Graduate Student Parental Accommodation Policy

The University of Maryland Graduate Student Parental Accommodation Policy provides a period of up to six (6) weeks during which new parents may postpone completion of academic requirements. It is intended to provide graduate students with an opportunity to integrate the challenges of new parenthood with the demands of graduate-level training, scholarship, and research. In addition to providing support to young families, this policy seeks to reduce attrition and improve time to degree for students who become parents.

The Parental Accommodation Policy is not a leave of absence. This policy allows students to maintain status as full-time, registered graduate students, and thus be eligible for the rights and privileges of registered students (e.g., access to University resources) while adjusting to their new familial obligations.

During this parental accommodation period, eligible students will continue to be enrolled as full-time graduate students and will continue to pay tuition and fees. Students also will be expected to keep the lines of communication with their departments open and demonstrate to their advisors that they are academically engaged and making progress in coursework and research, though perhaps at a slower pace.

ELIGIBILITY: To be eligible to apply for the benefits of the Parental Accommodation Policy, a new parent must (1) have been enrolled full-time for at least one full semester in a graduate program at the University, (2) be enrolled full-time at the time of application, (3) be in good academic standing, and (4) be making satisfactory progress toward degree. Any parent (regardless of gender) is eligible to apply.

In the event that both parents are eligible, each is individually entitled to a Parental Accommodation period of up to six (6) weeks. This Parental Accommodation period may be taken concurrently with or consecutively to the Parental Accommodation period taken by the other parent, with or without some overlap. The total combined Parental Accommodation period for both parents, however, may not exceed 12 weeks and must conclude 12 weeks following the child’s birth or adoption.

ACCOMMODATION: Approval of a student’s application for a period of Parental Accommodation allows the student, assuming the prior agreement of instructors, advisor, and academic program, to modify deadlines and academic expectations to accommodate the student’s new parental responsibilities. Students may be able to postpone completion of course assignments, examinations, and other academic requirements for a period of up to six (6) weeks. Students who will be enrolled in courses during the accommodation period must meet with their instructors to develop a written plan as to how they will satisfactorily complete the course(s). These plans must be approved and signed by the instructor(s) and submitted as part of the Parental Accommodation Application form. At the end of the accommodation period, students are expected to return to graduate study and resume progress toward completion of their degree.

Deadlines with regard to time to degree, time to candidacy, time to comprehensive or qualifying exams, etc. will be extended one semester per childbirth or adoption, upon the request of the
student. The total additional time granted for the extension of any deadlines as a result of the student’s use of the Parental Accommodation Policy, however, cannot exceed a maximum period of one (1) year, regardless of the number of births or adoptions, or the number of times the student invokes the Parental Accommodation Policy.

The period of Parental Accommodation begins immediately upon the birth or adoption; must be taken in a consecutive block of time; and cannot extend beyond six (6) weeks. The student may not divide the accommodation period into separate periods or defer the accommodation period beyond this time limit. In the event of simultaneous multiple births or adoptions, the maximum Parental Accommodation period for which a student is eligible with respect to that event remains six (6) weeks.

**APPLICATION:** At least eight (8) weeks prior to the anticipated birth or adoption, students must submit a written application for Parental Accommodation signed by the Faculty Advisor, Director of Graduate Studies, and the Chair of their academic department, to the Graduate School. (In unusual or extraordinary circumstances, the Graduate School may accept applications with less than eight week’s notice.)

Written plans to complete coursework, signed by the student and the instructor, must be provided for each course in which the student will be enrolled during the accommodation period. The discretion to provide an accommodation that allows a student to be away from the classroom for six weeks rests with the individual course instructor. Faculty are strongly encouraged to work with students to develop an accommodation that permits the student to fulfill academic coursework requirements while benefitting from a period of parental accommodation, and that also maintains fairness with regard to other students. In some cases such an accommodation may not be feasible. In such cases, faculty should provide a written explanation to the department’s Director of Graduate Studies as to why the accommodation is not possible, and students should adjust their class schedules accordingly.

The Dean of the Graduate School will review the request and notify the student and the student’s academic program if the request for a period of Parental Accommodation has been approved. The Graduate School will coordinate with academic programs to make appropriate adjustments to the student’s deadlines and records. Retroactive requests will not be considered. A copy of the application form is attached.

International students should discuss plans with the Office of International Services as soon as possible in order to identify and address proactively any individual or unique visa issues and/or to consider the latest applicable regulations. The intent of this policy is to permit all students to maintain their status as full-time, enrolled students during this period of accommodation.

Medical complications, prior to or following the birth, are not covered by this policy. If a student is not able to return at the end of the period of accommodation, s/he should consider applying for a Leave of Absence. See [http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog/registration_policies.htm#8](http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog/registration_policies.htm#8).

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