

Pregnant Graduate Assistant* Accommodation Policy

College of Engineering, University of Utah

- 1) Pregnant graduate assistants including research, teaching, or other graduate assistants can request, and may be granted, up to 6 weeks of leave for childbirth or childbirth-related medical conditions for the period prior to, during, and after childbirth. As long as a pregnant graduate student is employed during the leave period for at least 0.25 FTE, they will continue to receive pay during their leave.
- 2) Pregnant Research Assistants: If there is a risk that the project the research assistant is working on will suffer delays, the PI of the project funding the pregnant research assistant must formally request accommodations from the funding agencies to account for any delays in project completion. The PIs should use existing project funding (if the project allows) or obtain additional funding, if possible, to pay the pregnant research assistant during her leave. Only when no such additional funding is available from the sponsor, or from PI discretionary sources, returned research overhead from the department/school may be used to cover the pay for pregnant research assistants during their 6-week childbirth leave.
- 3) Pregnant Teaching Assistants or other Graduate Assistants: Differential tuition available to the department/school may be used to cover the pay for pregnant teaching assistants or other graduate assistants (who are not research assistants) during their 6-week childbirth leave.
- 4) Students on Fellowships:
 - a) Fellowships from University sources, that are paid through the Scholarship Office, will not be interrupted during the 6-week leave period as long as the student on leave continues to maintain her graduate student status by being enrolled and registered for the required number of credit hours.
 - b) Students who are given paid graduate assistant positions that the departments call "fellowships" are really GAs; they fall under point 3 above.
 - c) Students who are supported by fellowships from external sources (NSF, NIH, etc.) are subject to the rules and regulations of the granting agency with respect to leave from academic and research work. If they are required to suspend their externally funded fellowship, they should be treated like graduate research assistants, and their pay may be covered through returned research overhead of the department/school.
- 5) The pay during the 6-week leave period for any teaching, research, or other graduate assistant will be the same as without the pregnancy, except that it cannot exceed 0.5 FTE irrespective of their effort before and after the leave. For example, a student being paid at 0.5 FTE as a research assistant will continue to receive their pay at 0.5 FTE during the 6-week leave. However, if the student were paid at 1.0 FTE, they can be paid only 0.5 FTE during their leave period.

* Graduate Assistant refers to all of the following graduate students: Research Assistants, Teaching Assistants, and other Graduate Assistants who are not classified as Research Assistants or Teaching Assistants.

- 6) Tuition and fees still apply during the 6-week leave period. Any tuition benefits being received by the student will continue during the 6-week leave period as long as they continue to maintain their graduate student status by remaining enrolled and registered for the required number of credit hours.
- 7) State funds cannot be used to pay for the 6-week leave period.
- 8) This policy applies only to pregnant students (birth mothers) and not to their family members.
- 9) All pregnant students with graduate status, and being paid as a research, teaching, or other graduate assistant at 0.25 FTE or more, are eligible for this accommodation.
- 10) Graduate students who are not employed as research assistants, teaching assistants, or other graduate assistants will not receive any financial support from their department.
- 11) The pay during the leave period applies only to the portion of the period when the student is employed. For example, if a student is employed only until December 31st of a particular year and they start their leave on December 1st, they would receive pay only until December 31st of that year. However, if this student is actually employed until January 31st of the following year, they can be paid for a full 6-weeks across the Fall and Spring semesters.
- 12) Should the pregnant student need to modify their Program of Study, the student should refer to departmental policies for amendment procedures.
- 13) A leave longer than 6-weeks may be granted to accommodate for exceptional medical circumstances related to childbirth, but only the first six weeks will be covered by pay. Should such exceptional medical circumstances arise, students should seek a leave under the policies published in the University of Utah Student Handbook, <https://registrar.utah.edu/handbook/leave.php>.
- 14) This policy will be reviewed in July of 2022.