

In accordance with our [SEAS values statement on Ph.D. advising](#), we encourage Ph.D. advisers to be flexible in granting advisees breaks and reasonable time away from research. The SEAS faculty understand and advocate that health and wellbeing are paramount. We expect our Ph.D. students to take some recess time off each year, both as personal time and time with family and friends.

As a guideline for advisers, graduate students may take two weeks of recess time each academic year (July 1-June 30), in addition to any days taken during regular University holidays (<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/secular-religious-holidays/>) and the special winter vacation (last week of December). At their discretion, doctoral advisors may permit additional recess days to students. This can include giving additional recess days during the designated Fall and/or Spring breaks, or allowing students to take more than two weeks of recess time during a year. Recess days need not be taken continuously and can be spread out over the academic calendar year. With the advisor's approval, graduate students may also defer recess time from one year until a future year.

Recess days and duration must be discussed ahead of time with one's doctoral advisor to ensure there is no conflict with the student's academic coursework and research; recess days are intended to be enjoyed away from such pursuits. When a student takes recess time, their stipend will not be impacted. Advisors are strongly encouraged to make students aware, in advance, of days on the academic calendar when attendance is required and recess may not be scheduled.

Where academic pursuits, including research, interfere with University holidays or the special winter vacation, students may discuss with their doctoral advisor about taking recess days on alternate dates in the academic calendar year when the University is in operation.

Recess does not constitute a leave of absence from research under the graduate student policy; please see the Graduate Student Handbook (<https://grad.seas.upenn.edu/student-handbook/academic-options/>) for more information on leaves of absence.