

This policy was approved by the Chemistry Department at its December 2008 meeting.

A.16 Childbirth & Family Formation Accommodation Policy

The goal of our Childbirth & Family Formation Accommodation Policy is to encourage more women to enter and complete the PhD program or to undertake postdoctoral research in the Department of Chemistry at Wisconsin, and to provide a climate of support for graduate students and postdocs who choose to have children while in the Department. This Policy has three components, detailed below.

A.16 .1 Ensure a Safe Pregnancy

Recognizing that the chemistry profession presents particular challenges for pregnant women, the goal of this component of the Policy is ensure a safe working environment for pregnant students and postdocs. To this end it is essential that the expectant mother, her research advisor, and the Executive Director of the department meet at an early stage to develop a plan. As soon as the pregnancy is confirmed by a doctor, the woman should inform, on a highly confidential basis, the Executive Director and her research advisor so that a meeting can be scheduled to begin planning.

The pregnant student or postdoc, the research advisor, and the Executive Director will look for safe ways to progress towards the PhD or to continue postdoctoral research during pregnancy. In the case of students, with enough advance notice the group may consider the advisability of making an RA rather than TA appointment, and/or making a TA appointment that minimizes chemical exposure. In terms of research, options that may need to be considered include alternatives to working in a synthetic chemistry lab, such as computer work, spectroscopy, library work, review and paper writing, working on graduate requirements such as seminars, proposals, TBO/2nd year report, etc. It is recognized that each case will be different and that creative problem solving will be required to make the needed accommodations.

When a plan is agreed upon, the Executive Director will provide a written summary of the plan so that the agreement will be clear to all concerned.

A.16 .2 Paid Childbirth Accommodation Time & Requirement Extension

This component of the Policy is designed to help new mothers by reducing academic and financial hardships associated with pregnancy and childbirth.

The Chemistry Department will provide the graduate student (on an RA appointment) or postdoc mother with 6 weeks of full-time paid accommodation time for childbirth. Every effort will be made to assure continuation of health insurance and visa status during the period of leave. The timing of this leave is flexible, and may begin at the time of birth or earlier.

The student or postdoc must apply to the Executive Director for this leave, ideally 6 months prior to the expected birth. Pregnant students and postdocs are encouraged to confer with the Executive Director of the department and their research advisor as early as possible, to ensure that the necessary accommodations may be made in advance.

All academic requirement deadlines will be extended by a semester for the new mother.

A.16 .3 Paid Family Formation / Infant Care Accommodation Time & Optional Requirement Extension

This component of the Policy is designed to support graduate students and postdocs, women and men, who are forming families by reducing academic and financial hardships associated with new parenthood.

The Chemistry Department will provide the graduate student (on an RA appointment) or postdoc new parent with up to 6 weeks of paid accommodation time for infant care / family formation. Every effort will be made to assure continuation of health insurance and visa status during the period of leave. The timing of this leave is flexible, and may begin at the time of birth or earlier.

Some or all of the leave time may be taken on a part-time basis (for example, 4 weeks of full-time and 4 weeks of half-time leave). This 6-week family formation / infant care leave is in addition to the 6-week childbirth leave for new mothers.

The student or postdoc who will become a parent must apply to the Executive Director for this leave, ideally 6 months prior to the expected birth or adoption. Students and postdocs whose partner is expecting a child, or who are planning an adoption, are encouraged to confer with the Executive Director of the department and their research advisor as early as possible, to ensure that the necessary accommodations may be made in advance.

Graduate students who become parents may request an extension of academic requirement deadlines by up to one semester. Requests should be directed to the chair of the student's division.