

Filing for a Leave of Absence (LOA) as GME Trainee

Required Steps ACGME Programs

- 1) Submit a leave request via MedHub (either trainee or program admin can submit)
- 2) File with FMLA Source:
www.fmlasource.com or 833-485-4247
- 3) File paperwork with Unum



Required Steps Non ACGME Programs

- 1) Submit a leave request via MedHub (either trainee or program admin can submit)
- 2) File with FMLA Source:
www.fmlasource.com or 833-485-4247
- 3) File paperwork with Unum (if using STD benefits)
- 4) File with MA PMLA plan



Upon start of leave, confirm first day of absence by emailing your program contact. Any change in original leave dates should be updated with FMLA source and the state benefit plan (PMLA) as applicable.

Upon return from leave, confirm first day back at work by emailing your program contact.

If you need to raise any issues or concerns, including payroll related, it is recommended that you reach out to the GME Office (ldubois3@bidmc.harvard.edu) and/or your program as a starting point.

LOA FAQs for GME Trainees

How much time can I take off for family and/or medical leave?

GME-06 outlines the policy for regarding paid family and medical leaves. All trainees in ACGME accredited programs are eligible for 12 weeks of fully paid leave for their own health, care of a family member, or parental/bonding leave (birth and non-birth parents).

Will I have to extend my training to make up for the absence?

An extension of training may be needed to ensure all program specific ACGME and board requirements have been met. Consult with your program director and program coordinator for more information.

Do I need to use my sick and/or vacation time as part of my leave?

For all trainees in ACGME accredited programs, the 12 weeks of salary continuation does not require the use of sick and/or vacation time.

What if my anticipated dates change?

Many leaves require an adjustment of the anticipated start and/or end date. Please notify your program, update the leave request dates in Medhub (your program can do this on your behalf), and update FMLA source and PMLA (IF you filed with the state).

Who do I need to notify regarding my plans to take a LOA?

Your program director and coordinator should both be notified in order to plan out the leave appropriately. Official filing of your leave with FMLA source should begin no later than 30 days prior to the anticipated leave start date. Beginning the process 90 days out is encouraged.

If training under **J1 visa sponsorship**, please complete the required LOA notification and return to Deborah Parnter (dparnthe@bidmc.harvard.edu) in the GME Office: <https://www.ecfm.org/evsp/notification-LOA.pdf>

If your position is supported by funds from a **T32 grant**, you should **ask your manager to check in with a member of the research administration team** to confirm whether or not any additional benefits may apply.

What if I receive a denial letter?

This can occur if your physician certification is not processed within 14 days of starting the process with FMLA source. If that's the case, it will be resolved as soon as the paperwork is submitted. Denials also occur routinely if the leave is outside the boundaries of the federal job protection act (FMLA). This is typically not a cause for concern. Eligible leave requests will still be granted 12-weeks of GME salary continuation (as applicable). For additional clarification, please reach out to your program contact and/or the GME office.

What is the purpose of filing with Unum?

The purpose of filing with Unum, regardless of whether STD benefits are being utilized, is to complete the certification of health condition process. It is a requirement for accredited trainees to complete this step.

Does everyone need to file with Unum?

Unum is only required for accredited trainees as certification of health condition is needed from non BIDMC party.

Non-accredited trainees who file for state benefits (PMLA) will complete the health certification as part of the state filing process. They will also need to do this through Unum directly if utilizing STD benefits.

Nonbirthing parents do not need to file with Unum.

Does everyone qualify for the state benefit plan?

In order to qualify for the state plan (mainly utilized by non accredited programs) an employee must have earned at least 30% of the benefits they would qualify for. For a 12 month leave a typical GME fellow would need to work ~ 1 month to qualify for state PMFL benefits. See: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/paid-family-and-medical-leave-pfml-overview-and-benefits> for more info. If this threshold has not been met, then a combination of sick, vacation and/or STD benefits should be used to cover the leave.

When should the state plan (PMLA) be utilized?

