



MEMORANDUM

To: All VEF Fellows
Cc: VEF Staff
From: Kien Pham, Executive Director
Date: December 1, 2005

Subject: Policy on Leave of Absence

This is to inform you about our policy on a leave of absence from your university. This memorandum supersedes all previous written or oral communication from VEF on the subject.

During your study in the U.S., you might need to leave your academic program for unexpected personal or professional reasons. A leave of absence is defined as the period during which you are not enrolled in the academic program. Normal university breaks, including the summer, are not in this category. As your program sponsor, VEF is responsible to the U.S. Government for your legal status; therefore, we require you to comply with our policy and procedures.

Requesting a Leave of Absence:

First, you need to obtain a written authorization to leave your academic program signed by both your academic advisor and your department chair. This authorization should clearly state: 1) the beginning and ending dates of your approved leave; 2) procedures for re-admission; and 3) confirmation that the financial support intended for you by the university/department would remain unchanged and would resume when you return to your academic program.

Then, with the written authorization from the university, you can request a leave from VEF by completing the online form, entitled "Request for Leave of Absence," at www.vef.gov/veffellows. While the university might or might not ask for your reason(s) to leave, VEF will ask for that information to make a determination. It is important that you give us complete and truthful information so we can assist you in this matter.

Granting a Leave of Absence:

We will notify you in writing within two weeks after you submit your completed request form. The maximum period for a leave of absence that VEF will approve is 12 months. If you have J-2 dependents, they would need to leave the U.S. with you because they cannot legally remain in the country without you being in active J-1 status.

It is important to note that for your leave of absence, VEF will be required to close your existing SEVIS record. At the end of your approved leave, we will open a new SEVIS record and issue you a new Form DS-2019. As usual, we will help arrange a U.S. visa interview appointment for you in Vietnam, but we cannot promise that you will receive a J-1 visa at that time. This same SEVIS and visa procedure would also apply to your J-2 dependents.

Though VEF may grant an approval, VEF is not responsible for any expenses related to your leave of absence.

During your leave of absence, you are required to contact VEF by email once every three months to update us on your situation and reconfirm your intent to return to your academic program.

Lastly, we hope you will not have to take this career-halting step; but if you must do so, we will be there to support you.