

ABPS Personal Leave Policy

The American Board of Plastic Surgery (ABPS) (Board) has established an **optional** 12 weeks of Personal Leave that is available to residents in **Integrated, Independent and Competency-Based** plastic surgery residency training programs. The Personal Leave Policy went into effect beginning with the 2019-2020 academic year. This is a Board (ABPS) Policy. Program Directors are not required to offer this optional 12 weeks of personal leave to residents.

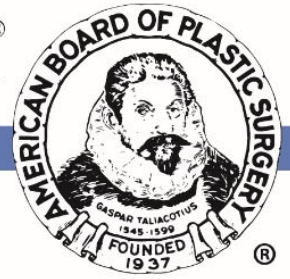
The 12 weeks of Personal Leave may only be used for maternity, paternity, foster care, adoption, medical or family leave or elective rotations, both international and domestic*, for a minimum of 5 consecutive days (one week) or more. Personal Leave can be used exclusively for medical/family leave, as defined by the Board, exclusively for rotations or any combination of both. **These 12 weeks of Personal Leave replace the previous 12-week block of elective rotations.** Personal Leave is not required to be taken as a single block but can be distributed throughout the entire residency as the training program allows.

Personal Leave may not be used for short-term required Military trips associated with Reservist or National Guard requirements. The decision to enlist as a Reservist or with the National Guard was a conscious decision and the required activities were a known requirement. The ABPS Personal Leave Policy may not be used for deployment-associated active-duty military obligations. Currently the ABPS does not allow partial years of training. For long-term deployments, greater than 3 months, as active duty, National Guard or Reservist, the resident may request the Board to consider accepting partial years of training. Only full months of clinical training will be considered, not weeks of training.

Personal Leave may not be used for administrative leave related to but not limited to academic restrictions, unprofessionalism, low milestone scores or poor performance on the In-Service Examination, poor academic performance or probation.

Effective July 1, 2021, no more than 4 weeks of personal leave can be taken during the last 3 months of plastic surgery residency training. Personal Leave is not to be used for travel and moving activities related to transition to a new residency position, fellowship training, new practice, or interviews. Residents must use the 4 non-clinical weeks allotted per year for moving activities and interviews. Academic conferences/educational meetings are considered part of the 48 clinical weeks of residency training.

Personal Leave is not to be used for isolated/single scheduled medical appointments or sick days. The intention of the Personal Leave Policy is to cover unexpected or planned extended medical or family leave related to significant medical or family events. It is not the intention of the Board to monitor and approve every sick day during the residents' training. The Personal Leave Policy was designed to help those residents that have significant medical episodes that might cause them to extend their plastic surgery residency training.



Program Directors should inform the Board as soon as they learn that Personal Leave will be required. Because of the large number of weeks requested, maternity/paternity/medical/other personal leave should be requested in a timely manner.

International and domestic rotations should be requested 90 days prior to the scheduled rotation. Approval by the Board prior to the event will hopefully prevent extended training by confirming that the proposed leave is allowed.

To monitor resident safety and completion of training, all personal leave and all international and individual domestic* rotations, whether full clinical or observational, must be approved by the Program Director and the ABPS. In addition, all international rotations must be approved by the Plastic Surgery Residency Review Committee (RRC-PS). Refer to the Board's requirements for international rotations.

*Domestic rotations that are a standard part of the program's curriculum (all residents in the program will complete that rotation and the training program has a Program Letter of Agreement (PLA) for that rotation) **do not** require Board approval and will count toward the clinical weeks of training. Domestic rotations that are specific to an individual and are not completed by all residents at that program, will require Board approval under the Personal Leave Policy.

Once the 12 weeks of Personal Leave are exhausted, any additional leave must come from the 4 non-clinical weeks per year, currently allowed by the Board. The 4 non-clinical weeks may be averaged over the length of the residency. The resident does not have to utilize all available non-clinical weeks before becoming eligible for Personal Leave.

