

Policy on Medical Student Parental Transition Time

I. PURPOSE

The University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine affirms its commitment to supporting medical students during significant life events such as pregnancy, childbirth, adoption, or foster placement. The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidance on parental transition time and available resources while ensuring that students continue to progress toward graduation.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- Medical students

III. POLICY

Eligibility:

Parental Transition Time serves as UPSOM's designated form of parental leave. Students remain enrolled during this six-week period.

All medical students are eligible to take up to six weeks (42 calendar days) of parental transition time during the curriculum whenever they become the parent of a new child or children (e.g. twins). This time may be used following the student becoming the parent of a new child or children—by birth, adoption, foster placement, or any other mechanism by which the student assumes parental responsibilities.

Parental transition time can be taken consecutively or intermittently up to the six-week maximum and must be taken within the six months following assumption of parental responsibilities. Students may choose to use available vacation time to lengthen their parental transition time. These days must be requested for at least one week at a time unless there are special circumstances (requiring approval from the Associate Dean for Medical Education).

The six-week maximum will not be extended for multiple births/adoptions. Students who become parents in different academic years may request a new six-week allocation.

Students who require more parental transition time because of unusual circumstances may request additional time with physician recommendation and approval from the Associate Dean of Student Affairs. Additional time would be granted as a personal or medical Leave of Absence (during which time the student would not be enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh).

In the event of an adverse pregnancy outcome (e.g., pregnancy loss or neonatal loss), the birthing parent—and partner, if applicable—may convert some or all planned transition time to medical and/or bereavement leave (see Policy on Leaves of Absence), with confidential counseling and flexible academic accommodations.

Academic advisors and coaches will actively participate in planning and monitoring the student's academic progress during and after parental transition time. Advisors will ensure that students receive timely guidance on course sequencing, graduation requirements, and remediation if needed.

Faculty, staff, and peers are expected to maintain a supportive and professional learning environment during parental transition time. Any concerns regarding mistreatment, discrimination, or retaliation related to the use of this policy should be reported through UPSOM's professionalism reporting mechanisms. UPSOM will monitor adherence to these expectations and address violations promptly.

Pregnancy, childbirth, and pregnancy-related medical needs may warrant reasonable modifications under Title IX, separate from this policy. Students may request such modifications through the University's Title IX Office.

Parental Transition Time (up to six weeks) is not recorded on the transcript or in the MSPE. Any additional time will be recorded as an LOA and will appear in the MSPE.

Enrollment and Academic Expectations: FOUNDATIONS PHASE

Parental transition time is treated like other lengthy absences (see Policy on Absence and Attendance). Students remain enrolled as full-time students during parental transition time. Transition time temporarily modifies deadlines and expectations without altering academic standards.

A written academic plan must be documented and approved prior to the start of Parental Transition Time.

Students will not be expected to participate in curricular activities during this period. The Assistant Dean for Foundations will provide revised deadlines for assignments, exams, and milestones. All missed work must be completed to the satisfaction of faculty by the revised deadlines.

Enrollment and Academic Expectations: CLERKSHIPS/BRIDGES PHASES

Parental transition time may be taken using vacation weeks and/or a two- or four-week "New Parenthood" elective. Intersession and recess weeks may supplement the six-week total. Graduation requirements remain unchanged.

A written academic plan must be documented and approved by the appropriate phase dean(s) prior to the start of Parental Transition Time.

Students remain fully enrolled as full-time students. The Associate Dean for Clinical Education and/or Assistant Dean for Medical Education, as appropriate) may modify

deadlines for clerkship, required rotations and longitudinal course requirements. Students must complete all graduation requirements.

Additional Time and Special Circumstances:

Students requiring additional time may request a Leave of Absence through the standard process.

If both parents are medical students, each may independently take their own six-week transition period.

IV. POLICY AUTHOR(S)

Office of Student Affairs

Office of Medical Education

V. RELATED POLICIES

Policy on Absence and Attendance

Policy on Leaves of Absence

Policy on Lactation

VI. REFERENCES

LCME Element 3.5

LCME Element 11.1

LCME Element 12.3

LCME Element 12.4

VII. APPROVALS

Curriculum Committee approved on March 24, 2026

VIII. PROCEDURES

1. Notification

Students are encouraged to notify their Coach, Advisory Dean, Student Affairs, and OMED as early as possible. Students must notify OMED and OSA at least one week before returning from transition time.

2. Documentation

Students may be asked to provide documentation confirming timing (e.g., provider letter, adoption/foster documentation). Requests for additional time require documentation for LOA review.

3. Planning

Advisors, the appropriate phase dean, and curricular leadership will work with the student to prepare an academic plan outlining:

- a. Adjusted milestones and course/clerkship schedules
- b. Use of transition time (consecutive or intermittent)
- c. Required make-up activities proportional to missed time
- d. A written academic plan must be documented and approved prior to the start of Parental Transition Time.

4. Approval

Standard requests (up to six weeks) are approved by OME. Shorter increments or additional time require review by the Associate Dean for Medical Education. OSA will be notified to provide support.

5. Formal Leave of Absence

Students who need time beyond six weeks must request a formal LOA.

Formal Leaves of Absence may affect enrollment status and financial aid eligibility. Students must meet with the Office of Financial Aid before an LOA is approved.

International students must consult the Office of International Services before any LOA to ensure visa compliance.

6. During the Transition Period

Students remain enrolled as full-time students. Revised deadlines are established by phase leadership.

Funding and Visa Considerations:

- a. Students supported by Pitt fellowships or financial aid experience no change during transition time.
- b. Students supported by external agencies must comply with granting agency expectations.

Dual-Parent Students

- a. Both medical student parents may independently use transition time.

7. Return to Curriculum

Students resume the curriculum after the transition period. Communication and collaboration support a smooth return.

8. Appeals

Students may appeal decisions to the Associate Dean for Medical Education, then to the Vice Dean for Education.

9. Policy Monitoring:

The Office of Medical Education will review this policy annually and report findings to the Curriculum Committee. This review will include student feedback, utilization data, and any identified barriers to access, ensuring continuous improvement and LCME compliance.

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