

## **Graduate Student Parental Leave Policy for Graduate, Research and Teaching Assistants Lehigh University, May 2022**

### **Purpose**

1. An assistantship is financial aid, not employment. This policy states the University's position on helping its graduate students, as they become parents, to strike a balance between personal or family responsibilities and the responsibilities associated with their program of study.
2. The policy's intent is to promote equitable treatment of graduate students.

The overarching goal of this policy is to help funded graduate students maintain full-time status and the continuity of their funding. A secondary goal is to help departments ensure the continuity of effort for graduate students with assistantships, especially with respect to teaching responsibilities.

### **Parental Leave (up to 5 weeks)**

A student (either the mother or mother's partner) who expects the birth of a child or plans the adoption of a child should consult with her/his adviser and work supervisor, (e.g. department chairperson, department manager, research principal investigator), and make appropriate arrangements for the anticipated absence from the assistantship assignment. It is the intention of this policy not to interrupt an assistantship for a parental leave of *up to 5 weeks*, during which time the student is excused from the duties associated with the assistantship.

The student taking the parental leave must be the child's primary caregiver. Accordingly, if both parents are graduate students, each is entitled to the parental leave for a period during which he or she is the primary caregiver, but the leaves cannot be simultaneous. In all cases, the student must use the parental leave grant within six months of the child's birth date or the adoption date.

The student's department or work supervisor may apply, through the Standing of Graduate Students Committee, to the Provost Office for a Parental Leave Grant (PLG). The PLG equals the student's assistantship pay during the parental leave, to compensate the student or another student carrying out the duties of the student who is on leave (typically the case for a teaching assistant). If no other student is paid and the work stops during the leave, the grant is not available, (this might be the case for some graduate assistantships).

A research assistant funded by a sponsored research grant may be eligible for continuation of support under the terms and conditions of the research grant. If no such support is available, the student's department may apply for a PLG to take the student temporarily off the research assistantship and continue his or her pay during the leave regardless of whether the research grant pays another student to carry out the duties of the student who is on leave.

### **Process**

- The student will start the Application for a Grant to Support a Graduate Student Parental Leave (PLG) in the first section of the form. (The application and the policy can be found on the Graduate Student Life Office website).  
[https://grad.lehigh.edu/sites/grad.lehigh.edu/files/Copy%20of%20Updated%20Application%20for%20a%20Work-Life%20Grant%20to%20Support%20a%20Graduate%20Student%20Parental%20Leave\\_0.pdf](https://grad.lehigh.edu/sites/grad.lehigh.edu/files/Copy%20of%20Updated%20Application%20for%20a%20Work-Life%20Grant%20to%20Support%20a%20Graduate%20Student%20Parental%20Leave_0.pdf)
- The Department Coordinator will complete the second section of the form.
- The Academic Adviser, Work Supervisor, Department Chairperson, Graduate Program Director or Associate Dean and the College Dean will each sign the form.

- Once the form is completed, attach a copy of the students offer letter and payroll assignment form that spans the anticipated leave of the student going on leave and send it to the Sr. Budget Analyst in the Provost Office – 27 Alumni Memorial Building.
- Inform the Sr. Budget Analyst in the Provost Office of who will be doing the duties of the student while they are on leave.
- The Sr. Budget Analyst will notify the department if there is a problem with the request. Please note that the Sr. Budget Analyst must receive the application, offer letter, payroll assignment form and the student who will be completing the duties on behalf of the student on leave in order to process the grant. **Any missing information will slow down the funding process.**
- Once the student has taken the leave and returned to work, the Department Coordinator will notify the Sr. Budget Analyst of the actual leave start date and end date.
- The Sr. Budget Analyst will calculate the leave compensation based on the information provided by the Department Coordinator and will process a reallocation to the index listed on the assignment form. If the reallocation should go to a different index, the Department Coordinator will need to send a written request (e.g., email) indicating the index to credit and the reason for the different index.