For non-accredited trainees, it is generally the primary salary source. You can only apply once you are within the 60 day window of the anticipated leave.

ACGME accredited trainees should NOT apply for the state plan unless the duration of the leave is greater than 12-weeks. Accredited trainees receive 12 weeks of full salary and benefits without the need to apply separately to PMLA.

For additional information regarding PMLA see: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/paid-family-and-medical-leave-pfml-overview-and-benefits>

PMLA wage calculator: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/paid-family-and-medical-leave-pfml-overview-and-benefits#how-much-will-i-get-paid?>

How does Short-Term Disability (STD) work?

This is an opt in benefits election which covers 60-70% of salary (depending on benefits selection at the time of enrollment). If enrolled, it may be used as a supplement to the MA State benefit plan to help close the salary gap (additional \$25-100 wkly).

If I am the non birth parent, does my leave need to start immediately when the child is born?

No, but it must be taken in full within 12 months of the birth.

Are intermittent LOAs allowable?

Intermittent LOAs are not allowed per BIDMC policy, however, with program approval, a trainee may request two separate consecutive blocks of time off (will be treated as two separate leaves). This time is not to exceed 12 weeks combined and must be taken in full within 12 months of the birth.

If an unexpected need for a LOA occurs, how long do I have to file a request?

The request must be filed within 30 days of the occurrence.

What is the definition of an “immediate family member”?

The FMLA definition of a covered family member includes: your spouse, your children or step children and your parents.

The state benefit plan includes all of the following:

- Your spouse or domestic partner
- Your children, step-children or domestic partner’s children
- Your parents, step-parents or parent’s domestic partner
- Your spouse or domestic partner’s parents
- Your grandchildren, step-grandchildren or domestic partner’s grandchildren
- Your grandparents, step-grandparents, or grandparent’s domestic partner
- Your siblings or step-siblings

What length of time qualifies as an official leave of absence vs. standard sick time?

A leave of absence is defined as requiring 5 or more consecutive days off from work.

What if my leave occurs towards the end of my training? What are my options?

A 12 week absence is allowed, extending beyond the expected program end date as long as the trainee will be returning to at least one full day of work. Consult with your program director and coordinator to understand if additional training time may need to be made up.

What are my options if I am expecting a child or have a qualifying incident occur prior to the start of my training?

Trainees are not benefits eligible until their first day of hire. If the incident occurs prior to the trainee’s start date, no formal benefits would apply. Consult with your program to discuss options for a deferred start OR front loading of vacation time.

Is the return to work form a required submission?

This is required when an employee is out for their own serious health condition. Maternity leaves do not require EOHS clearance, thus the form is not needed for that specific type of leave.

Are there any parent support groups for BIDMC trainees?

A support group for GME trainees who are parents (and their families) exists through the GME Wellness Committee. Please reach out to Ritika Parris at rparris@bidmc.harvard.edu for more information or refer to this link to sign up: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1AC0od1agEiEmw-8Wji56YpXU366ZgrFZZlgpMEWIZUM/edit#gid=0>.

Where are the lactation spaces on campus and how do I reserve?

Lactation Rooms are available at the following locations:

East Campus: Feldberg 217 (1 station) Gryzmish 217 (3 stations) CLS 436 (2 stations)

West Campus: Palmer 505 (3 stations) RB 4 (1 station)

Rooms have hospital grade Medela pumps, mini fridges, and sinks. You can bring your own pump or use a Medela Symphony Pump Kit. To request access to the rooms, email: Employeehealth@bidmc.harvard.edu

What if I have additional questions I could not find the answer to in this guide?

For questions that are related specifically to GME, please reach out to your program coordinator, program director and/or Laurie Dubois in the GME Office.

Questions that do not pertain specifically to GME should be directly to the HR Service Center (HRSC) at (617) 667-5000, Monday through Friday, 7:30am-5:00pm. Select option #1 to reach a benefits representatives. You may also reach out for support by [Creating a Case](#) in Workday.