

Best Practices for Parental Accommodation in Chemistry (10/18/2016) **Department of Chemistry, Indiana University**

A. Overview of The College of Arts and Science Parental Accommodation Policy

This document is meant to align the Department of Chemistry's policy for parental accommodation with that of the College of Arts and Science, and to clarify unique aspects of the policy that may be encountered in the Department of Chemistry. The Department and the College are committed to accommodating the needs of new parents as they continue working towards a degree. The Parental Accommodation policy provides a framework for students to balance these competing demands.

- The most up to date information on parental accommodation can be found at the following link. <https://college.indiana.edu/student-portal/graduate-students/parental-accommodation.html>
- The most up to date information on Graduate Student leave of absence can be found at the following link. <https://college.indiana.edu/student-portal/graduate-students/leaves-absence.html>

From the College Policy: Students who hold a College of Arts and Sciences funded student academic appointment (SAA) of at least 37.5% FTE and who have completed a minimum of one semester (a minimum of nine credits) in the College are eligible for a parental accommodation period up to six weeks, once in their academic career. Students must complete this accommodation within six weeks of the birth or adoption of a child and this policy covers both expectant mothers and fathers. While completing the accommodation period, students receive continuing full support including SAA stipend, health insurance, and fee remission.

A parental accommodation is not a leave of absence, as students must remain enrolled in at least six credit hours. However, the accommodation period allows academic flexibility (extended deadlines and the ability to postpone coursework, exams, and other academic duties), and provides full release from SAA duties for six weeks. It is the responsibility of the student to consult with faculty and advisors in their home departments to determine what academic accommodations can be made. The Director of Graduate Student Services is available to assist students with such requests as needed.

For students who hold instructional SAAs, the College of Arts and Sciences will cover the cost of hiring a replacement graduate assistant during a parental accommodation period. It is the department's responsibility to identify and appoint a replacement instructor, subject to College and VPFAA policies regarding academic appointments. The College of Arts and Sciences will not cover the cost of replacements for non-instructional SAAs.

1. Students should first contact their department, to request academic accommodations, and to notify the DGS of the expected timeframe for absence from SAA duties. Whenever possible, students should contact departments a minimum of three months prior to the requested accommodation.
2. Students must fill out the Graduate Student Parental Accommodation Request (<https://college.indiana.edu/doc/student-portal/grad/parental-accommodation-request.pdf>) as well as the Medical Certification (<https://college.indiana.edu/doc/student->

[portal/grad/parental-accommodation-medical-certification-form.pdf](#)) form. The parental accommodation cannot be approved until the Medical Certification form is received by the College Graduate Office. Departments may ask to review the Medical Certification form prior to submission to the College Graduate Office.

3. The student or the department should forward the Parental Accommodation Request and the Medical Certification form to the College Graduate Office.
4. Key points of the Parental Accommodation are found below.
 - a. Paid leaves of absence are no longer offered.
 - b. The Parental Accommodation Policy covers the six weeks directly following the birth or adoption of a child, and can be requested once in a student's graduate career. Accommodations include:
 - i. Academic flexibility (extended deadlines, postponed deadlines for coursework, etc.)
 - ii. Full release from SAA duties
 - iii. Continuing full support including SAA stipend, health insurance, and fee remission during the accommodation period
 - c. If a leave of absence is the appropriate course of action, students must work with their DGS to create a "Leave Return Plan," to be submitted with the leave request. This plan should include:
 - i. A summary of student progress in the program up to the current term
 - ii. A record of funding commitments and the status of those commitments upon the student's return
 - iii. An expected return date (students who are not able to return by this date should request a leave extension and negotiate a new plan)
 - iv. An outline for the academic work the student will complete once they resume their studies (including plans to resolve incompletes)

B. Chemistry Specific Aspects of Safety, Leave, and Facilities.

1. Pregnancy

a. Safety

Many laboratories contain reproductive toxins and appropriate safety measures should be taken both in advance of pregnancy and after conception to eliminate risks to reproductive health. In particular, the student should discuss with their physician the specific conditions in the laboratory, and the advisor, in consultation with EH&S guidelines, needs to take into account any potentially dangerous chemical environments. Please see the safety guidelines and possible accommodations detailed in Appendix 1.

