

Parental Support and Relief for Graduate Assistants

Approved by Graduate Council September 11, 2008

Graduate assistants who wish to suspend their academic responsibilities because of the birth or adoption of a child may request parental support or relief during the semester in which the birth or adoption occurs. This policy applies to graduate students who are current graduate assistants and who are/will be related to the child as mother or father, including domestic partners. If both parents are graduate assistants, this policy applies to both. This policy is not mandatory – if the graduate assistant chooses not to suspend academic responsibilities during the semester of the birth or adoption of a child, no action is warranted.

Summary of Policy

1. The Graduate Assistant must be currently enrolled in an academic program, and in good academic standing.
2. The Graduate Assistant shall provide his/her employer with written notice not less than thirty days prior to the date of the requested leave, if practicable. In the case of unforeseen/emergency circumstances only, the graduate assistant must give a verbal notice to his/her employer at least twenty-four hours prior to taking leave.
3. The Graduate Assistant must provide medical or legal documentation of the birth or adoption to his/her supervisor.
4. Duration of the leave is not to exceed the semester immediately following the semester in which the birth or adoption occurs.
5. Prior to taking the leave, the Graduate Assistant must make all arrangements with course instructors regarding making up coursework during the time of the leave.
6. If receiving a stipend, the stipend will be suspended at the time of leave through the remainder of the semester. The student will not receive additional semesters of financial support beyond what is specified in Graduate Assistant policies.
7. If receiving a tuition scholarship, the scholarship will be retained by the student, who will complete all course requirements as determined in item #5 above. If the student withdraws from courses, the student must repay the scholarship amount, as described in current graduate assistantship policies.
8. The Graduate Assistant shall retain full access to UNI library services, computing services including e-mail and MyUniverse, health center, sports and performing arts activities, and on-campus housing during the semester of leave, provided the necessary financial obligations are satisfied. If the student withdraws from all courses, the student will lose access to these services.
9. The Graduate Assistant will be granted a one semester extension on the recency requirement of seven years for graduate work applied to the program of study. The Graduate Assistant must file a student request to enact this extension.

Special Considerations

- All graduate assistants are responsible for determining the implications for eligibility of student loans and loan deferment privileges.
- All graduate assistants are responsible for discussing with their research advisor how a leave would affect time-sensitive research projects and reporting, and the feasibility of resuming the same research project on return from leave.
- International graduate assistants are responsible for determining the implications of a leave for fulfilling visa requirements.
- As employees of the University, all graduate assistants are eligible to utilize benefits specified in the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), whether for parental support or for reasons other than those specified in this policy.