

Nephrology Fellowship Time Off and Leave of Absence Policy

Division of Nephrology, University of Washington

This policy applies to all fellows in an [ACGME Nephrology fellow](#) appointment and based on required stipulations from the fellow's [CIR-NW contract](#) and in accordance with general [GME Leaves policy](#).

All Non-ACGME fellows, Clinician Researchers, and Acting Instructors should review information available on the UW Academic Human Resources [Time Off and Leaves page](#).

All leave and paid time off (vacation and sick time) must be reported to the Nephrology Fellowship Program Director (PD) and Program Administrator (PA), including while fellows are on non-clinical rotations, research rotations, or being paid on training grants. In the event of any conflict between this policy and the UW GME Time Off and Leaves of Absence Policy or CIR-NW CBA, the UW GME policy and governing agreement will be followed.

Vacation Leave

Fellows will receive 28 days of paid vacation per academic year at the start of each 1-year appointment period (effective July 1), broken down as 20 business days and 8 weekend days. Vacation leave can be taken in 1- or 2-full week blocks and in a Monday through Sunday format. Unused vacation leave will lapse at the expiration of each appointment period, so non-transferable between training years.

Vacation requests must be submitted by email and approved by the Program Administrator (PA) and Program Director (PD) before the start of the academic year. Fellows should email their (28) vacation day requests and any weekend requests to the PA in the Spring (PA will initiate the email request), and the PA will confirm vacation dates in writing at least 60 days ahead of the new academic year. The PA is responsible for entering these approved vacation dates into MedHub, and will communicate approved vacation dates with clinic schedulers at each fellow's Continuity Clinic site so clinics are blocked for those dates.

Any changes to approved vacation dates must be submitted by email and require approval by the PA and PD. If a fellow is unable to secure a swap despite reasonable efforts, the PD and PA will assist in arranging coverage so approved leave can be taken while maintaining patient safety. The PA is responsible for confirming all changes in writing, updating MedHub and OnCall paging, and notifying the clinic schedulers of any changes.

Paid Personal Day

Fellows are entitled to 1 paid personal holiday per calendar year (January – December) consistent with UW policy and the CIR-NW CBA contract. Fellows become eligible for this benefit after 4 months of consecutive employment. Fellows are responsible for submitting requests by email to the Program Administrator, and the program will make best efforts to accommodate the request while ensuring appropriate clinical coverage and maintaining patient safety. The PA is responsible for coordinating coverage, confirming the personal day by email, and updating MedHub and paging. Any unused paid personal holiday does not roll over unless a holiday request was denied by the program and could not be rescheduled within that calendar year.

Faith/Conscience Unpaid Holiday

As part of UW's CBA contract, fellows may take up to 2 unpaid holidays per calendar year for a reason of faith or conscience, or for an organized activity conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or religious organization. To take unpaid time off, fellows must send their requests by email to the Program Administrator and Program Director using the outlined leave request procedure. In their request, the fellow should inform their PA and PD that the requested unpaid day(s) is for a reason of faith or conscience or for an organized activity conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or religious organization. The program will make best efforts to accommodate the request while ensuring appropriate clinical coverage and maintaining patient safety. The PA is responsible for coordinating coverage, confirming the personal day by email, and updating MedHub and paging.

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Sick Leave

Fellows receive 17 days of paid sick leave (12 business days and 5 weekend days) at the start of each 1-year appointment period, effective July 1. Sick time off is rolled over to subsequent training years while the fellow is appointed to a UW GME training program or if appointed within 2 years of the end of a previous UW GME appointment. Accumulated sick time off that is not transferable is not compensable at the completion or expiration of the appointment to the Nephrology Fellowship Program.

Sick leave may be used for the following:

- Personal medical, dental, or optical appointments
- Personal illness, disability or injury (including disability due to pregnancy), childbirth, or to recover from childbirth
- To care for a child of the fellow who has a health condition that requires treatment or supervision. For this purpose "child" means a biological, adopted or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing in loco parentis who is under 18, or 18 or older and is incapable of self-care because of mental or physical disability (See [UW GME Leaves of Absence page](#))
- To care for the fellow's seriously ill family member
- Absence necessitated by the death of a fellow's family member (5 days of entitled paid Bereavement leave should be used first; see subsection below for more detail)
- To accompany a family member to medical, dental, or optical appointments when the fellow's presence is required. *The fellow must make advance arrangements with the PA for such absences*
- Childcare emergency (child's school or day care has been closed by a public health official for any health-related reason or after the declaration of an emergency by a local or state government or agency, or by the federal government)
- Domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or hate crimes covered absences
- To allow the fellow to prepare for, or participate in, any judicial or administrative immigration proceeding involving the fellow or their family member

If sick leave is used, fellows are not required to arrange coverage. Rather, fellows should follow the outlined process in the *Nephrology Jeopardy Clinical Coverage policy*. This includes notifying the Program Director of the need for coverage as soon as possible, and the PD is responsible for coordinating and communicating coverage with faculty and/or fellows. The Program Administrator is responsible for updating coverage in MedHub and paging systems.

If a fellow is seeking to use or has used sick paid time off for authorized purposes for more than 3 consecutive days, the fellow is required to provide verification that establishes that the use of sick paid time off is for an authorized purpose. Verification must be provided within 10 calendar days of the first day of when sick paid time off was used to care for themselves or a family member. The fellow is not required to provide any details concerning the specific nature of the health condition to use sick paid time off, unless otherwise required by law.