b. Timeline and Plan of Continuing Study around the Birth

At least 4 months before the due date, the student and advisor should communicate about the timeline when an interruption in work may be expected and whether the student plans to take 6 weeks or longer of parental accommodation after the birth of the baby. This meeting should include a realistic discussion on whether or not another student may be assigned to the project if it requires continuity.

c. Graduate Program Benchmarks

A postponement of the 5th semester examination may be requested, if the birth takes place before the 5th semester.

2. Childbirth

a. Leave of Absence (see the college policy as described above)

b. Support during the 6 weeks parental accommodation

- i. AI support: The College of Arts & Sciences will cover the cost of a replacement AI for the six week accommodation period in accordance with the policy outlined on pages 1-2 of this document.
- ii. Grant support: The College of Arts & Sciences does not provide financial support for students supported on grants that are seeking parental accommodations. Principle Investigators are encouraged by the College to work with their funding agencies and department to provide a level of support comparable to those on AI for both expectant mothers and fathers. There has been a tradition within the department to provide such support whenever possible, using the mechanisms outlined below. *This policy is routinely being revised by the College of Arts & Sciences and the Principle Investigator should also check with the Department's Graduate Office for updates.*

The funding agencies have different (or no) policies on supporting graduate students during periods of parental accommodation. Advisors should contact their program managers to determine whether a supplement would be available to assign an additional student to the project during the period of leave or to extend the period of support by the length of leave. Generally, agencies appear to be willing to grant no-cost extensions in the case of a delay in results due to family accommodations, and many recognize childbirth as one of many common interruptions in scientific progress.

NSF: Principal Investigators are asked to talk with their project manager on a case by case basis.

DOE: within the Office of Basic Energy Sciences (BES), the policy is to defer to the practices outlined by the institution that employs that student with regards to leave and benefits, and institutions generally pay these via indirect costs/fringe benefits (unfortunately, this is not the case at our institution, currently). Nevertheless, Principal Investigators are welcome to request no cost extensions or supplements for a variety of reasons, including this, and program managers give these requests careful consideration.

NIH: Allows support during parental leave. See <http://nexus.od.nih.gov/all/2011/01/19/family-friendly-policies-apply-to-all-grants/>

iii. Fellowship support: Students supported by internal fellowships shall continue to be supported by the fellowship during the 6-week family accommodation period.

c. Support after the 6 weeks of family accommodation

The student is expected to resume normal research and teaching activities after the 6 weeks of family accommodation unless prior arrangements have been discussed with the advisor. Should the student require additional time, a leave application can be submitted (see <https://college.indiana.edu/student-portal/graduate-students/leaves-absence.html>). The student and advisor should discuss a new timeline for return to work as well as whether or not another student may be assigned to the project if it requires continuity.

3. Lactation Room

If the student wishes to maintain breastfeeding after family leave, a private lactation room has been established in Chemistry. The faculty advisor should be aware of and accommodate periodic daily breaks taken for this purpose. Consult with the business office for key access, and send an email to IUChemLactation@gmail.com to gain access to a private online calendar to help ensure single occupancy.

4. Childcare

The IU-run childcare has room for 8 newborns, with typical waitlists of 15 or more families. Discounts for students are available (see Appendix 2), though places for newborns are very limited. A listing of other daycare centers is maintained by the city of Bloomington:

http://bloomington.in.gov/documents/viewDocument.php?document_id=841

Appendix 1. Reproductive Health and Pregnancy Safety- adapted from UIUC chemistry personnel safety information.

The chemical laboratory environment presents risks and hazards to reproductive health. Following are guidelines for laboratory workers who are pregnant or attempting to become pregnant.

