Date: December 4, 2013
Subject: Childbirth Accommodation Policy Statement

The University of Kansas Medical Center acknowledges that the years spent in graduate and professional degree programs can be prime childbearing years for students. KUMC wishes to assert itself as an institution that values family-friendly policies for students, faculty and staff by adopting a student-specific childbirth accommodation policy. This policy illustrates a commitment by KUMC to diversity and inclusion which will allow the institution to recruit and retain the highest quality students.

The University of Kansas Medical Center will grant students up to a six-week accommodation period for welcoming a child under the following conditions: the birth of a child, the adoption of a child, or the placement of a child for adoption or foster care. The six-week accommodation period can be granted as a leave, a revised academic, research, or clinical schedule, or a combination of the above.

Eligibility

This policy will apply to all enrolled students regardless of gender or marital status. Other situations related to family life would continue to be covered by general leave of absence. Depending on their academic program, timing of birth/adoption, and level of support they will receive in caring for a newborn, a student may find it more advantageous both academically and personally to take a leave of absence rather than utilizing the childbirth accommodation policy.

Applying for the Accommodation Period

Academic Accommodations

A student should fill out the Application for an Academic Accommodation Period form to initiate discussions with their advisor(s) and departmental or school administrators as soon as possible, but no later than four months prior to the anticipated delivery date. If a child is being welcomed through adoption or foster care, please fill out an Application for an Academic Accommodation Period form as soon as possible depending on the situation. Individual programs and departments will review the student’s requests and, along with the student and other necessary parties (i.e. advisors, instructors), determine the accommodations that will be provided. These discussions should also detail the type of academic engagement, and progress expected from the student while on leave or a revised academic schedule. If a program decides that due to academic requirements, a leave of absence is more appropriate, a request may be denied. The denial of the request must be made to the student in writing with adequate justification. If an accommodation period of less than six weeks is proposed, this decision must also be justified. Upon approval of a student’s request, a plan will be submitted to the Dean of the student’s School. The plan will outline the specific accommodations being provided for a student, as well as any expectations from the academic program. Students may appeal decisions regarding accommodations. The appeal of the decision must be made in writing and submitted to the Dean of the student’s School. The Dean of the student’s School will have final decision-making authority.

All academic programs and departments are expected to work with their students and make a good-faith effort to provide reasonable accommodations so that their students can remain in good academic standing and continue progress towards their degree while also balancing the
demands of caring for a new child. It is also encouraged that advisors, academic staff, and departmental leaders work with sensitivity and imagination to provide more than these minimum standards put forth by KUMC when circumstances allow for further accommodations. Students should be proactive in speaking with advisors, instructors, and academic deans when they are planning a family or expecting a child to devise the best personal and academic plan.

**Student Status**

Students will retain their full time student status if approved for an academic accommodation period. Additionally, for students who decide to take a leave of absence, they will have the option to pay student fees if they wish to have continued access to campus resources.

**Financial Support (applicable to those funded by GTAs, GRAs, or Fellowships)**

For students who currently receive stipends through a graduate teaching assistantship (GTA) or graduate research assistantship (GRA), they will remain fully funded for a six-week period. Students who do not receive stipends at the time of application are not eligible for financial support. Any continuation of support past six weeks will be determined on an individual basis. Students will remain funded by their current stipend source for the first two weeks and then will be funded by a Childbirth Accommodation Fund through the Office of Graduate Studies for up to four additional weeks. Students in the MD/PhD program would continue to receive their stipends from their current source during the MD phase and from current stipend source for two weeks and then the Childbirth Accommodation Fund for up to four additional weeks during the PhD phase. If a student is on a grant or fellowship that allows them to receive stipends during maternity/paternity leaves, then they will continue to be paid by their current funding source for the entire six-week period. If funding is not allowed by the outside grant or fellowship, then the student will receive six weeks of support from the Childbirth Accommodation Fund.

While not covered under this childbirth accommodation policy, students who experience medically necessary absences during pregnancy or due to conditions related to pregnancy should refer to the federal Title IX policy to educate themselves about their rights regarding their education. If you feel that you are experiencing discrimination due to pregnancy or related conditions, please contact the Office of Institutional Opportunity and Access (IOA@ku.edu).