


October 16, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Peabody Ph.D. Students and Graduate Faculty Members

FROM: Camilla P. Benbow 
Patricia and Rodes Hart Dean of Education and Human Development

RE: Parental Leave for Peabody Graduate (Ph.D.) Students

Eligibility: All students enrolled full-time in the Graduate School and supported by funding from either internal or external sources are covered by this policy. This includes students with funding through stipends, such as training grants or service-free fellowships, and students compensated for services, such as teaching assistants or research assistants. Students supported by external funding sources may be subject to additional rules of the granting agency regarding parental leave. Students are not employees and thus are not subject to the provisions of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

Period of Leave: Prior to and/or following childbirth or adoption of an infant, the primary caregiver (whether mother or father) will be allowed to take six weeks of parental leave. During this period, the student's current stipend, and, if applicable, funding for health insurance and tuition, will be continued without interruption. The student's enrollment status will be continued during this period, as well.

Limitations: If both parents are Vanderbilt graduate students, only one may take parental leave. The parental leave provided by this policy may be taken during the semester in which the child is born or adopted, or during any subsequent semester that begins no later than six months after the birth or adoption.

Advance notice and approval: The student must request a parental leave from her or his departmental chair, through the director of graduate studies, at least three months prior to the beginning of the anticipated leave or, in the case of adoption, as soon as the adoption is confirmed. The request must be made in writing and, once approved by the department chair and Director of Graduate Studies, forwarded to the Peabody Dean's Office for approval and notification of the Graduate School. Students should also make appropriate arrangements as needed with their course instructors to make up any missed coursework during the leave period.

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Documentation upon return: As soon as possible, the student must provide her or his departmental chair with (a) a copy of a birth certificate or, (b) in the case of adoption, written certification of child adoption from the adoption agency.

Extended leave: Students who wish or need to take a longer period of leave, without continuation of funding, may request a leave of absence for up to one year through the established policy of the Graduate School. Graduate students who are not receiving funding through Vanderbilt should request a leave of absence for childbirth or adoption if they anticipate an interruption in progress toward their degree.

This policy is applicable to all students enrolled in the Graduate School and establishes minimum standards for parental leave for graduate students. Departments may offer greater accommodations as are warranted by the individual circumstances of the student.