**Policy Name:** Graduate Student Parental and Medical Leave Program

**Policy Owner:** Vice Provost for Graduate and Postdoctoral Education

**Policy Contact:** Bonnie Ferri, bonnie.ferri@gatech.edu

**Reviewed By:** Faculty Senate on behalf of the faculty of Georgia Tech (resolution of support, April 2022), Dean of Students, Equity and Compliance Programs, School of Mechanical Engineering, Student Academic and Financial Affairs Committee (SAFAC) of the Faculty, Student Regulations Committee (SRC) of the Faculty, Institute Graduate Curriculum Committee (IGCC) of the Faculty, Graduate Student Government Association, Graduate Student Senate, Office of the Provost (funding approved) Office of the General Counsel

**Policy Steering Committee Approval:** May 2023

**Policy Purpose:** This policy creates and outlines a parental and medical leave support program for full-time, fully-funded graduate students. Under the policy, a graduate student can take up to six weeks of paid leave while maintaining their full-time enrollment status. This support program is aligned with the Institute’s strategic plan and values (e.g. retention initiatives, expanding access, cultivate well-being, DEI blueprint). Georgia Tech lags in this area as most of Georgia Tech’s peer institutions have this type of support for graduate students.

**Summary of Substantive Policy Elements:**
- Creates a parental and medical leave program for full-time graduate students.
- Defines qualifying events under this policy only.
- Provides for work flexibility or time away from work (up to six weeks).
- Provides for continuation of financial support if applicable (up to six weeks).
- Provides for an extension of degree completion timelines (one year, once per degree).
- Maintains a student’s enrollment status and access to student services and resources.
Graduate Student Parental and Medical Leave Program

Policy No.
Type of Policy: Administrative
Effective Date: TBD
Last Revised: TBD
Policy Owner: Vice Provost for Graduate and Postdoctoral Education
Policy Contact: Bonnie Ferri, bonnie.ferri@gatech.edu

1. Reason for Policy
This policy creates a parental and medical leave program for full-time graduate students, defines qualifying events under this policy only, provides for continuation of financial support if applicable, provides for an extension of degree completion timelines, and maintains a student’s enrollment status and access to student services and resources. This policy does not replace, limit, or change rights and resources available under federal or state law and Institute policies including but not limited to the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Title IX, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

2. Policy Statement

Eligibility
Graduate students enrolled full time at Georgia Tech are eligible under this policy for any of the following reasons:

- birth or placement of a child (for adoption or foster care)
- the student’s own serious, acute health condition or to provide care for the student’s child, spouse, domestic partner or parent with a serious, acute health condition
- a period of incapacity or treatment connected with inpatient hospital care, hospice, or residential medical care.

Program Support
Under this policy, eligible students will be approved at their request for the following support:

Financial: Students employed as a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA), employed as a Graduate Research Assistant (GRA), or fully funded on a fellowship may be granted up
to six weeks of interim, replacement financial support from the Office of Graduate Education paid at the student’s existing stipend rate. Students can utilize up to six weeks of financial support per academic year. Financial support is subject to the availability of funding and is considered taxable income.

Work Flexibility: Students employed as a GTA or GRA are eligible for up to six weeks away from job responsibilities. This can be achieved by employing the Graduate Assistantship Schedule and Flexibility Policy or by arranging for time completely away in coordination with the student’s home department. The student and advisor or graduate program, in consultation with the Office of Graduate Education, if necessary, will develop a mutually-agreed-upon work flexibility arrangement depending on the student’s specific job duties.

Degree Completion Timeline Extension: Students may be granted an additional year to complete degree requirements pursuant to the time limits for degree completion in the Catalog for Master’s and Doctoral degrees. Students can utilize this extension once per graduate degree.

Maintenance of Enrollment Status: During the period of support under this program, the student’s status as a full-time student remains unchanged.

**Timing**

Students can request benefits under this policy via the Office of the Dean of Students and/or Equity and Compliance Programs. Requests should be made as far in advance as reasonably possible to allow time to arrange for financial support and work flexibility. Financial support and work flexibility will be provided concurrently if both are requested.

**3. Scope**

Graduate students enrolled full time at Georgia Tech are eligible for support under this policy.

**4. Definitions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Serious, acute health condition</strong></th>
<th>an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that requires treatment by a health care provider or involves inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility and develops suddenly, lasting for a short period of time (nominally 2-6 weeks)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic partner</strong></td>
<td>a committed, non-marital relationship between two adults declared and verified through the Office of the Dean of Students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Responsibilities

**Office of Graduate Education**
The Office of Graduate Education via the Vice Provost for Graduate and Postdoctoral Education owns the policy and administers requested support following the procedures and guidelines.

**Office of the Dean of Students**
The Office of the Dean of Students receives requests for support, reviews appropriate documents, verifies eligibility, and refers students to the Office of Graduate Education for the administration of support.

**Equity and Compliance Programs**
Equity and Compliance Programs receives requests for support, reviews appropriate documents, verifies eligibility, and refers students to the Office of Graduate Education for the administration of support.

6. Related Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Link</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office of Graduate Education Website</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Assistantship Schedule and Flexibility Policy</td>
<td><a href="https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/academic-affairs/graduate-assistantship-schedule-and-flexibility-policy">https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/academic-affairs/graduate-assistantship-schedule-and-flexibility-policy</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Tech Catalog for Master’s Degrees</td>
<td><a href="https://catalog.gatech.edu/academics/graduate/masters-degree-info/">https://catalog.gatech.edu/academics/graduate/masters-degree-info/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Tech Catalog for Doctoral Degrees</td>
<td><a href="https://catalog.gatech.edu/academics/graduate/doctoral-degree-info/">https://catalog.gatech.edu/academics/graduate/doctoral-degree-info/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Policy History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revision Date</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Office of Graduate Education</td>
<td>New Policy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>