

# Policy on Childbirth Accommodation for Doctoral Students

*Dean of Graduate Division*

*University of California, San Diego*

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Recognizing the special challenges involved in balancing participation in Doctoral programs and childbearing, the University and the Graduate Division are committed to supporting policies, programs, and services to financially assist graduate students through childbirth while they pursue their academic goals.

## **Childbirth Accommodations for Doctoral Students**

Doctoral student women who give birth while in paid status with a Graduate Student Researcher (GSR), Associate In or Teaching Assistant (TA) appointment may be excused from regular employment duties for a period of up to six weeks without loss of financial support (a longer period may be granted in the case of exceptional medical circumstances experienced by the mother or child before or after birth). Eligible students holding TA or Associate In positions (all salaried ASE positions) must use all available ASE/UAW contract childbirth benefits first. MFA students will also be considered eligible under this policy. The student will continue her academic program and maintain registration status. She will continue to pursue her academic goals during this accommodation period (i.e., registered for independent study). Students will continue to be paid by their existing employer. Support for a GSR replacement will only be considered under exceptional circumstances. In particular, the PI must justify that extraordinary circumstances, such as a pressing proposal deadline, could warrant the addition of a substitute employee, who presumably will be unfamiliar with the specifics of the research project. Substitute funding will not be provided to support another GSR in the same research group during the period of the childbirth accommodation who otherwise was already being supported by the PI. Any replacement student employee would only qualify for fee remissions

if they reach 25% time during a given quarter. International students holding F-1 or J-1 visas who may be considered for replacement appointments are not eligible for an exception to work over 50% time.

For most GSR assignments, we encourage the principal investigators to consider modified assignments and/or reduced activity to accommodate the physical limitations during pregnancy and childbirth. For example, principal investigators may continue to support students while they are writing or otherwise preparing the development or defense of a dissertation. Such activity is typically an allowable expense on a research grant or contract if the student has already been funded to do the work related to that project.

Women doctoral students supported by university fellowships will experience no change in their financial support during childbirth accommodation. Women doctoral students supported by extramural fellowships will likewise experience no change in their financial support if the outside agency defers to the University in matters of leave policies.

*Note:* Students will not receive financial support under this provision if they do not already hold a GSR, Associate In, or TA appointment. Support for a replacement GSR will also not be continued beyond the end date of the original appointment of the mother covered by this policy.

**Eligibility:** In addition to the criteria above, a doctoral student requesting childbirth accommodations must:

1. Maintain full time academic status throughout the accommodation period;
2. Apply prior to the accommodation period requested (retroactive requests will not be considered).

**Applying for the Graduate Division Childbirth Accommodation Program:** A student must:

1. Complete the program request form.
2. Secure the applicable endorsements from:
  - a. the academic program Graduate Adviser,
  - b. the student's TA, Associate In or GSR supervisor, as appropriate

**Graduate Division**

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3. The completed form must be submitted to the Financial Support Unit of the Graduate Division.

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