

Number: PPD - 0605
Subject: Leave Policies for Students

Annual and Holiday Leave for Students on Assistantships

In recognition of their contributions to the Institute's research, education and advisory missions, students holding graduate assistantships at VIMS are allowed annual leave consistent with the annual leave policy for university classified and operational employees, as described on the William & Mary website, [here](#). Students holding 20 hour per week appointments (100% of full-time graduate employment) are allowed up to 6 days (24 hours) of vacation leave annually. Annual leave is pro-rated for those who hold appointments of less than 20 hours per week. Graduate assistants will also receive scheduled university holidays as published by William & Mary ([here](#); currently 12 days annually) if the holiday coincides with the period of the assistantship appointment. However, teaching assistants are expected to fulfill any assigned responsibilities when classes are in session on a scheduled university holiday. In addition, if an assistantship supervisor¹ requires the student to perform assistantship duties (e.g., animal care, critical ongoing research projects) on a William & Mary holiday, that expectation must be communicated to the student as soon as possible (e.g., a month or more in advance) and provisions agreeable to the student must be made for equivalent time off on a non-holiday weekday. Similarly, if a graduate student wishes to engage in assistantship activities on a William & Mary holiday, with permission from the student's supervisor, an alternate leave day should be determined. Days on which classes are not in session but the university is open (e.g., Fall and Spring break, January intersession) are not automatic holidays for graduate students holding assistantships.

Time away requires planning to ensure continuity of research, teaching and other responsibilities of an assistantship appointment. VIMS and the School of Marine Science recognize the importance of time off to health and wellbeing. Supervisors should plan for and encourage graduate assistants to take annual leave and holiday time, accommodate student preferences whenever possible, and adjust work expectations to allow for time off. A graduate student seeking to take leave time away from assistantship duties should make the request to the supervisor with as much advanced notice as possible (e.g., a month or more in advance) to allow the supervisor to plan for adequate coverage of responsibilities. While hours worked for assistantships are not reported to VIMS or William & Mary, the supervisor is expected to track leave. VIMS allows students on assistantships to accrue annual leave from year to year to the extent of 1.5 times the current annual allowance. The supervisor is responsible for maintaining a record of annual leave used by the student. A student may take additional time as long as they have arranged with the supervisor to make up work hours missed.

Although there is no formal personal and sick leave policy for graduate students on assistantships, supervisors are expected to provide a reasonable amount of sick leave and work to accommodate student requests for other types of personal leave (e.g., religious holidays). It is the student's responsibility to inform the advisor or supervisor of the need for sick or personal leave. In order to determine the best course of action for a student's academic progress, the need for sick leave of more than month must be discussed with the Associate Dean of Academic Studies.

¹ This is usually the advisor for Research Assistants, or the instructor for Teaching Assistants. When leave is accrued for a Teaching Assistantship, coordination with the advisor will be required. Good planning will minimize confusion.

Other Types of Leave

Students who are currently on assistantships and who plan to spend more than a month off campus (e.g., for research), students who wish to transition to part-time (“off-site”) student status for employment or other reasons, or any student who wishes to take an extended leave of absence from the academic program for medical or other reasons, must have the permission of the Associate Dean of Academic Studies. Various types of leave affect eligibility status for assistantships and other types of financial support. The student should contact the Office of Academic Studies for further details.

Note: Travel

Graduate students who are planning to travel on Institute business must obtain the appropriate authorization before embarking on the trip. See Policy and Procedure Document 0017 and contact the department business manager for further information.

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