

Policy on Lactation (for Medical Students)

I. PURPOSE

The School of Medicine is committed to supporting medical students who are lactating by providing time and space to express milk in a manner that does not disrupt their academic progression.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to all medical students who are lactating and who wish to express milk during the school day in any phase of the curriculum.

III. POLICY

Lactating students are entitled to reasonable break time (typically 20–30 minutes every 3–4 hours) and private space to express milk during the school day. This includes time during pre-clerkship coursework, clinical rotations, and all other required educational activities.

Break time for lactation is not considered an absence, and shall not count against attendance or participation requirements, provided that the student communicates their needs in advance with the faculty/staff and works with the appropriate academic leadership to make reasonable lactation arrangements.

Designated lactation rooms in Alan Magee Scaife Hall shall be maintained as clean, private, and secure spaces with appropriate furnishings.

In clinical settings, clerkship directors or site supervisors shall work with students to identify appropriate lactation spaces and allow reasonable time for breaks without penalty.

Confidentiality shall be maintained, and no student shall be penalized or disadvantaged for requesting or using lactation accommodations.

IV. POLICY AUTHOR(S)

Office of Accreditation and Continuous Quality Improvement

Office of Student Affairs

V. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Policy on Parental Transition Time

VI. REFERENCES

VII. APPROVALS

Educational Policy Council approved on December 10, 2025.

VIII. PROCEDURES

Requesting Support

- Students should notify the Office of Medical Education (phase dean) as early as possible regarding anticipated lactation needs.
- Students are not required to provide medical documentation in order to receive lactation support.

Planning

- The appropriate phase dean, in consultation with course/clerkship directors, shall work with the student to plan for reasonable lactation breaks and identify accessible lactation spaces.
- In pre-clerkship settings, adjustments shall be made to classroom or laboratory schedules. Students must plan and communicate accordingly around summative assessments, OSCE's, and other activities that are difficult to replicate.
- In clinical settings, students must coordinate with site supervisors/preceptors to ensure that lactation breaks can occur without negatively affecting patient care.

Break Time and Attendance

- Lactation breaks do not count against attendance or participation requirements.
- Missed material, if any, may need to be reviewed independently by the student but should not trigger punitive make-up requirements.

Facilities

- Where refrigeration is not available, students may use personal coolers.

Confidentiality and Non-Retaliation

- All requests shall be handled confidentially.
- No student shall be penalized, disadvantaged, or retaliated against for requesting or using lactation support.

A student who would like to appeal a decision made in regards to this policy may do so to the Associate Dean for Medical Education. If a resolution is not reached, an appeal may be made to the Vice Dean for Education, whose decision is final.

The University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine reserves the right to change these policies and procedures as needed.