Personal Leave is considered independent of research time. **Residents may not use Personal Leave during research.**

Research Rotations

The ABPS will allow a total of 6 weeks during a 3-year Independent program and 12 weeks during a 6-year Integrated program for research. This research time is to be devoted exclusively to research and should **not** be utilized for personal leave or elective domestic or international away rotations. These research weeks can be considered as part of the 48 clinical weeks of training required each academic year.

The weeks do not have to be successive but should not be divided up into more than 3 blocks for integrated residents and 2 blocks for independent residents.



To utilize the research time effectively, a project should be submitted to the Program Director or their designee at least 90 days before the research time is scheduled to begin. The Program Director must approve the project and assign a faculty mentor who will supervise the residents.

A written report summarizing the results of the research project must be submitted to the Program Director at the conclusion of the research time. Research rotations **do not** have to be approved by the Board, and the final report **does not** have to be submitted to the Board Office.

To receive approval for Personal Leave, the Program Director must provide details regarding the leave request in a timely manner and explain how the combination of Personal Leave and non-clinical weeks still allows the resident to accomplish the 48 clinical weeks per year that the Board requires. The 12 weeks of Personal Leave, whether used for maternity, paternity, medical, family, foster care, adoption or elective rotations, will count towards the 48 clinical weeks required per year. The 4 non-clinical weeks per year **do not** count towards the 48 clinical weeks per year. The Board does not define the remaining 4 weeks per year beyond the 48 weeks of required clinical training and therefore those weeks may be used for vacation, medical leave, rotations or any activity as determined by the local institution and/or program. Personal Leave taken beyond the combination of 12 weeks of personal leave and the 4 non-clinical weeks per year, averaged over the residency, will result in extended plastic surgery residency training.

Program Directors are required to attest that the resident satisfactorily completed all Plastic Surgery Milestones. This attestation must be completed by the Program Director at the time the Residency Graduation Form is requested by the Board and the Program Director officially “signs off” on the graduating resident.

To receive Board approval of Personal Leave, the resident must have completed the required ABPS Resident Registration and Evaluation of Training Form. This process can be found on the Board’s website under the Resident Tab [Resident Registration and Evaluation of Training Form](#). To begin the Registration process and to gain access to the online Resident Registration and Evaluation of Training Form, **residents** can access the Registration link here [ABPS Registration](#).

Program Directors (**not residents**) must contact the Board in writing for approval of any Personal Leave. The Program Director must send a letter to the Board Office via email to info@abplasticsurgery.org detailing the following:

1. Full name of resident;
2. Reason for personal leave;
3. Exact dates of expected personal leave (start date of leave and anticipated date of return to clinical rotations);



4. Number of weeks of any previously used and ABPS approved personal leave;
5. Number of clinical weeks worked and expected for each year of the resident's training;
6. PSY level of training that personal leave will be taken; and
7. Completed ABPS Training and Personal Leave Chart (refer below).

Please complete the ABPS Training and Personal Leave Chart below and include it in the letter requesting Board approval. For each academic year, include exact TO and FROM academic year dates, include all **anticipated and completed** clinical weeks worked and all **anticipated and completed** non-clinical weeks (vacation) for all years of plastic surgery residency training.

Independent Programs – include all 3 years of plastic surgery residency training

Integrated Programs – include all 6 years of plastic surgery residency training

Academic Year m/d/y to m/d/y	Resident Level	Total # Clinical Weeks Worked	Total # Non- Clinical Weeks	Total # Weeks Personal Leave
July 1, 20 – June 30, 20	PSY-I			
July 1, 20 – June 30, 20	PSY-II			
July 1, 20 – June 30, 20	PSY-III			
July 1, 20 – June 30, 20	PSY-IV			
July 1, 20 – June 30, 20	PSY-V			
July 1, 20 – June 30, 20	PSY-VI			
TOTALS				

Hand Surgery Fellows:

Hand surgery fellows are required to complete 48 clinical weeks of training per year. Effective November 2021, if requested by the fellowship program director and approved by the Board, the fellow may take up to 4 weeks of personal leave during the 48 clinical weeks. Refer to the ABPS Hand Fellowship Personal Leave Policy for more detailed information.