Policy on Parental Leave for Graduate Students

I. Purpose and Scope

This policy offers graduate students who become parents with the option of requesting a leave from their academic requirements and other teaching and research responsibilities. The policy applies to all full time, registered graduate students at Northeastern in good standing.

II. Definitions

N/A

III. Policy

Graduate students at Northeastern University, who are full time, and registered, may be eligible to request a six-week parental leave. The six weeks may be taken at any time within one year surrounding the birth or adoption of a child. The timing must be agreed to in advance and in writing between the graduate student and her/his academic advisor and her/his department chair. Specific provisions of the leave will vary based on the student’s program and/or responsibilities to the University, as described more fully below.

During the parental leave, the student may be able to postpone course assignments, examinations, teaching and research responsibilities, and/or other academic requirements. Also, the graduate student may be granted a full semester extension (4 months relative to the timing of the event) to meet departmental, college, and University requirements.
In order to be eligible for consideration under this policy, a graduate student must:
be a full-time graduate student in good standing at Northeastern University;
provide a letter from a physician or other health care professional stating an anticipated arrival
date or provide documentation specifying an expected date of adoption;
to the extent possible notify her/his academic department of request for the six-week leave of
absence at least four months in advance of the anticipated due date or adoption date;
complete the Request for Parental Leave form and obtain the appropriate approval signatures.

Confirmation of student’s academic appointments by the appropriate administrators is
separate from approval of leave, and must not be unreasonably withheld.

If both parents are current Northeastern University graduate students, only one student-parent
is eligible to receive Parental Leave per birth or adoption.

Graduate students who are stipend supported and have guaranteed support from their
program may request a parental leave with stipend and tuition support (see below). Full-time
graduate students who are not stipend or tuition supported may request a parental leave
without tuition or stipend support.

2. Graduate Students with Continuing Appointments as Teaching Assistants or Research
Assistants.

A graduate student who is eligible for a six-week Parental Leave and has a continuing
appointment as a research assistant or teaching assistant (during the anticipated delivery or
arrival date) as confirmed by their respective academic departments is eligible for continued
stipend support and tuition support during the Parental Leave. The timing of the leave with
continued stipend and tuition support must be consistent with the academic unit’s funding
commitment to the student. Parental leave may not be taken during a time when the student
would, otherwise not receive a stipend and tuition support.

If a student requests a leave that is longer than six weeks, this leave must be approved by the
graduate student’s home department as a personal leave and the balance of time beyond six
weeks will be considered an unpaid, unsupported leave.

A. For Teaching Assistants Only
• The student’s continuing appointment must be confirmed by the department chair and
  the graduate associate dean of the appropriate college.
• The academic unit must provide that there is a set of equivalent work activities (consistent with the appointment) to assign to the student upon return from the Parental Leave.

• Funding for the six-week leave stipend will be provided from existing teaching assistant funds.

B. For Research Assistants Only

• The continuing appointment as a research assistant must be confirmed by the principal investigator of the funded project that supports the graduate student.

• Parental leave for a graduate student working on an externally funded research grant must be administered consistent with funding agency guidelines regarding parental or other leaves.

• If the funding agency defers to University established policy then the leave will be funded by the grant.

• If the funding agency does not allow for a paid parental leave or a paid leave from work then the graduate student will be eligible for payment from University funds.

C. International Students

By law, international students are eligible for medical leaves only.

• It is essential that an international graduate student remain in compliance with immigration laws during a Parental Leave. It is strongly recommended that they consult with the International Student and Scholar Institute (ISSI) for the most current and appropriate procedures to follow.

• An international graduate student who wishes to be considered for Parental Leave must request a medical leave of absence from ISSI for a period consistent with the anticipated due date of the child. A letter from a physician or health care professional is required so the application for the medical leave may be processed through ISSI.

• Students may request a full medical leave or a reduced course load leave.

• Immigration regulations may negatively affect the availability of the paternity leave policy to international students.

IV. Additional Information

Because of programmatic differences, this policy does not apply to the School of Law, which has its own policy on parental leave. For further information, please contact the Assistant Dean of Students at the School of Law.
V. **Contact Information**

Associate Vice Provost for Graduate Education (617) 373-2170