

### Graduate Student Leave Policy Revision – Proposal Preamble

#### Situation:

The GSO administers leaves for graduate students, with roughly 4-8 per year (most are parental leaves). Campus has introduced an unpaid leave option, administered through academic units, that allows students on SAA to keep their health insurance for up to 6 months if they withdraw from both their SAA and coursework.

**GSC proposes to sunset the existing policy** and replace with the proposed policy. The current application form is here.

#### Concerns about current policy:

- Our policy (approved in 2011) needs to be revised in light of new campus leave and SAA policies.
- The policy is expensive, and we provide more coverage than other units on campus. Given the current financial situation this can appear as extravagant to campus leaders. COAS offers only a one-time, six-week paid parental accommodation.
- The policy lacks clarity (e.g., whether the advisor and unit head may reject a request of an eligible student – answer is no) .
- The “Leave” is not a leave of absence for students, since they maintain program enrollment. This may become particularly confusing with the new leave policy introduced by campus.
- Students sometimes ask for leaves when they do not need a formal leave.

#### Main proposed changes:

1. To be more consistent with COAS (and appear less extravagant), and in light of the new campus leave option, we limit students to 1 parental leave and 1 medical leave.
2. Removing discussion of SoE unpaid leave (will discuss campus leave policy option during their initial consultation with the GSO).
3. Adding that students must be in good academic standing to qualify (similar to campus policy).
4. Eliminating summer paid accommodation (COAS does not fund summer accommodations, as summer employment and enrollment are “discretionary.”)
5. Reducing window for parental accommodation from within 6 months to within 6 weeks of birth/adoption, consistent with COAS.
6. Changing minimum appointment required for accommodation from 37.5% to 50%, given new campus minimum appointments.
7. Spelling out which SoE unit pays for coverage of AIs, RAs and GAs (based on our current practice).

PROPOSAL  
**Paid Accommodation for SoE Graduate Students on Student Academic Appointment**  
School of Education Indiana University  
Effective date: 08/01/2023

This policy explains the conditions and process for a School of Education (SOE) graduate student to receive paid accommodation when on a Student Academic Appointment.

### **Terms of Parental and Medical Accommodation**

The School of Education allows two types of paid accommodation: Parental and Medical.

#### Eligibility

To be eligible for a paid accommodation, a student must:

- hold a Student Academic Appointment in the School of Education, including affiliated centers, of at least .5 FTE for the entire fall or spring term at the time of the accommodation.
- be enrolled full-time (at least 6 credit hours) in a School of Education graduate degree-granting program.
- be in good academic standing.
- have completed a School of Education Student Academic Appointment (of .5 or more) for at least one fall or spring semester.

#### General Terms

- During the accommodation period, students on eligible Student Academic Appointments will continue to receive full support, including stipend, health insurance, and any fee remission for up to 6 consecutive weeks, or to the end of the semester, whichever occurs first.
- Students will be considered active in their programs and must maintain full-time enrollment (at least 6 credit hours).
- Accommodations will be considered only for current or future terms, and will not be granted retroactively.

#### Additional Terms Specific to Parental Accommodation:

- The accommodation must be taken within six weeks of the birth or adoption of a child.
- Student Academic Appointees may receive at most one parental accommodation during their SoE graduate studies.

#### Additional Terms Specific to Medical Accommodation

- Medical Accommodation is for critical situations, defined as:
  - A serious health condition requiring an absence of 3 weeks or more.
  - The serious health condition of a spouse, domestic partner, child, or parent when the student is the primary or co-primary caregiver and the absence is anticipated to continue for at least three weeks.
  - Death of a spouse, domestic partner, child, or parent.
- Student Academic Appointees may receive at most one medical accommodation during their SoE graduate studies.

**Commented [LST1]:** This text was in the last version you saw, but Danielle wisely recommended moving this out of the policy – we will include this on the website and/or student application form:

There is also an unpaid leave option, which allows students on SAA to retain their health insurance but withdraw from their SAA and coursework for up to six months (or until the end of their contract, whichever comes first). Application is [here](#).

In many circumstances, an accommodation or leave is not necessary. You can expect faculty and staff to reasonably accommodate brief illnesses or other hardships during a semester, even if you do not take a leave of absence. It may be possible for you to arrange informally for accommodations of foreseeable absences. If you experience absences from your courses due to illness, you may be able to remain registered by taking incompletes, or by reducing coursework or other academic requirements. If you are a doctoral student in the pre-qualifying examination stage, you are not required to be continuously enrolled.

## Requesting a Paid Accommodation

It is the responsibility of the student:

- To initiate the accommodation request with the Graduate Studies Office ([gsostusv@indiana.edu](mailto:gsostusv@indiana.edu)) as soon as possible after the need is realized, before the beginning of the semester if possible. If the accommodation cannot be anticipated, request for the accommodation should be made no more than one week after the need for the accommodation occurs. Accommodations may be denied by the Graduate Studies Office if the student does not provide adequate notice of the request.
- To provide any requested medical certification or other verification of the reason for the accommodation.
- To discuss their upcoming absence with their SAA supervisor, and provide information related to current students or research projects associated with SAA responsibilities, as requested by the hiring department or center.
- To maintain full-time enrollment. When requesting an accommodation, the student should discuss with the assigned faculty advisor the impact of the accommodation on course and degree progress, and to make any necessary special arrangements with course instructors. Possible arrangements for registered courses might include virtual participation in a course, transferring from regular courses to research credits during the period of the accommodation, or receiving an incomplete in a course.
- If desired, students may apply for a one-term extension of all major degree milestones and time limits (qualifying exam deadlines, number of years between passing the oral qualifying exam and obtaining the degree). Students who are enrolled in G901 during the accommodation, or who have incomplete grades due to expire during the term of the accommodation, may also be eligible for extensions of the standard limits. Applications for such extensions are subject to approval from Graduate Studies (SoE programs) or the University Graduate School (Ph.D. programs).

### Procedure for Completing the Request Form

After conferring with the Graduate Studies Office, a student fills out the Request for Accommodation Form and reviews it with their primary faculty advisor and SAA supervisor. The student turns the form in to their major department, including a description of the specific arrangements, if any, pertaining to timeline and SAA responsibilities. The SAA supervisor, faculty advisor, and Department Chair or SAA unit sign the form to indicate that the student has discussed their upcoming absence and made necessary arrangements. Department staff forward the form to the Office of Graduate Studies for review and approval by the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies.

### Cost Coverage Within the SoE:

It is the responsibility of the hiring unit to arrange for covering the student's remaining duties during the time of the accommodation. When a unit's arrangements to cover an AI's duties involve additional cost, the Dean's office will pay the cost. Arrangements for covering the duties of RAs and GAs, including any costs incurred, are handled by the relevant unit (e.g., research center, department).

### Return from Paid Accommodation

Evaluation of a graduate student's academic progress and performance shall not be affected negatively by an approved period of accommodation that conformed to the requirements spelled out in this policy. Upon return from an approved accommodation, a student whose contract is still in effect will be assigned the same or similar duties, as determined by the needs of the department or center, to complete the remainder of that contract.