

September 2003: Graduate Council Student Parent Policies (Revision of May 1998 Statement)

2003–2004 GRADUATE COUNCIL

BERKELEY DIVISION OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

September 2003

GRADUATE COUNCIL STUDENT PARENT POLICIES (Revision of May 1998 statement)

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.

The student requesting an extension of time for childbearing leave must have substantial responsibility for the care of a newborn child. Each request for extension must include a statement written by the student certifying that he/she has substantial responsibility for the care of the child or children. As with all other such matters, the Head Graduate Adviser's endorsement is required when the request is sent to the Graduate Division.

Additional Flexibility in Deadlines for Passing Preliminary and Qualifying Examinations and for Normative Time to Completion of Degree

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 based on parenting demands must be granted extensions for passing these exams. 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.

Because of the physical demands of childbearing, a woman 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); a man may receive a six-month extension.

And, any woman who has taken time to accommodate childbirth or other serious parental demands may receive an extension of one extra year for passing Qualifying Examinations; a man may receive a six-month extension. Following Qualifying Exams, an extension of one extra year toward Normative Time completion may also be granted.

An extension (for the preliminary exam, qualifying exam, or post-candidacy Normative Time clock) is granted, regardless of the number of semesters the student was on withdrawal status. The provision to stop the pre- or post-candidacy Normative Time clocks may be invoked even if a student with substantial childcare responsibility does not take a formal leave (withdrawal) or have a modification of duties.

The total additional time granted by this policy may not exceed two years, no matter how many children are involved. Units must acknowledge these extensions in their calculations of Normative Time both before and after Qualifying Examinations.

International Students

The Student Parent Policy also applies to international students. However, a student's visa status may be jeopardized by a time extension. He or she must consult with the Services for International Students and Scholars (SISS) regarding the implications of an extension on visa status.

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.