



Berkeley  
Graduate Division

Jan 23, 2018

To: Deans, Chairs, Head Graduate Advisers, and Graduate Student Affairs Officers

From: Fiona M. Doyle, Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Dean of the Graduate Division

**Re: NEW: Withdrawal Policy to Accommodate Professional Internships**

Over the past several years, the Graduate Division, the Graduate Council, departments, and individual faculty have increased their support for graduate student professional and career development. Graduate student organizations such as Beyond Academia, Science Leadership and Management (SLAM), and the Graduate Assembly have been very active in this area. A consensus among all parties is the need to prepare graduate students in all disciplines both for academic positions and for positions beyond the professoriate. One goal of these initiatives is to treat professional and career preparation as part of the graduate degree program rather than as a sideline activity.

This past year, the Advisory Committee for Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Fellow Professional Development, a standing committee of the Graduate Council, has given particular attention to ways the campus might assist graduate students who wish to extend their professional development and career preparation through internships. With this work, the campus is recognizing the educational and career value that off-campus internships provide, including an opportunity to explore non-academic career paths, to gain transferable skills, and to build wider networks.

At present students wishing to pursue professional opportunities during the academic year withdraw from their degree programs for a period of one or two semesters. Currently, with the exception of parental leave, readmission is not guaranteed when a student temporarily withdraws from their degree program; students must assume the risk, even if in practice slight, of not being readmitted to their program.

To remedy this situation and to reduce the stigma often associated with temporarily withdrawing from a degree program, the Graduate Council has approved guaranteeing readmission upon completion of an internship, subject to the following conditions being met prior to withdrawal:

1. The student submits to their department a brief plan that includes a description of the professional development opportunity and a justification of its value to educational goals. Included in the plan is the schedule for return to campus.
2. The student's major professor and Head Graduate Advisor approve the plan.
3. The student agrees that time spent on professional internships on withdrawal status counts toward time-to-degree and normative time calculation.
4. The student confirms that time spent on the professional internship will not exceed a year.



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This new policy becomes effective immediately.

The form that students and departments should use is here: [PETITION FOR INTERNSHIP LEAVE WITH RE-ENROLLMENT](#).

**Please forward this information to all faculty and graduate students in your department.** Thank you.