



Policy Title:

**Academic adjustments for birth or adoption of a child**

Applies to: Matriculated, registered graduate students anticipating the adoption or birth of a child.

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**1. POLICY STATEMENT**

OHSU is committed to achieving a diverse graduate student body and facilitating participation of all students in research and their graduate studies. The birth or adoption of a child can be a demanding time for parents and may require unique academic adjustments in order to allow students the opportunity to continue progress towards their degree during such time. While not considered employees, OHSU graduate students are in a unique situation and need special consideration for the birth or adoption of a child, distinct from accommodation and leave including sick leave.

This policy establishes minimum adjustments that must be offered to a graduate student anticipating the birth or adoption a child. Nothing in this policy is intended to deter advisors, academic staff, and departmental leaders from considering other options beyond the adjustments described in this policy.

This policy applies to all matriculated, registered, graduate students regardless of sex or gender.

**2. ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENTS**

Students who anticipate the birth or adoption of a child are responsible for informing their mentors, program and (if applicable) thesis advisory committee as early as possible prior to the birth or adoption. Programs must provide the following options for students during pregnancy (before birth) and/or in the weeks immediately following birth or adoption of a child:

**Academic Requirements:** Students may postpone course assignments, examinations, and other academic requirements for up to one term (students will work with their academic advisors and instructors as soon as possible to determine whether interrupted courses will receive a Withdrawal or Incomplete designation).

**Academic Milestones:** Students will be granted an automatic one-term extension of departmental requirements and academic milestones including cumulative and qualifying exams. This extension is separate from and in addition to any extensions that students may petition for to complete their degree.

**Stipend Support for 8 weeks:** Graduate students supported by stipends or fellowships will be relieved of full time graduate responsibilities and modify their duties for 8 weeks to accommodate the birth or adoption of a child. Students will maintain full-time enrollment at the minimum number of credits. By remaining on full-time status, student

visa status and loan repayment schedules will remain unchanged and students will retain health insurance benefits. This policy is **not** a leave of absence.

Eligible students who are receiving stipend support would continue to receive this support throughout the 8-week period. Students will not receive a stipend or salary if none was received previously, but are eligible for adjustments/extensions described under 'Academic Requirements' and 'Academic Milestones' above.

Students who are supported by fellowships or grants external to Oregon Health & Science University must adhere to the rules of the fellowship or grant source with respect to absences from academic and research work. Most granting agencies provide for a short period of reduced activity due to health or personal issues. The student cannot be removed from research support for this 8-week period unless the granting agency requires such removal during such a period.

**Leave of Absence:** Students may request a formal leave of absence as described in the Leave of Absence Policy.

### 3. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

During the period leading up to and including the time covered by this policy, students will remain in close contact with their program, lab and research mentor. To ensure good communication, the responsibilities of the student, mentor and graduate program director are outlined below:

**Students:** Graduate students shall be responsible for communicating their needs and limitations in the time leading up to and following the birth or adoption of a child. This includes:

1. Notify their mentor and program director as early as possible, and with these faculty generate a plan that includes expectations and possible rescheduling of course work, research, and anticipated academic milestones. Plan must be approved by Program Director and Associate Dean and shared (when appropriate) with the Thesis Advisory Committee.
2. If in a laboratory, they will work with lab colleagues and mentor to identify who will assume responsibility for routine tasks and maintenance issues during the period of reduced responsibilities (i.e. maintaining fly lines, mouse colony maintenance, etc.).
3. Maintain open communication about any changes to the plan as the need arises.
4. Stay in touch with the lab as much as possible.
5. Notify faculty advisor/mentor (and where appropriate, their lab) at least two weeks in advance of anticipated date of return to full responsibilities.

**Faculty:** Advisors shall have reasonable expectations about their student's progress during the time preceding and following the birth or adoption of a child. This includes:

1. Be responsive to the health of the student and accommodate based on changing needs.

2. Work with the student and program director to make an appropriate plan for reduced responsibilities.

3. Communicate with the student and lab about ongoing projects and help make appropriate plans for carrying on projects in the student's absence.

4. Work with the student to make arrangements for submitting work for completion of requirements when the student returns, and grade work promptly to remove any "Incomplete" notations as rapidly as possible.

**Graduate Program Director:**

1. Oversee open communication and support reasonable expectations on all sides.

2. Communicate with the program administrators, graduate studies office and registrar as needed to ensure that all officials are aware that the student will receive academic adjustments for a finite period of time.

**4 PROCEDURES**

The Graduate Program will post a checklist and form to be completed by the student and faculty mentor.

**5. RELATED POLICIES**

Leave of Absence Policy, 2-01-1112

**6. KEY SEARCH WORDS**

maternity, childbirth, adoption, stipend support, graduation requirements, leave of absence
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**7. REVISION HISTORY**

02/31/2012	1.0	New Policy Statement

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**Responsible Officer:** Associate Dean, SOM Graduate Studies

**Policy Contact:** SOM Graduate Studies Office, 503-494-6222

**Supersedes:** N/A