

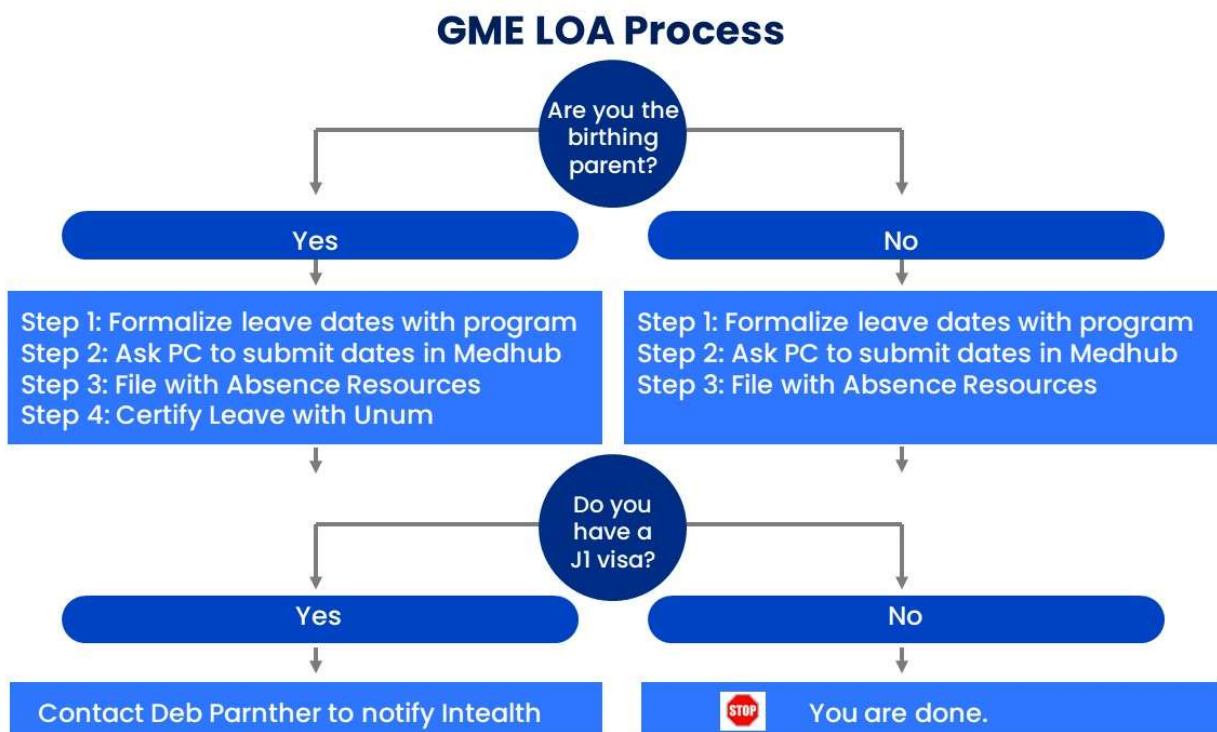
Filing for a Leave of Absence (LOA) as GME Trainee

This guide is meant to take you through the steps involved in filing for a leave of absence (LOA) as a GME trainee and also provide you with responses to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). We are committed to supporting you through this process. If you do not find the answers to your questions in this guide, please reach out directly to your program coordinator or Laurie Dubois in the GME Office (ldubois3@bidmc.harvard.edu) for additional guidance. You may also reach out directly to a member of the HR Absence Management Team (Shannon Lawson; sklawson@bilh.org).

GME-06 outlines policy regarding paid family and medical leaves for GME trainees. **All GME trainees 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).**

All trainees should consult with their Program Directors to understand whether or not a training extension will be required in order to meet all program and board requirements.

The flowing flow chart is intended to help guide you through the required steps for filing your leave depending on your circumstances.



See below contact information needed to complete the steps listed in the chart above.

Absence Resources: www.absenceresources.com or 833-485-4247

Absence Resources is a service utilized by BILH to manage leaves of absences across the institution. It is required for all employees to file leaves directly.

Unum: *will contact you directly as needed after filing with Absence Resources*

Unum is the BILH short-term disability (STD) carrier. They are also the responsible party for certifying the health reason for taking a leave of absence.

J1 Trainees: If training under **J1 visa sponsorship**, please complete the required LOA notification and return to Deborah Parnter (dparnter@bidmc.harvard.edu) in the GME Office:

<https://www.ecfm.org/evsp/notification-LOA.pdf>

All trainees should notify their programs to confirm their first day of leave and update Absence Resources if the dates change.

FAQs for GME Trainees

What if I encounter any payroll related issues or concerns?

It is recommended that you reach out to the GME Office (ldubois3@bidmc.harvard.edu) and your program coordinator as a starting point. You can also simultaneously open a case directly in WorkDay.

What is the MA State PFML plan? Do I need to apply for this?

PFML is the Massachusetts state Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) benefit plan. GME trainees received up to 12-weeks of full salary and benefits continuation. Individuals **do NOT need file with the state plan UNLESS more than 12 weeks of leave is needed**. If that is the case, see link for more info:

<https://www.mass.gov/how-to/how-to-apply-for-paid-family-and-medical-leave-pfml>

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

The 12 weeks of salary continuation benefit 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 Absence Resources and PFML (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 and offer you additional program specific guidance. Official filing of your leave with Absence Resources should be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the anticipated leave start date. Beginning the process 90 days out is encouraged.

Are there any specific steps needed for research sponsored trainees?

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 Absence Resources. If that is 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. 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 Short Term Disability (STD) benefits are being utilized, is to complete the certification of health condition process. It is a requirement for trainees to complete this step.

Does everyone need to file with Unum?

Unum is only required for trainees as certification of health condition is needed from a non BIDMC party. 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 for leaves greater than 12 weeks) an employee must have earned atleast 30% of the benefits they would qualify for. For a 12 month leave, a typical GME trainee 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 (PFML) be utilized?

You can only apply once you are within the 60-day window of the anticipated leave. Use only when expecting to be on leave more than 12 weeks.

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

PFML 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 befits 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). This benefit is primarily only utilized if the length of leave is greater than 12-weeks.

If I am the non-birthing 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 allowed in two separate blocks of time, with program approval of the dates requested. This time is not to exceed 12 weeks combined and must be taken in full within 12 months of the birth. The time cannot be parsed into multiple smaller increments.

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 refer to the housestaff internal resources page or this link to sign up:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ACOd1agEiEmw-8Wji56YpXU366ZgrFZZIgpMEWIZUM/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 can be directed 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.