

<b>Policy:</b>	Graduate School Parental Accommodation Policy
<b>Title:</b>	
<b>Effective:</b>	7/27/2010
<b>Senate Proposal:</b>	No
<b>Responsible University Officer:</b>	Jacqueline E. Huntoon, Dean
<b>Responsible Office:</b>	Graduate School

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## Policy Statement

The Michigan Tech Graduate School will grant up to six weeks of excused absence to accommodate the needs of a student who becomes the primary caregiver of a new child or children through childbirth or adoption. In addition, eligible students will also automatically be granted a one-semester extension in their time-to-degree limit, deadline for completion of a qualifying exam, and deadline for completion of a proposal defense.

## Policy Requirements

The Graduate Student Parental Accommodation Policy applies to graduate students who:

- have new childcare or related responsibilities due to a recent or upcoming birth or placement of a child under four years of age in the home for the purposes of adoption;
- are the primary caregiver for the child or children new to the home;
- are enrolled full-time at Michigan Tech;
- are in good academic standing;
- have completed at least one full-time semester at Michigan Tech.

If both parents are enrolled as graduate students, only one will normally be eligible for parental accommodation. Requests for consideration of an accommodation for both parents must be made in writing to the dean of the Graduate School a minimum of six weeks before the planned parental accommodation period. If the request is approved, both parents must then submit a formal application for parental accommodation.

International graduate students who are attending Michigan Tech full-time with a student visa or exchange visitor visa are encouraged to consult with the International Programs and Services office about their plans during the parental accommodation period to ensure compliance with immigration regulations.

## Reason for Policy

Michigan Tech understands the importance of accommodating the needs of a graduate student who becomes primary caregiver of a new child or children that join(s) the student's family through childbirth or adoption.

The Graduate School Graduate Student Parental Accommodation Policy provides assistance to students during a pregnancy, postpartum, during an adoption process, or

following an adoption placement. This policy makes it possible for students to receive time extensions for the completion of courses, exams, and other degree requirements (including the overall time to completion of the degree). This policy also makes it possible for students to be released from normal teaching or research responsibilities for a six-week period. Finally, this policy provides a mechanism for Michigan Tech departments to receive funding from the Graduate School to hire a temporary replacement for any student receiving a stipend who goes on an excused parental accommodation absence.

In other cases, the individual may need to take time off for health reasons or may be unable to perform teaching or research obligations. Such students need to be able to take time off with pay as well as receive time extensions for exam or degree completion.

## **Related Policy Information**

Graduate students who apply for and are granted a parental accommodation can receive one or both of the following benefits.

**1. *An excused absence from courses, research, teaching assignments, or other Michigan Tech responsibilities for a period of up to six weeks.***

The excused absence may begin up to three weeks prior to either a birth or placement of child or children of under four years in age in the home for purposes of adoption. In the event of multiple births or placements for adoption that occur within a one-year time frame, the period of the combined excused absence remains at six weeks total. During the six-week period the student will continue to be enrolled as a fulltime student and will continue to pay tuition. Students supported by a stipend will not have their support terminated.

Students are expected to return full-time to their graduate responsibilities after the six-week parental accommodation period. A student's excused absence will end after the six-week parental accommodation period. If the excused absence results in a student being unable to complete requirements for a course they should be given an incomplete ("I" grade) for that course by the course's instructor of record. Students receiving "I" grades will need to work with the instructor of record for that course to identify a plan to complete all requirements for the course within three semesters in residence. Failure to complete all requirements within three semesters in residence will result in the "I" grade changing to an "F" (failure) grade.

**2. *A parental accommodation student will be given a one-semester extension in her/his time-to-degree limit, deadline for completion of a qualifying exam, and deadline for completion of a proposal defense.***

Other deadlines and academic expectations may also be modified as part of the parental accommodation by the student's academic home department. Any and all requests for modifications of deadlines should be documented in writing on the student's Graduate Student Parental Accommodation Request form. Any and all requests must be approved by the dean of the Graduate School in advance of the parental accommodation period.

Students requesting a parental accommodation should be aware that requests for an extension of a deadline will not be granted if the deadline has already passed. In the event of multiple births or placements for adoption students are eligible for a maximum of a one calendar year extension of deadlines.

## **Exclusions**

Funding is not available from the Graduate School to individuals or units who need to replace individuals who are classified as regular Michigan Tech employees (faculty or staff), even if that individual is pursuing a graduate degree. Individuals classified as employees should consult with Human Resources to determine the benefits available to them.

