

Professor Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer

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**TO:** Boston University Academic Deans

**FROM:** Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer 

Daniel Kleinman, Associate Provost for Graduate Affairs 

**DATE:** April 3, 2019

**SUBJECT:** Vacation Policy for PhD Students

Boston University has recently established a [vacation policy](#) for PhD students who are supported by stipends. This policy comes in the context of substantial discussion and research in recent years on PhD student mental health and work-life balance. There is broad consensus that, given the heavy workload graduate students are often asked to shoulder, there should be guaranteed opportunities for them to step away from their research to rest and recharge. Some PhD students at BU have expressed concern about difficult working conditions they have faced. Further, some faculty have highlighted the need for students to create a reasonable balance between their scholarly work and other aspects of their lives. **Through this new benefit, the University makes an investment that we believe will help provide that balance and result in even greater effectiveness and creativity from our talented PhD students.**

This new policy goes into effect on September 1, 2019. It reflects the work and thinking of students, faculty, and academic leaders across BU, and it was refined through discussion in Graduate Council, the Committee on Graduate Academic Program and Policies, and University Council.

The policy specifically states “*that all PhD students receiving stipended support are entitled to paid vacation time.*”

- *Students with a 12-month stipend are entitled to two weeks (10 working days) of paid vacation time per academic calendar year (September 1 through August 31 of the following year).*
- *Students with shorter appointments are entitled to a pro-rated amount of paid vacation time per academic year, such as 6 days for 8-month appointments and 8 days for 10-month appointments.”*

This guaranteed vacation time must be taken during a single academic year and will not accrue and roll over to the next academic year. PhD students are expected to coordinate vacation time requests with their research advisor, training grant PI and/or their teaching supervisor.

If you are interested in further background and context, there have been stories published about the policy in both [BU Today](#) and [Inside Higher Ed](#).

We ask that you communicate the details of this policy and its importance to the faculty and students in your school or college. Your support will be crucial to the policy's success.

Thank you, in advance, for your assistance in implementing this important new policy. In the event that you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Daniel Kleinman, Associate Provost for Graduate Affairs, at [dlklein@bu.edu](mailto:dlklein@bu.edu).