

Policy on Parental Leave for Graduate Students

ACADEMIC AND FACULTY AFFAIRS

Effective Date: January
11, 2010

Date Revised: August
21, 2017

Supersedes: N/A

Related Policies:
Family and Medical
Leave

Responsible
Office/Department:
Office of the Provost

Keywords: family leave;
parenting leave; medical
leave; teaching
assistants; research
assistants

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 twelve week parental leave. The twelve 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 twelve 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 twelve 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 twelve weeks, this leave must be approved by the graduate student's home department as a personal leave and the balance of time beyond twelve 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 twelve 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 holding F-1 or J-1 student status

- It is essential that international students who hold F-1 or J-1 visa status remain in compliance with U.S. federal government regulations even in the case of a leave due to parental responsibilities.
- Students must consult in advance with the Office of Global Services (OGS) to review the current procedures

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

Vice Provost for Graduate Education (617) 373-2170