## **Contact(s)**

<u>Office/Unit</u>	<u>Telephone Number</u>
Graduate School	(906) 487-2327

## **Definitions**

### **Responsibilities**

Those responsible for ensuring that the research or teaching being conducted by the individual is carried out (e.g., the student's advisor, Graduate Program Director, academic home Department Chair, School Dean, or the Principal Investigator of a research project) must be informed in a timely manner of a student's need for parental accommodation and must be involved in the planning for a student's parental accommodation in order to ensure that necessary work is carried out even if a student must be absent for a period of time.

Students requesting parental accommodation must submit a completed application to the Graduate School at least one calendar month in advance of the proposed accommodation period.

Programs requesting funds for temporary support must submit a completed funding request form to the Graduate School at least three weeks prior to the proposed accommodation period.

## Procedures

In support of this policy, the following procedures are included:

### **I. Application**

- A. Students must submit completed applications for a parental accommodation at least one calendar month in advance of the proposed parental accommodation period using the Graduate School's Graduate Student Parental Accommodation Request Form.
- B. This form must be signed by the student's advisor, Graduate Program Director, and/or academic home Department Chair or School Dean, and the Principal Investigator of the research project that would normally be providing the student's funding during the intended parental accommodation period (if applicable).
1. It is the student's responsibility to obtain all signatures.
  2. By signing the form, the signatories certify that the student has discussed his or her situation with them. Signatures further indicate that a plan is in place to ensure that the student's teaching and/or research responsibilities will be managed during the student's excused absence and that the student's plan for completion of the degree has been modified to account for the excused absence.
  3. Exceptions for the one-month advance notice requirement will be allowed only in cases involving a medical emergency. Documentation of a medical emergency must be provided in the form of a letter from a health-care provider to the dean of the Graduate School.
  4. The dean of the Graduate School will review submitted applications and will make the final determination about whether or not a student is eligible for parental accommodation. All students who meet the eligibility requirements will be granted the parental accommodation.

### **II. Graduate School Funding for Replacements for Accommodated Students**

- A. Students are not eligible to receive funding from the Graduate School as part of the Graduate Student Parental Accommodation policy.
- B. Graduate students supported by Michigan Tech fellowships will not experience any change in funding during the parental accommodation period.
- C. Students supported by an externally funded fellowship must adhere to rules of the granting agency with regard to absences from research and academic work.
- D. Funding may be available from the Graduate School to Department Chairs, School Deans, Graduate Program Directors, and Principal Investigators who must hire a temporary replacement for a student who has

been granted an excused absence under the parental accommodation policy.

1. In some cases the Graduate School will be able to provide financial support to allow for the hiring of a temporary replacement for a graduate student who has been granted an excused absence under the Parental Accommodation Policy.

2. Department Chairs, School Deans, Graduate Program Directors, and Principal Investigators can apply for funding from the Graduate School using the Graduate Student Parental Accommodation Funding Request Form. Students who request parental accommodation are not responsible for securing their replacements. Replacements for students who receive an excused absence will normally be secured by the person submitting the funding request form to the Graduate School.

a) Department Chairs, School Deans, Graduate Program Directors, and Principal Investigators who wish to apply for funding from the Graduate School must submit the Graduate Student Parental Accommodation Funding Request form to the dean of the Graduate School at least three weeks in advance of the proposed parental accommodation period.

b) The dean will review each request to ensure that the requirements for requesting funding are met. In cases for which all requirements are met, requests for funding will be granted until all available funds are expended.

c) Funding from the Graduate School for a replacement for a student normally supported by a sponsored project will only be available when the external funding source disallows payments to graduate students who reduce their time commitment or are absent under the circumstances covered by Michigan Tech's Graduate Student Parental Accommodation Policy. In such situations, PIs are encouraged to work with the student to develop a plan for the timely completion of research or other work supported by the sponsor before the student begins their excused absence period.

d) Funding from the Graduate School for a replacement for a student normally supported as a graduate teaching assistant will only be available when a department or program has no option to cover teaching needs other than to hire an additional part-time graduate student who will serve as a temporary teaching assistant.

e) Temporary replacements will be paid an hourly wage equivalent to the hourly wage earned by internally-funded graduate teaching assistants.

f) Tuition costs will not be reimbursed by the Graduate School since the parental accommodation period is limited to six weeks

## **Forms and Instructions**

In support of this policy, the following forms/instructions are included:

Graduate Student Parental Accommodation Request Form

Graduate Student Parental Accommodation Funding Request Form

## **Appendices**

### **Additional Information**

Students who find themselves in situations that are not fully addressed by this policy should consult with the Graduate School to determine if there are other options available to them. For example, students who experience medical problems associated with a pregnancy or birth that require longer than six weeks recovery time may be eligible for medical leave.

All university personnel should be aware that the University has a safety policy that applies specifically to children in the workplace (<http://www.sas.it.mtu.edu/fm/oshs/section3.htm>). This policy must be adhered to at all times.

### **History**

Adoption Date: July 2010