- Consult with your personal physician about your work conditions and activities in order to plan a safe course of action pre-conception, during pregnancy and post-partum. Any restrictions placed by the physician should be brought to the attention of the principal investigator or laboratory supervisor and EH&S personnel immediately.
- Clear communication and cooperation among the laboratory worker, the principal investigator or laboratory supervisor, and EH&S personnel are necessary to conduct a thorough hazard assessment of laboratory operations and conditions, which may put the developing embryo or fetus at risk. In cases where a pregnancy is planned, the laboratory worker should initiate the hazard assessment prior to conception because certain chemical exposures may affect fertility success or critical fetal development in the earliest stages.
- In addition, laboratory worker, the principal investigator or laboratory supervisor, and EH&S personnel need to work together in developing a plan and finding creative solutions to ensure a safe work environment during the pregnancy. In some cases, work activities and conditions may need to be modified - such as working in a separate laboratory, substituting extremely hazardous reagents with less harmful ones, having another laboratory worker serve as the student's experimental hands, or focusing on a different aspect of research (e.g. theoretical instead of synthetic or writing).
- For the health of the developing embryo or fetus, the pregnant individual and laboratory co-workers must strictly adhere to the safety guidelines in this Chemical Hygiene Plan. Give special attention to Carcinogens, Reproductive Toxins and Acutely Toxic Chemicals in Section 3.21 of the Chemical Safety Plan (<http://ehs.iu.edu/docs/Laboratory-Chemical-Safety-Plan.pdf>) pages 3-48 to 3-51.
- Any other safety concerns should be discussed with the laboratory supervisor and EH&S personnel. EH&S personnel (contact: Nora Czar, nczar@indiana.edu) are willing to have confidential meetings with students regarding chemical safety. If you feel that your concerns are not adequately addressed, please contact the Department Chair or a member of the Diversity Affairs Committee.

Lists can be found in Appendix C of the IU Chemical Safety plan.
<http://ehs.iu.edu/docs/Laboratory-Chemical-Safety-Plan.pdf>

Appendix 2. Student Family Discounts (Approved November 2013)

The three licensed child care centers offer weekly fee discounts for income eligible student families with children enrolled full time at Campus Children's Center (CCC), Campus View Child Care Center (CVCCC) and Hoosier Courts Nursery School (HC). Below is a description of the student discount policy and procedures.

- **Funding sources** - funding for student family discounts comes from two sources. The funding from these sources can vary from year to year so, consequently, the amount of money that is available for student family discounts may change each year.
 - Day Care Support Account (DCSA) – the DCSA is funded through student activity fees. Currently each time a student registers, a small portion of each activity fee (currently 42 cents) is allocated to the DCSA. The DCSA not only funds student family discounts at the licensed centers, it also supports the operation of the two parent cooperatives, Knee High and Sunflower. The DCSA is administered by the Dean of Students Office which has complete discretion on how funds in the DCSA are distributed each year.
 - IU Parent Fund – The Parent Fund provides the second portion of the discount funding and is allocated through a grant normally over a 3 year period. Because of the grant process, receiving the grant and the amount of the grant can vary over the years.

- **Eligibility for the discount** - families must meet **all** of the following criteria in order to receive a discount.
 - One parent must be a **full time** IU Bloomington student. Families must submit a class schedule to verify full time IUB student status during the current semester.
 - The child must be enrolled **full time** at CCC, CVCCC or HC. *Families with children enrolled part time are not eligible for the discount.*
 - The family must not be receiving any other kind of financial assistance for child care fees (e.g. CCDF vouchers).
 - Families must meet income eligibility guidelines which are based on CACFP income guidelines. Families must submit a copy of a W-2 tax form and/or recent pay stub to verify income. **The income for both parents must be verified.**
 - **Each semester**, families must submit an application and verify full time student status and family income **by the deadline each semester.**

- **Discount amount** – The amount of a family's discount may vary annually and is based on several factors
 - Family income level
 - Funding available – this may change significantly annually.
 - The number of eligible families each semester.
 - Until a family discount is granted, the family will pay the full weekly fee.