



UNC CHARLOTTE

The Graduate School

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2/4/2020 Revised: Policy on Parental Leave Accommodations for Graduate Students

Overview

This policy recognizes that graduate students lead complicated lives, which may include parenthood. This policy is designed to protect any graduate student who becomes a parent while he/she is also enrolled as a student.

This policy establishes minimum protections for students, but hiring units are encouraged to work with students to allow up to six weeks of paid time-off for the birth or adoption of a child.

Students who take six weeks of leave must use the time in a continuous block. This policy ensures that:

- Students can maintain their student status/enrollment while on leave;
- Students can keep their stipend if they hold an assistantship;
- All other student benefits remain intact

Planning and Approval

Advanced planning is important so that obligations can be met by the unit and the student. Graduate students who anticipate taking parental leave should meet with their advisors/managers as soon as possible to plan for the parental leave. When possible, advisors and students should create a plan for the student's research activities that includes a flexible schedule during the time off. If an advisor has specific, research-related deadlines that fall during the planned leave, these should be communicated with the student and the department to ensure that they are met. When flexibility alone will not ensure that work continues, funding for a temporary replacement should be used.

When possible, students who anticipate taking leave should not be in teaching roles during their leave semester. Units that need a temporary replacement for the student may submit requests in writing for support grants to their college dean. This policy recognizes that supporting students is a **shared** responsibility. Therefore the hiring unit, along with College, will collaborate with the Graduate School to:

1. provide funding or staffing to ensure that units can continue the work being done by the graduate student during the leave period;
2. enable the graduate student to take a stipend-protected parental leave of absence without losing their role or position with the program.

While this policy recognizes the protections afforded to pregnant women under Title IX, the policy goes beyond the legal protections to ensure that, in cases where a parent is a UNC Charlotte graduate student, that parent has the option to take leave.

This policy does not attempt to cover every circumstance related to parental accommodations. Rather this policy should be seen as the baseline for accommodations. Programs and unit are encouraged to be flexible when accommodating students.