Requests involving protected leave categories should be directed to UW HR/GME Leave of Absence processes to ensure confidentiality and appropriate support.

Bereavement

If a family member dies, or for a loss of pregnancy, a fellow is granted up to 5 days of paid bereavement time off at the fellow's discretion. If additional time is needed, the fellow may request the use of available vacation or sick time off. The fellow must inform the Program Director and Administrator as soon as possible of the need for bereavement time off, and requests will not be unreasonably denied. If bereavement time off requests are denied by the Nephrology Fellowship Program, the fellow may appeal to the GME office, and the GME office will make a good faith effort to review appeals within 1 business day.

Professional Paid Time Off

Per UW's CBA contract, fellows receive up to 10 days of paid Professional Leave, per academic year, for professional activities. Examples of professional activities may include presenting scholarly work at, or attending, a professional or scientific meeting, sitting for exams, participating in other educational activities, serving on committees of professional organizations, or participating in professional interviews. 2nd year fellows will be given priority with requests for professional leave, and programs will make every effort to grant professional leave for fellowship or job interviews. Requests for Professional Leave must be submitted by email well in advance, and require approval by the Program Administrator (PA) and Program Director (PD), as well as the Department of Medicine (the PA will submit for approval using the [SOM Travel Requests portal](#)). Once approved, the PA is responsible for coordinating coverage, confirming coverage plans by email, and updating MedHub and paging systems.

Additional Professional Leave (beyond 10 days) may be granted at the discretion of the Program Director and Administrator, and will be funded by the program. Per ABIM Internal Medicine and Subspecialty regulations, professional time off for activities such as attendance at training-related seminars, educational conferences, courses, or interviews for subsequent training positions or jobs are not counted as part of the allocation for leave time.

Extended Leaves of Absence

Approved leaves of absence include but are not limited to: FMLA, PFML, UW Parental Leave, leave for a medical condition (FMLA or non-FMLA), time off for domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, or hate crime, Military Leave, and Other Unpaid Leave. In accordance with UW GME policy, fellows are entitled to a minimum of 6 weeks of paid parental leave for the birth, adoption, or foster placement of a child. This leave is available to all parents and does not require use of accrued vacation or sick leave.

Fellows are encouraged to communicate planned medical and/or parental leave with the Program Director and Program Administrator as soon as possible in advance of the estimated start date for the absence. Approval is contingent on GME and institutional requirements, not solely program discretion. To ensure clear expectations and understanding of leave, fellows are highly encouraged to consult with GME Leaves of Absence manager, [Bre Leatherman](#), to navigate their parental leave. More resources to assist in leave planning can be found on the [UW GME Leaves of Absence page](#).

Process for applying for leave:

- Complete a [Leave Planning Template](#) and submit it to the PA and PD in writing ahead of time. Determine if a training extension is required or not using guidance from ASN, ACGME, ABIM, and UW Nephrology program requirements.
- The PA and PD will confirm the schedule, then the PA is responsible for entering the leave into MedHub and working with Department of Medicine HR team to enter details into Workday.
- Complete a Leave Request form and submit it to UWHR – see the [UW GME Leaves of Absence page](#) for the appropriate form.
- Decide if you will apply for WA Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML). Applying for PFML is a separate process than applying for leave with UW. It is an optional way to receive payment during your leave if you qualify. To apply, visit: <https://paidleave.wa.gov/>

Fellows can use vacation, sick, and/or personal holiday paid time off balances to remain in “paid” status during an approved leave of absence. Otherwise, the leave is unpaid. Fellows are not required to exhaust paid time off balances prior to taking unpaid leave during an approved leave of absence.

Federal regulations require that the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) maintain up-to-date records on the locations and activities of the exchange visitor physicians it sponsors. Fellows on an ECFMG-sponsored J-1 visa are required to inform ECFMG *in advance* of any planned leave of absence including medical, parental, or academic leave. The [Required Notification of a Leave of Absence \(ecfm.org\)](#) form with instructions is available on the ECFMG website.

Fellows funded by an NIH training grant, like the TL1 NCOR-KUH training grant, are eligible for different parental leave benefits, and fellows should contact the GME Office and NCOR-KUH Program Manager for additional guidance. It is the responsibility of the Program Administrator to work with the Division Administrator and Department of Medicine HR to update the costing allocations in Workday for the leave period.

Extensions of Training:

In accordance with [ABIM Internal Medicine and Subspecialties Board Certification Policies and Procedures](#), Nephrology fellows could take up to 105 days of leave during their 2-year Nephrology training program (35 days per academic year, with an additional 35 days for Deficits in Required Training Time policy in effect) without needing to extend their training. The Program Director and Administrator will provide guidance to the fellow based on published ABIM Nephrology board certifying standards. If the Nephrology Fellowship Program Director and Clinical Competency Committee attest to ABIM that the trainee has achieved required competence with a deficit of less than 5 weeks (35 days), extended training may not be required. The Program Director may request that ABIM apply the Deficits in Required Training Time policy on a fellow's behalf, and such a request may only be made during the fellow's final year of training. If applicable, the Program Director will request a deficit in training time when submitting evaluations for the final year of standard training via FasTrack, and the request is subject to ABIM review. The Deficits in Required Training Time policy is not intended to be used to shorten training before the end of the academic year.