Leave of Absence

Postdoctoral fellows may need to take time away from Mount Sinai for an extended period of time to attend to personal matters or illness. A “Leave of Absence” may be available to provide the flexibility needed to maintain the relationship with Mount Sinai while taking care of these personal concerns or illness. Postdoctoral fellows may be eligible for certain leaves for a specific time period. Such leave may be either paid or unpaid. Failure to comply with the School’s leave policies and procedures may result in the delay or denial of the postdoctoral fellow’s request for leave and/or disciplinary action.

A. Overview

In the event that a postdoctoral fellow needs to take a leave of absence, up to twelve (12) weeks of leave time paid/unpaid is allowed for any of the following:

1. **Parental Leave**: due to the birth, adoption, care for a newborn, or placement of a child;
2. **Caregiving Leave**: in order to care for a child, parent, or spouse with a documented serious health condition; or
3. **Medical Leave**: because of the postdoctoral fellow’s own serious health condition.

When the need for leave is foreseeable, the postdoctoral fellow must provide at least 30 days written notice explaining the reason for the leave (without the specific details) and the leave's anticipated duration. The postdoctoral fellow does not need to provide the department or supervisor with details regarding his/her own medical condition/illness. The specific details of the personal illness or illness of a family member (listed in #2 above) should be submitted confidentially to ISMMS Human Resources. When leave is not foreseeable, notice must be given within two working days of learning of the need for leave, except in extraordinary circumstances. Earned sick time (if personal illness) vacation, holidays, and free days, must be used first during this leave.

The first step for a postdoctoral fellow planning to take a leave of absence is to get approval from the department and determine how much earned unused time off the fellow has accumulated. For medical leave (e.g., maternity leave), when the doctor determines the "period deemed disabled", Mount Sinai will pay out sick days in the sick time bank for the period of disability or until the sick time and earned vacation time runs out, and the balance of the period deemed disabled is paid out through short-term disability or unpaid if no longer disabled. The disability paid to the postdoctoral fellow is determined by the benefits selections made during benefits open enrollment. Any time taken after disability period is exhausted (if agreed upon by PI/Department) will be unpaid. Please contact Theresa.scarabino@mssm.edu or (212) 241-0380 in the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs or ISMMS Human Resources at (212) 241-4097 for guidance on your leave of absence.

The Office of International Personnel must be notified immediately when any Foreign National needs to take a leave of absence for any reason. ISMMS Human Resources may contact a postdoctoral fellow's healthcare provider directly to get clarification and authentication of a medical certification. If the postdoctoral fellow chooses not to provide ISMMS with a HIPAA-authorized release allowing clarification, and the postdoctoral fellow does not otherwise clarify the medical certification, the leave may be denied. ISMMS may also require the postdoctoral fellow to obtain a second opinion by an independent Medical Center-designated provider at the Medical Center’s expense.

If, due to the operational impact on the department, the postdoctoral fellow’s position cannot be held open (the twelve (12) week period has passed) he/she should be informed as soon as possible. Upon readiness to return to work, the postdoctoral fellow should report to the Office of the Postdoctoral Affairs to seek other opportunities, commensurate with the postdoctoral fellow’s skills.

B. Types of Leave

1. **Short Term Disability Leave** - Granted to those who are eligible (one becomes “eligible” after four consecutive weeks as a postdoctoral fellow at Mount Sinai, per New York State guidelines) and who are absent from work due to a non-job related illness (including pregnancy-related disability) or an off-the-job injury for more than seven (7) calendar days, subject to the limits set forth in Human Resources Policy Manual section 7.7 (can be found on Mount Sinai Intranet).

2. **Worker’s Compensation Leave** - Granted to eligible postdoctoral fellows absent from work due to a documented job related illness and/or job related accidental injury within the limits set forth in Human Resources Policy Manual section 7.7 (can be found on Mount Sinai Intranet) and subject to the following provisions: Postdoctoral fellows returning to his/her
assignment following a medical leave of absence must submit to their PI clearance to return to full duty by their primary care physician.

3. **Unpaid Leave of Absence**
   a) Granted at the discretion of PI as an unpaid leave for educational or personal reasons.
   b) **Not applicable to Foreign Nationals on Visas in certain circumstances. PI/Departments must contact International Personnel to discuss.**
   c) Must contact the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs and ISMMS Human Resources prior to placing a postdoctoral fellow on a Leave of Absence.

4. **Military Leave** - Granted to postdoctoral fellows who perform either voluntary or involuntary duty in the uniformed services, including active duty, active duty training, inactive duty training, full-time National Guard duty and Reserve personnel, and includes time to undergo examination to determine fitness to perform such duty. The time off is granted without pay, but may be charged against available vacation.

   Postdoctoral fellows returning from extended military duty are reinstated to their former position(s) or to position(s) of like status and salary, provided that said postdoctoral fellow applies for reinstatement within ninety (90) days from their date of honorable discharge from military service.

   Mount Sinai follows the guidelines established by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) regarding military leave and endorses the “Statement of Support for the Guard and Reserve” from the United States Department of Defense.