

Graduate Student Parental Leave Policy – REVISED 3/2018.

Definitions: College (College of Health), Graduate School (University of Utah Graduate School), University (University of Utah)

Preamble

The purpose of this policy is to provide Department Chairs and Directors of Graduate Studies with guidelines regarding support for graduate students, paid Teaching Assistants, and paid Research Assistants when they are requesting parental leave for family responsibilities. The College has a collective commitment to fostering a family-friendly environment for its students with policies that support families and gender equity. This policy applies to all pregnant and parenting persons, regardless of sex/gender, gender identity, or gender expression, as long as the caregiver is providing the majority of the care for the child, and applies to the birth or adoption of a child. This policy seeks to support graduate students if they choose to expand their families and continue participation in their educations.

Procedures

During Pregnancy/Immediately Following Childbirth

The College follows all federal, state, and University anti-discrimination laws and policies. Therefore, it explicitly prohibits discrimination on the basis of pregnancy status. The Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO; <https://oeo.utah.edu/>) oversees the University's adherence to Title IX. The OEO is responsible for granting accommodations for pregnancy and parenting based on medical needs in accordance with federal law. Students who need accommodations during pregnancy or as a result of the childbirth process should contact the OEO directly. The role of the faculty is not to determine appropriate accommodations, but rather to refer students to the OEO.

The link below describes pregnancy accommodations:

<https://oeo.utah.edu/how-can-we-help/pregnancy-and-pregnancy-related-accommodations.php>

The following is a link to form requesting accommodations:

https://oeo.utah.edu/resources/documents/pregnancy_accommodation-request-form-FINAL-fillable-3-1-17.pdf

Caregiving after Childbirth or Adoption

Graduate students seeking time off from classes for caregiving and bonding with a new child can request a leave of absence through the Graduate School. The link to the procedures and form for requesting a leave of absence follows: http://registrar.utah.edu/_pdf/graduate-leave-absence.pdf. Students may take up to one year of leave from classes. A leave of absence request does not need to be completed for Summer terms.

If a student wishes to take leave starting in the middle of a regular semester (Fall or Spring), grades of Incomplete ("I") may be possible if the student has completed 80% of the work (per University policy). If the student has not completed 80% of the work, they will need to withdraw from classes, complete the request form, and obtain the necessary signatures. The student needs to bear in mind the potential ramifications of withdrawing in terms of financial aid, health insurance, etc. If a student has health insurance during the semester in which eligibility

requirements were met, the policy would be in effect until it expires. After that point the student has the option to enroll in the Continuation Plan. The Enrollment form is located at www.uhcrs.com/utah.

A student on a leave of absence is not eligible for University assistantship or fellowship funding during the leave. However, if a student is receiving a University assistantship or fellowship, a leave of absence shall not jeopardize their position provided that the original funding mechanism is still viable at the time of their return.

Additional arrangements can be negotiated between the Department Chair and the student. Such arrangements might include, but are not limited to, reduced work schedules, extended deadlines, or extended eligibility clocks. Departments may also compensate a student on an assistantship while releasing them from work responsibilities for up to one semester (recognizing that the student must maintain full-time enrollment during this time in order to be eligible for the assistantship).

If a student is receiving an assistantship funded by a grant, a leave of absence may result in termination of that position depending on the specifics of the internal or external grant that is funding the student. Students who are funded by grants external to the University of Utah must follow the rules of the granting agency with respect to absences from academic and research work. Similarly, students who are funded by Fellowships must follow the sponsoring organization's guidelines.

The student requesting such arrangements must first submit a written request to their Department Chair. Discussions among the Department Chair and the student must occur and must result in document with the following components:

1. Attestation by the student that they will be providing the majority of the care for the child during regular working hours;
2. Conditions and arrangements to be met and made;
3. Dates covered by the agreement; and
4. Signatures of both parties.

If a student is dissatisfied with the arrangements or cannot reach an agreement with the Department Chair, they may appeal to the Associate Dean for Faculty and Academic Affairs within the College. If the student feels that they have been discriminated against, the student may contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action: <http://oeo.utah.edu>.