

University of California
Fee Policy for Graduate Student *In Absentia* Registration

The Fee Policy for Graduate Student *In Absentia* Registration promotes continuous enrollment of graduate and professional degree students by providing an appropriate enrollment incentive. The policy recognizes that these students may need to perform work away from the University but seeks to minimize the number of students who allow their registration status to lapse. As a result, the policy strengthens the relationship between the University and its graduate students. Both the eligibility criteria and reduced fee level are predicated on the fact that students undertaking approved coursework or research outside of California have access to substantially fewer instructional resources and student services than do students who reside within the state, and should therefore qualify for a meaningful fee reduction.

Effective for the 2009 fall term, academic and professional program graduate students who find it necessary to undertake coursework or research related to their degree program outside of California during their tenure at the University are eligible for reductions in fees as provided below. Authority for implementation of this policy and for granting exceptions rests with the graduate dean unless campus authority for a degree program has been delegated to a professional school dean.

Eligibility Criteria for the Reduced *In Absentia* Fee

All students pursuing doctoral or master's degrees in academic disciplines as well as those pursuing professional master's or doctoral degrees are eligible for the fee reduction. Students in self-supporting graduate programs are not covered by this policy.

Students may apply for *in absentia* registration status under the following circumstances:

- Academic doctoral students must have advanced to candidacy by the time the *in absentia* status would begin.
- Master's and graduate professional students must have completed at least one year of coursework by the time the *in absentia* status would begin.
- Special cases within the above two categories can be approved only by exception at the discretion of the appropriate graduate dean or professional school dean.
- Students who seek *in absentia* registration beyond the initial term of *in absentia* status must re-apply for each subsequent period.

Students must be enrolled full-time in regular UC units to be eligible for the reduced *in absentia* fee. The appropriate graduate dean or professional school dean is responsible for determining that the proposed *in absentia* units meet the following criteria. The research or coursework:

- Must be directly related to the student's degree program as evidenced by UC faculty approval.
- Must be of a nature that makes it necessary to be completed outside of California for at least one full academic term.
- Must involve only indirect supervision appropriate to evaluating the student's academic progress and performance (e.g., correspondence via e-mail or review of written work) from UC faculty during the *in absentia* period.

- Must involve no significant studying or in-person collaboration with UC faculty during the *in absentia* period to ensure that units do not entail direct access to UC resources or learning environment.

The appropriate graduate dean or professional school dean (in accordance with campus delegation of authority for degree programs) may grant *in absentia* registration status for:

- Up to two years for academic doctoral students.
- Up to one year for master's and graduate professional students.
- Longer periods at the discretion of the appropriate graduate dean or professional school dean.

Students shall observe the following requirements while enrolled *in absentia*:

- Be enrolled full-time at their UC campus of origin for the duration of their *in absentia* registration.
- Be enrolled in a UC academic doctoral, master's or graduate professional program (except self-supporting) for the duration of their *in absentia* registration.

Students are eligible to apply for and receive University fellowships and research assistantships, but not teaching assistantships during the *in absentia* period.

Study or Research at Non-UC Institutions

Students paying the reduced *in absentia* fee who enroll and pay fees at non-UC institutions will not qualify for additional University of California need-based aid. Students may fulfill all or part of their independent study requirements by enrolling in courses at a non-UC institution while registered *in absentia* at UC. In this case, however, the tuition and fee charges paid to the non-UC institution will not increase the student's eligibility for need-based aid from UC. The tuition and fees paid to non-UC institutions will also not affect the amount of *in absentia* fees owed to UC. Furthermore, students who wish to transfer coursework from non-UC institutions toward degree requirements at the UC campus of origin must obtain approval to do so in accordance with campus policies.

Periods of qualified *in absentia* registration shall fulfill academic residency requirements for degree programs. Under current *Academic Senate Regulations 610 and 688*, academic residency requires only that students be registered and enrolled full-time at the University, and does not require them to be physically present or pay a certain amount of fees or tuition. As a result, periods of approved *in absentia* research or coursework will count towards graduate degree residency requirements. The definition of academic residency is under the jurisdiction of the Academic Senate and is subject to review and revision.

Reduced Fee Level

Students shall be assessed the following fees while registered *in absentia*:

- 15 percent of the combined University Educational and Registration Fee. This reflects that students *in absentia* have less access to UC resources than do other UC students, but continue to utilize some level of advising and other University resources to facilitate timely academic progress toward degree completion.

- The full health insurance fees associated with the UC campus of origin (or provide evidence of alternative insurance coverage according to customary campus practice). Students registered *in absentia* will have access to all benefits associated with their student health insurance plan.
- Campus-based fees, as determined by each campus.
- Non-resident tuition, if applicable. Nothing in this policy is intended to affect the criteria for applicability of non-resident tuition.
- Professional school fees, if applicable. This would only apply to students in graduate professional programs subject to Fees for Selected Professional School Students.

Follow-Up and Evaluation

The Office of the President will assess the revenue impacts of the Policy during its initial implementation. Uncertainty over how students will adjust their enrollment patterns in response to the proposed fee reduction makes it difficult to estimate future revenue impacts using data from prior years. Within this context, it is anticipated that the Office of the President will measure the following:

- Change in the number of students registering *in absentia* in 2011-12 compared to 2008-09.
- Change in the length of *in absentia* registration durations in 2011-12 compared to 2008-09.
- Change in the number of students with enrollment lapses of at least one term or on leave in 2011-12 compared to 2008-09.

A full report on the revenue impacts will be provided to the Chancellors three years after implementation, with interim reports provided to the graduate deans each year prior to that.

Finally, effective for the 2009 fall term, UC campuses will be required to eliminate the provision for research leaves currently granted to some doctoral students. A primary objective of the updated policy is to ensure the continuous enrollment of graduate students throughout the completion of their degrees. Allowing doctoral students to take “research leaves” that permit them to leave the University for significant periods of time as an alternative to continuous enrollment for graduate students in need of conducting research or completing coursework away from the University is inconsistent with the policy and such leaves are to be eliminated.