

May 1998: GRADUATE COUNCIL STUDENT PARENT POLICIES

Academic Senate

320 Stephens Hall

University of California, Berkeley

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Additional Flexibility in Deadlines for Passing Preliminary and Qualifying Examinations

New parenthood is a common experience for graduate students. The Graduate Council recognizes that parenting is a very time-intensive task, particularly in the early years. Students are often reluctant to ask for a special exception to deal with parenting demands. Academic units may be inconsistent or inflexible in the way they deal with this issue. The Graduate Council, therefore, requires that each academic unit adopt a minimum leave policy to accommodate new parents.

While graduate student parents should be encouraged to take and pass the preliminary and Qualifying Examinations as soon as possible, students who need extra time must be granted extensions for passing these exams based on parenting demands. Parenting demands include childbirth and may include the serious illness of a child or other exceptional circumstances relating to a child. Each case, other than childbirth, will be reviewed and approved by the unit.

Any student who has taken time to accommodate childbirth or other serious parental demands may receive an extension of up to one extra year for passing preliminary examinations (in units that require these examinations). And, any student who has taken time off to accommodate childbirth or other serious parental demands may receive an extension of one extra year for passing Qualifying Examinations. Following Qualifying Exams, an extension of one extra year toward Normative Time completion may also be granted. The total additional time granted by this policy may not exceed two years, regardless of the number of children involved. Units must acknowledge these extensions in their calculations of Normative Time both before and after Qualifying Examinations.

Graduate Student Parent Support

It is recognized that each unit handles the issue of student support differently. Nevertheless, it is suggested that each unit be as generous as possible in dealing with student parents, particularly in the event of accommodating childbirth.

Examples of Graduate Student Parent Support Policies may be obtained from the Graduate Division.