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Doctoral Student Parental Accommodation Policy

PLEASE NOTE: The Graduate Center’s pilot Doctoral Student Parental Accommodation Policy (the “Policy”) will be in effect for the 2014–2015 – 2015-2016 academic years. Following this two-year pilot period, the Policy is subject to evaluation and possible revision. The Policy does not apply to doctoral students pursuing a degree in the lab sciences (“CUNY Science Scholars”), who are covered by a separate parental accommodation policy.

Introduction

In recognition of the challenges of balancing the demands of doctoral study and parenting a new child, this policy is intended to further the Graduate Center’s commitment to supporting programs and services to help graduate student parents to meet their family care obligations while they pursue their academic goals. The Policy assists doctoral students immediately prior to and/or immediately following the birth or adoption of a young child. The purpose of the Policy is to make it possible for a student to maintain registered full-time student status, along with all the benefits of such status, while facilitating the return to full participation in courses, research and teaching. The Policy is not intended to replace communication between the student and the program, but rather to serve as a framework and to provide support for family situations. At all times, the student should work proactively with the advisor and Executive Officer to ensure progress towards academic goals. Faculty should be flexible in their expectations of students who become new parents, so that students can meet the demands of graduate study at the same time that they face new demands in their parental roles.

Eligibility

The Policy applies only to full-time, enrolled Graduate Center doctoral students (other than CUNY Science Scholars) who are in good academic standing and are making satisfactory progress toward completion of their degree. The Policy covers students who experience a childbirth (either who give birth or whose spouse or partner gives birth) or who adopt a child under the age of 6. Students who have completed at least two full-time semesters of their degree program have the option of applying for a one-semester service reduction (see Section III below).

Categories of Parental Accommodation

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There are three categories of parental accommodation: **(I)** Extension of time limits to degree or candidacy; **(II)** Parental academic accommodation for a total of one six-week period to be taken immediately prior to and/or immediately following the birth or adoption.; **(III)** Service reduction for funded students during the semester that the birth or adoption occurs or the immediately following semester. Students must have completed at least two full-time semesters of their degree program to become eligible for service reduction.

I. Extension of Time Limits to Degree or Candidacy

Eligible students are entitled to an academic extension of six months per birth or adoption to the maximum time limits to degree and candidacy as established in the Graduate Center's academic policies. In the event of a multiple birth or adoption, the length of the extension period is still limited to six months. The six-month extension does not serve to extend the period of the student's fellowship, if any (see Section III.B below).

II. Parental Academic Accommodation Period

All eligible students will be granted a parental academic accommodation period ("accommodation period") of up to six weeks to be taken immediately prior to and/or immediately following the birth or adoption. During this period of accommodation, the student will continue to be enrolled as a full-time student. Because the student remains enrolled as a full-time student and continues to pay tuition, this is not a leave of absence. It is instead a modification of deadlines and academic expectations to accommodate the student's new parental responsibilities. The student will be able to postpone completion of course assignments, examinations, and other academic requirements. The student should consult in advance with his/her advisor and Executive Officer about how the student will meet academic goals and requirements. The student is responsible for ensuring that this consultation takes place as far in advance of the accommodation period as possible. Accommodations will be tailored to the student's individual circumstances and academic responsibilities.

The student must complete the accommodation period within six weeks of the birth or adoption. The student may not divide the time period of parental accommodation for use past this time limit. If both parents are eligible graduate students, both may take the six-week accommodation period. The total accommodation period for each birth or adoption is limited to six weeks; in the event of a multiple birth or adoption, the length of the accommodation period will be limited to six weeks. After the end of the accommodation period, students are expected to return to graduate study and resume progress toward completing their degrees.

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III. Service Reduction for Funded Students During the Parental Accommodation Period

A. Doctoral Students Employed by the Graduate Center

Doctoral students (other than CUNY Science Scholars) who are supported by the Graduate Center on a Graduate Assistantship A, B, or C, or in a teaching/non-teaching adjunct position will be excused from their regular teaching, research, clinical, or other training duties for the semester in which the birth or adoption occurs or the immediately following semester, at the election of the student. If the birth or adoption takes place during the summer, the student is eligible for the service reduction in the fall semester. The service reduction may not span two semesters. During the semester of parental accommodation, these students will receive financial support from the Graduate Center in the form of a Graduate Assistantship D (GAD), which provides eligibility for NYSHIP, and non-service University Fellowship funds, which together will total the amount of support that would otherwise have been received. The student will be responsible for the 50 hours of service per semester required of the GAD title. The student's Executive Officer will make an appropriate GAD service assignment.

B. Doctoral Student Five-Year Fellowship Recipients

Doctoral students (other than CUNY Science Scholars) who are supported by five-year fellowships (e.g., Enhanced Chancellor's Fellowships, Graduate Center Fellowships) will experience no change in the total amount of their funding during the semester of parental accommodation; they will continue to receive their fellowship support and benefits. During the semester of parental accommodation, eligible students will receive financial support from the Graduate Center in the form of a Graduate Assistantship D (GAD), which provides eligibility for NYSHIP. The student will be responsible for the 50 hours of appropriate service per semester required of the GAD. The student's Executive Officer will make the GAD service requirement. The student will receive the remaining portion of his/her fellowship as a non-service University Fellowship stipend and the same tuition benefit received under his/her fellowship. For eligible students on five-year fellowships, the period of the service reduction will NOT serve to extend the period of the fellowship, which remains five years.

