Graduate Student Pregnant & Parenting Accommodation Recommendations

Purpose

Texas A&M University is committed to achieving a diverse graduate student body in all areas of research and graduate studies. This includes fostering a family-friendly environment in which students can balance scholarly and parenting responsibilities while successfully pursuing their academic and research goals. This commitment strengthens the University’s ability to recruit and retain the very best graduate students. It is in this spirit that these guidelines promote reasonable accommodations for graduate student experiencing the birth or adoption of a child. This document is to be used as a guideline for students that intent to continue progress towards his/her degree plan and does not serve as an official university policy.

Depending on the year of the student, the term of the pregnancy, and if any complications arise, departmental administrators, together with teaching and research supervisors, are encouraged to work with graduate student employees to devise plans that makes reasonable and temporary academic and employment accommodations with regard to the demands on a student’s time and effort. The student should provide sufficient advance notice to make the accommodation planning practical. Preferably, a graduate student should submit a request to the department (or program) administration for accommodation not less than three months prior that modified effort.

Academic Accommodations

An academic accommodation period is justified for so long a period of time as deemed medically necessary by the student’s physician. If the student intends to continue his/her academic program and maintain full registration status, it is recommended that he/she will continue to pursue academic goals during an accommodation period to last a whole semester or a portion of a semester. Accommodation plans associated with academic studies could involve modification or postponement of degree plans, assignments, examinations or other academic work, as well as extensions of programmatic requirements and academic milestones. Modified academic work might be accompanied by accommodations such as the assignment of incomplete grades. Enrollment in directed study and research units, during the semester leading up to the pregnancy or the semester following the birth, may be a viable solution to offer students more flexibility during this time, as the committee sees fit.

Employment Accommodations

OGAPS recommends an employment accommodation period of up to 6 weeks. Departmental administrators and research supervisors are encouraged to work with graduate student employees to come up with a temporary modification of teaching or research duties, where the graduate assistant can continue to work, but in a more limited capacity, for up to 6 weeks. For TAs, rearrangement of teaching duties, or for RAs, adjustments to laboratory or other research schedules, are recommended. If needed, advisors can consult with the department head or dean to try to identify employment opportunities that would allow for greater flexibility, such as online teaching roles. If necessary, Texas’s Parental Leave Act
(PLA) allows mothers and fathers to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave beginning on the day of birth or day of foster placement. Requisite documentation is required for enrollment under PLA.

System Regulation 7. Student Attendance
System Regulation 10. Grading
Official Withdrawal from the University
Family and Medical Leave Act and Parental Leave Act