Duke University Graduate School
Ph.D. Research Assistant Vacation Policy
Revision Date: March 5, 2012

Purpose

To clarify Graduate School expectations regarding paid vacation for Ph.D. students funded on twelve-month research projects. This policy applies to all research-supported students regardless of funding source.

Background

In the past, the Graduate School has left the matter of the amount of paid vacation allowed to Ph.D. students funded on research projects to the discretion of individual principal investigators. This has created unevenness in decisions about paid vacation.

Policy

1. Graduate students who are funded by research projects on a twelve-month stipend schedule are allowed a minimum two weeks (ten working days) of vacation each year. Students who wish to take vacation must apprise their advisor of their intentions at least two weeks before the planned absence.

2. Students wishing to take additional periods of time off, paid or unpaid, must receive the approval of their advisor. If payroll changes are necessary, the advisor will notify the department or program business office prior to the payroll deadline for the affected pay period of any such arrangements. Approval for additional periods of paid time off may be subject to funding agency restrictions.

3. University observed holidays and time away for professional activities (conferences, workshops, interviews, for instance) do not count against vacation. Ph.D. Research Assistant holidays will follow the Holiday Schedule for University Staff. Note also that the Graduate School policy on religious holidays corresponds broadly to that of Trinity College: students who wish to observe religious holidays must inform their advisor in advance, must plan to make up any missed work, and cannot be required to take the religious holiday as a vacation day.

4. Unclaimed vacation cannot be carried over to a subsequent year nor will any unclaimed vacations days be paid out if not used by year end or upon termination of the research position. The annual cycle for determining available vacation will be September 1 to August 30 of the following year.
Related Links

Holiday Schedule for University Staff

Trinity College of Arts & Sciences: Religious Observance and Holidays