

Graduate Student Parental Leave Policy

SUMMARY

This policy establishes guidelines to protect the interests of graduate students who, while in the course of their graduate academic program, become the primary caregiver to a newborn or adopted child.

BACKGROUND

In 2010, the Graduate Student Association (GSA) was approached by students and faculty about the fact that there was no specific leave policy regarding childbirth or adoption at Saint Louis University for graduate students. Without a clear policy, there are no guidelines in place for the student, mentor, and department to follow in determining how the leave should be structured. This policy was developed from the sub-committee's recommendations to GSA, after a review of policies in place at peer institutions.

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for the benefits under this policy, a graduate student must:

- be enrolled as a full-time graduate student in either a master's or doctoral program
- be in good standing with her or his academic department
- be the primary caregiver to a newborn or adopted child

If both parents are eligible graduate students, only one parent (the primary caregiver) may apply for the parental leave.

PROCEDURE

Students must submit a Petition for Graduate Student Parental Leave to their graduate advisor at least 60 days prior to the expected start of the leave period; exceptions to the rule will only be made in cases of exceptional circumstances. Graduate students on an assistantship or fellowship must submit an additional document that details the impact of and accommodations needed for the leave.

Students are required to be enrolled during a leave period in order to receive benefits.

OVERVIEW

At least 60 days prior to the expected due date or adoption, a graduate student who meets the eligibility criteria above may apply for a Graduate Student Parental Leave. Parental leaves must be approved by the student's mentor or advisor, the academic department chair, the appropriate College, School, or Center graduate education faculty administrator (e.g. Associate Dean for Graduate Education), and the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs.

The Graduate Student Parental Leave Policy will provide relief of all full-time graduate duties including research, teaching responsibilities, and comprehensive or candidacy examinations for 6 weeks following childbirth or adoption. It is mandatory for graduate students on an approved parental leave to maintain continuous enrollment during the leave period. The nature of the coursework is to be determined in consultation with the advisor.

Should a graduate student require additional relief of duties beyond the approved parental leave period, the graduate student must petition for a leave of absence, as described in the Graduate Education Catalog. Students on an approved parental leave will continue to have access to University resources (e.g., e-mail, library privileges).

Graduate Students Receiving University Funding Support

All graduate students receiving University support for health insurance will continue to receive full insurance coverage paid by the University throughout the duration of the parental leave period.

Tuition scholarships for a graduate student on an approved parental leave will be continued during the leave period as necessary.

Graduate students receiving an assistantship stipend will be guaranteed the continuation of their stipend for the first 6 weeks of the leave period, provided those weeks fall within the contracted period of the assistantship. Thereafter, continued funding during the leave period will be at the discretion of the department chair and dean, in consultation with the graduate student and his or her advisor.

Graduate students receiving a University fellowship will be guaranteed the continuation of their stipend for the 6 weeks of the leave period, provided those weeks fall within the contracted period of the fellowship. Thereafter, continued funding during the leave period will be at the discretion of the Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, in consultation with the graduate student and his or her advisor.