



Duke University Graduate School
Ph.D. Research Assistant Vacation Policy
Revision Date: September 26, 2018

Purpose

To clarify Graduate School expectations regarding 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 vacation allowed to Ph.D. students funded on research projects to the discretion of individual principal investigators. This has created unevenness in decisions about vacation.

Policy

1. Graduate students who are funded by research projects on a twelve-month stipend schedule are allowed a minimum two weeks (ten academic days) of vacation each academic 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 away, with or without stipend, must receive prior approval of their advisor. If stipend changes are necessary, the advisor will notify the department or program business office prior to the deadline for the affected period of any such arrangements. Approval for additional periods of time away with stipend support may be subject to funding agency restrictions.
3. University observed holidays and time away for professional activities (conferences, workshops, interviews, for instance) shall 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 assignments or training and cannot be required to take the religious holiday as vacation.
4. Unclaimed vacation cannot be carried over to a subsequent academic year nor will any unclaimed vacations days be eligible for stipend support if not used by the end of the annual cycle or research position. The annual cycle for determining vacation opportunities will be September 1 to August 30 of the following year.

Related Links

[Trinity College of Arts & Sciences: Religious Observance and Holidays](#)