unpaid
 - (For programs): Use if the trainee will be taking unpaid leave and they have been approved for FMLA and/or PFML.
- Parental Leave – Unpaid

- (For programs): Use if the trainee will be taking unpaid leave and they have been approved for UW Parental Leave, but they have not applied for and/or do not qualify for FMLA or PFML.

This applies regardless of:

- How your program requires entry on a regular basis.
- If your program regularly operates on a less than 7 day per week basis.
- If the trainee was not already scheduled to work a certain day during the leave.

Why?

Trainees are required to designate all 7 days per week, including the weekends, during a continuous leave of absence as either sick, vacation, personal holiday paid, paid holiday, or unpaid leave is because of the unique billing structure that applies to resident and fellow appointments. GME Finance bills separately for each day that a trainee is assigned to a training site in MedHub. This means a trainee who works Monday through Friday will be assigned to that same training site on the weekends in MedHub, and the site will also be billed for Saturday and Sunday. This is the typical practice when a trainee is not on a leave of absence, but it does not work when the trainee is on a leave of absence. If a trainee on leave applied sick and vacation to just Monday through Friday, that means they would still be assigned to the site on Saturday and Sunday in MedHub. Finance would then bill that site for Saturday and Sunday, and the site would reject paying for those days since the trainee is on leave and not at that site.

Additionally, since all trainees are provided with the same amount of paid sick time off (17 days) and paid vacation time off (20 weekdays and 8 weekend days) at the beginning of each one-year appointment period, this is the only way to ensure equity between those trainees who typically work Monday through Friday schedule, and those trainees who typically work a Sunday through Saturday schedule.

For more details:

- [Recording a Leave of Absence in MedHub Guide](#)
- [GME Leave Policy](#)
- [GME Leave Entry Guidelines](#)

Step 6- Understand how paid holidays work during a leave of absence.

If you are in paid status on the “workday” preceding a University recognized holiday, you are eligible to receive payment for that holiday. The “workday” that needs to be in paid status preceding the holiday can only be a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday. This applies even though during a continuous leave of absence all 7 days a week, including the weekends, must be coded in MedHub.

For example:

- If you wanted to receive holiday pay for Presidents Day on Mon 2/20 during your leave, you would need to be in paid status (sick, vacation, or personal holiday paid) in MedHub on Fri 2/17.

- You would not receive holiday pay for Mon 2/20 if you were in unpaid status on Fri 2/17, and then in paid status on Sat 2/18 & Sun 2/19.

For a list of scheduled holidays: [UW Holiday Calendar](#)

Step 7- Complete a Leave Request Form and submit to UW HR.

This is required for any leave of absence, regardless of if you are eligible or not for FMLA or PFML. The Leave Request Form is what places you on an approved UW leave of absence, and is a necessary step in order for you to be able to claim any PFML benefits.

Complete Part 1 of the applicable Leave Request Form:

- [Parental Leave for Birth Parent \(PDF\)](#)
- [Parental Leave for Parent other than Birth Parent \(PDF\)](#)
- [Personal Serious Health Condition \(PDF\)](#)
- [Family Member's Serious Health Condition \(PDF\)](#)
- [Serious Injury or Illness of Military Family Member \(PDF\)](#)
- [Military Family Qualifying Exigency \(PDF\)](#)

Have your healthcare provider (or your family member's healthcare provider) complete Part 2. Completed forms should be submitted to hrlleaves@uw.edu or faxed to 206-685-0636.

UW HR will review and process the Leave of Absence Request, and send a confirmation notice to you upon approval.

Step 8- Complete a Leave of Absence Planning Template and submit to your program.

A Leave Planning Template is a calendar view of how you are choosing to apply any available UW Paid Time Off to your leave of absence that would otherwise be unpaid. You are not required to apply UW PTO during an unpaid leave of absence, but it is important to understand what is required in order to maintain your benefits during a leave before making that decision (see Step 4).

- [Leave of Absence Planning Example](#)
- [Leave of Absence Planning Template](#)

Once you have completed your Leave Planning Template, submit it to your program so they can complete the required entry into MedHub and Workday accordingly. Both paid time and unpaid time during a leave are recorded in MedHub. Only unpaid time during a leave is recorded in Workday.

- [Recording a Leave of Absence in MedHub Guide](#)
- [Recording a Leave of Absence in Workday Guide](#)

Trainees that have questions about completing a Leave Planning Template should reach out to Bre Smith at smitbre@uw.edu for assistance.

Programs that have questions about recording a Leave Planning Template in MedHub or Workday should contact Bre Smith at smitbre@uw.edu for assistance.

Step 9- Ensure your program completed the necessary steps to record your leave of absence in MedHub.

Your program should have used your completed Leave Planning Template to update MedHub with any UW Paid Time Off days you will be using during your leave, and coded any remaining time during your leave as Unpaid Leave.

For more details:

- [Recording a Leave of Absence in MedHub Guide](#)

Step 10- Ensure your program completed the necessary steps to record your leave of absence in Workday.

Your program should have notified your department Workday administrator to:

1. Record any unpaid days during your leave in Workday. This is the only way to avoid an overpayment.
2. Submit an Absence Request on your behalf in Workday. This is what places you on a UW-approved leave of absence in Workday. This is a necessary step to claim PFML benefits and ensure benefit continuation when eligible.
3. Complete applicable FMLA Time Off Tracking in Workday. This is what tracks how much FMLA leave you have remaining during the applicable rolling-12 month period.
4. Initiate a Return from Leave Request when you return from leave. This takes you off a leave of absence within Workday.

For more details:

- [Recording a Leave of Absence in Workday Guide](#)
- [ISC Workday Userguide for Academic Personnel Leave of Absences](#)

Additional Resources

If your leave dates change

1. Submit an updated Leave Request Form (see Step 7) that has been certified by a healthcare provider* to UW HR so they can adjust your approved leave dates.
 - a. *Parental leave dates are the only leave types that UW HR can adjust based on actual delivery date without updated documentation from the provider. Everything else will need an updated certification form.
2. Notify your Program so they can update your paid time off/unpaid leave in MedHub accordingly.

3. Your program should notify your department Workday administrator so they can update your Absence Request and any unpaid time in Workday accordingly.

Parenting Resources

Please visit the [GME Parenting Resources webpage](#) for robust information on pregnancy accommodations, lactation spaces, childcare options, financial resources, return to work tips, and more.

J-1 Exchange Visitors on Leave

Federal regulations require that the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) maintain up-to-date records on the locations and activities of the exchange visitor physicians it sponsors. Residents on an ECFMG-sponsored J-1 are therefore required to inform ECFMG in advance of any planned LOA including medical, parental, or academic leave. The [Required Notification of a Leave of Absence](#) [ecfm.org] form with instructions is available on the ECFMG website.

Accommodations

To request a disability accommodation, or to request a pregnancy accommodation outside of those listed in the [CBA](#) or UW HR [website](#), please contact the [Disability Services Office](#) at dso@uw.edu or 206-543-6450.

Questions?

If you have any questions about the leave of absence process, please reach out to:

Bre Smith
HR Manager
Graduate Medical Education
smitbre@uw.edu
206-543-2109

Request a Leave Meeting

Bre Smith is available to meet via zoom or phone with trainees and programs to discuss any leave related questions. Typically, Bre meets with trainees and programs separately about leave matters. To schedule a time to meet:

- Email Bre directly at smitbre@uw.edu
- Or you can fill out a [Leave Meeting Request form](#) (UW NetID required). This form provides Bre with basic information about the upcoming leave of absence to assist with the discussion. Once you have submitted the form, Bre will follow up to schedule the meeting.