

PARENTAL ACCOMMODATION

Eligibility

The Graduate Student Parental Accommodation applies to active students of all gender identities and gender expressions in The Graduate School who experience the birth or adoption of a child for whom they have parental responsibilities.

- Those adopting children over the age of 18 or a spouse's or partner's child are not covered by this policy.
- Those residing in localities where legal adoption is not an option but who are assuming parental responsibilities and otherwise meet the eligibility criteria are covered by this policy.

Students are eligible who have not utilized a parental accommodation during the previous 12 months before the requested accommodation start date.

Accommodation Options

Accommodation options vary with the student's funding status and funding source:

- Funded graduate students (graduate assistants, research assistants, teaching assistants, fellows) who are eligible to receive tuition and stipend from the University during the accommodation period may request paid leave from their duties for a 12 week accommodation period.
 - Funding will be provided by The Graduate School during the 12 week accommodation period.
 - If a student is not receiving funding as of the start date of the parental accommodation, none will be provided by this accommodation.
 - Graduate students who are funded from an external sponsor are obliged to inform their funding agency and should consult TGS Student Funding.
- Unfunded graduate students (those who are not receiving funding as of the start date of the parental accommodation) may request unpaid leave from their studies for up to a 12 week accommodation period.

Either option will result in the extension of future TGS milestone deadlines (qualifying exam, prospectus, degree deadline) by one year (four quarters). Programs must extend future, program-specific deadlines by the same length. Students, Directors of Graduate Studies (DGSes) and advisers are expected to discuss a timeline for meeting requirements well in advance of the start of the accommodation period.

To ensure that programs have ample time to arrange coverage during the accommodation, students must request the accommodation at least 60 days in advance of the accommodation start date. In unforeseen circumstances, students must provide as much notice as possible.

Stipulations

- Individual students may request one accommodation per childbirth or adoption event.
- Students who have had a prior parental accommodation within the past 12 months may not request another accommodation, but may request a medical or family leave of absence (<https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/tgs/academic-policies-procedures/leaves-absence/>).

- Students must begin the accommodation period within the first 90 days of the birth or adoption, or prior to the birth/adoption if medically necessary.
- The period of accommodation applies to calendar weeks. If a parental accommodation overlaps with an academic break, the break period will still count toward the 12-week period of accommodation.
- Whichever accommodation option students choose, students will be eligible to maintain their student health insurance. Depending on a student's funding status, the health insurance subsidy may or may not be applied. If the health insurance subsidy is not applied, a student will have the option to enroll in and purchase coverage in fall quarter and may be eligible for a prorated subsidy depending on timing of return and funding status at the time of return. The Graduate School's Student Services (<https://www.tgs.northwestern.edu/about/contact/>) representatives will be able to assist in this process.
- Students using a parental accommodation for all or most of a quarter will not enroll for that quarter and will be placed in "leave" status. Students who are enrolled in classes as of the start date of a parental accommodation must work with their instructors to determine whether incomplete grades are possible and to arrange a timeline for completion of coursework upon return from the accommodation period. If a student anticipates taking parental accommodation for a partial quarter, it is recommended that the student not enroll in coursework. Students should consult TGS Student Services to determine whether registration in a quarter surrounding a parental accommodation is appropriate and if so, the exact registration status.
- Students who are utilizing a parental accommodation may not fulfill degree requirements or make progress toward degree completion during the accommodation period. Programs (including instructors and advisers) may not require fulfillment of requirements or progress toward degree completion during the accommodation period.

Procedures

- Eligible students will request a parental accommodation by submitting the "Petition for Absence" form via TGS Forms in GSTS (<https://gsts.northwestern.edu/>) and selecting the parental accommodation option at least 60 days prior to the accommodation start date (or as soon as possible in unforeseen circumstances).
 - International students requesting a parental accommodation must consult with the Office of International Student and Scholar Services (<https://www.northwestern.edu/international/>). International students utilizing a parental accommodation who wish to remain in the U.S. during the accommodation period will need to receive approval in advance of the start date from the **Office of International Student and Scholar Services**.
- The program's Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) or DGS designate will review the form, after which The Graduate School will review.
- When approved, The Graduate School may, depending on the timing of the accommodation, update the student's record to place the student in "leave" status, reflect the extension of milestones, and make any other necessary changes to the record.
- At the end of the 12 week period, students will resume their studies. If additional time away is needed, students must file for the appropriate leave of absence.
 - If students wish to return prior to the end of the 12 week period, they must first consult with The Graduate School Student Services.