C. Doctoral Students without Financial Support from the Graduate Center who provide service within CUNY

Doctoral students (other than CUNY Science Scholars) holding positions within CUNY through which they are eligible for NYSHIP are also eligible to apply for parental accommodation. Those

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who wish to give up their positions at CUNY during the semester of parental accommodation will be eligible to receive a Graduate Assistantship D (GAD) with an appropriate service requirement from the Graduate Center which will allow them to maintain NYSHIP coverage. In order to qualify for this, students must submit an appointment letter for their eligible CUNY position as part of their applications.

PLEASE NOTE:

- Students who are supported by fellowships external to the University must adhere to the rules of the granting agency with respect to absences from academic and research work.
- In the event that both parents are full-time doctoral students at the Graduate Center, only one is eligible for a reduction in service during the parental accommodation period. Both parents are eligible for the extension on time to degree/time to candidacy and the parental academic accommodation.

Planning

With assistance from the Executive Officer, it is the student's responsibility to make arrangements as early as possible with faculty for course completion and for continuation of teaching, research, and/or clinical activities affected by the six-week extension period and semester reduction in work hours. The student should also discuss with his/her advisor(s) how these accommodations might affect time-sensitive research, teaching, or clinical projects, and the feasibility of his/her continued participation in these same projects. A policy cannot anticipate every individual circumstance, so students who need additional accommodation due to medical needs during or after pregnancy, such as in the case of Caesarean birth, should consult with the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs and their advisors/Executive Officers about arrangements for additional accommodation.

Students should initiate discussions with their advisors and Executive Officers and apply for the provisions of parental accommodation as early as possible to provide time necessary to reassign teaching duties for those students supported by teaching assistantships, or to adjust clinical assignments, or laboratory and other research schedules. The planning period should also be used to reach agreement on a timeline for academic work (e.g., class work, qualifying exam and other academic milestones, field work, time-sensitive research reports on sponsored projects) that may be affected by the six-week extension of requirements or one-semester reduction of service. It is

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essential that a student consult with his/her advisor(s) well in advance if the nature of his/her funding or research grant conditions require that specific tasks be completed by specified dates, or if a Principal Investigator (PI) will need to hire additional help to meet those conditions during a period of reduced activity by the graduate student. Students who are teaching should consult with their direct supervisors on the campus.

Students should also be assured that sensitive or personal information they share with their supervisors, advisors, Executive Officers, and the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, such as medical information, will be treated with utmost discretion and communicated only to pertinent individuals. Students must feel free to share information in an environment where their privacy is respected.

Special Notice to International Students

Students who are attending the Graduate Center with an F-1 student visa or J-1 Exchange Visitor visa are strongly encouraged to consult in advance with the International Center about their plans during the period of Parental Accommodation.

Application and Approval Process

An eligible student must submit an application for Doctoral Student Parental Accommodation to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. In the case of childbirth, the student must submit the application no later than the 24th week of pregnancy. In the case of adoption, the application must be submitted as soon as the adoption is confirmed. Appropriate documentation (i.e., a signed letter from the student's health care provider with an estimate of the delivery date or from the adoption agency with an estimate of the adoption date) must accompany the application.

The student must specify on the application whether he/she intends to receive the six-week academic accommodation during the period immediately preceding, and/or the period immediately following, the anticipated birth or adoption. If the student is requesting a one-semester service reduction, he/she must specify whether he/she intends to take it in the semester of the anticipated birth/adoption or in the next immediately following semester. (As noted in section III.C. above, doctoral students holding positions within CUNY through which they are eligible for NYSHIP must submit an appointment letter for their eligible CUNY position.)

The student must consult in advance with his/her instructors, advisers(s) and work supervisors and obtain the signature of his/her Executive Officer, who must indicate that he/she has received

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notice that the student has requested the parental accommodations as specified on the application form.

Assuming that the student meets the requisite eligibility requirements, the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs will notify the student, the student's doctoral program, and the relevant University administrative offices that the six-week extension of academic requirements and the one-semester graduate assistantship service reduction have been approved, along with the start date for the extension and excusal periods.

Extended Leave

Students who wish or need to take a longer period of leave, without continuation of funding, may request a leave of absence through the established policy of the Graduate Center.

Doctoral Student Parental Accommodation Request Form

For the full text of the Doctoral Student Parental Policy please visit
[The Graduate Center website](#)



Note: Please consult with appropriate academic advisers, instructors and work supervisors before submitting this application.

You must submit the following supporting documentation along with this form to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs

- If applicable, appointment letter for eligible CUNY position (see [section III C](#) of policy), *and*
- A letter from your medical provider with an actual or anticipated delivery date, or
- A letter from the adoption agency with an actual or anticipated adoption date.

Student Name

Banner ID

Student E-mail Address

Program Name / Level

Anticipated Date of Birth or Adoption *(It is understood that this is an anticipated date and actual date of delivery or adoption may differ.)*

Date

If applicable, what is beginning date of six week academic accommodation period?

Date

If applicable, when will the service reduction be taken?

In semester of anticipated birth/adoption

Fall

Spring

In semester following birth/adoption

Fall

Spring

Student Signature

Date

Executive Officer: By signing you affirm that you are aware that the student has consulted with appropriate academic advisers, instructors and work supervisors before submitting this application.

Executive Officer Signature

Date

Vice President for Student Affairs Signature

Date