Helpful Information for Graduate Students Seeking Protected Leave

OSU’s Graduate Assistantship Family and Medical Leave Policy (GAFML)

- Graduate employees do not work enough hours to meet the eligibility requirements under FMLA or OFLA (since we technically do not have a full 1.0 appointment).
  - However, a new policy was created in our most recent bargaining agreement between CGE (Coalition of Graduate Employees) and OSU (see Appendix).
  - Summary of The Graduate Assistantship Family and Medical Leave Policy
    - 12 weeks of protected leave (however you are required to use your accrued sick leave before going into Leave Without Pay)
    - Includes 3 weeks of paid leave
    - You will have access to continuation of benefits for the duration of your paid and unpaid leave
    - Does not extend your appointment
- Be sure to speak to your supervisor/advisor regarding your plans to take Protected Leave.
- In order to take Protected Leave you must have a current GTA or GRA appointment or have been on an appointment in the term immediately prior to the leave of absence. This means you must maintain any academic enrollment requirements of your contract and stay enrolled during your time of leave. Be sure to take a close look at your contract. (See this Comparison Tool for more information regarding eligibility.)
- If you have questions/concerns regarding maintaining your health insurance/benefits please contact the Graduate Employee Benefits team, sometimes also referred to as ‘Grad Health’ (contact information below).
- The Graduate School does not expect graduate students to work during summer term. Therefore, you may take summer term “off” without actually taking GAFML and while maintaining your current health insurance (there is nothing required on your part for this to happen, your insurance automatically remains active whether you have an active contract or not or are enrolled for credits or not).
- If your leave lands in the middle of a term, work with the FW department and the Graduate School to potentially extend your leave beyond 12 weeks (however, this may affect your benefits – consult with Graduate Employee Benefits).

OSU Human Resources

- There are a couple teams within OSU’s Human Resources (HR) department that you will need to correspond with:
  - Graduate Employee Benefits team
  - Protected Leaves team
- It can be especially difficult to communicate with HR during summer term (slow/no responses, people on vacation, etc.).
- If you have difficulty reaching someone or do you not know who to turn to, send your questions to Ask HR (askhr@oregonstate.edu).
To sign up for Protected Leave:

- **STEP 1:**
  Begin your request for Protected Leave by submitting an official request in EmpCenter (see #3 'how to apply'). This must happen 30 days in advance of your expected due date or placement for adoption/foster care.

- **STEP 2:**
  Contact the Protected Leaves team to complete your request. The team will help you determine the best dates to take your leave. If needed, the Protected Leaves team will adjust the dates you submitted via EmpCenter. The Protected Leave team will also fill out your timesheets for you during your leave (although you will still be responsible for submitting the sheets on time).
  - Protected Leaves team (OSU HR)
    - medical.leave@oregonstate.edu

- **STEP 3:**
  The Graduate School will need to accept your request for GAFML (this should happen automatically after you complete a request in EmpCenter and communicate with the Protected Leaves team).
  - More information from the Graduate School [HERE](#) (OSU Graduate School, Leave of Absence Request Form)
  - OSU Graduate School
    - graduate.school@oregonstate.edu

- **STEP 4:** If you would like to continue your health insurance coverage, Because our health insurance premiums are typically automatically deducted from our paycheck you will need to contact Graduate Employee Benefits and arrange to self-pay your premium during your medical leave.

To add your new child onto your health insurance plan:

- Submit an Enrollment Form (docusign or submit PDF to the email) to the Graduate Employee Benefits team (sometimes also referred to as ‘Grad Health’).
  - Forms and Policy Information
  - You will want to fill out the top section with your information, and in section 2A, please fill out that you are adding a dependent, the date of the event (birth) and mark the birth box. Under family members you are enrolling, please list the newborn under the dependent child section. Sign and date the second page then return to our office via email (or submit via Docusign).
  - Graduate Employee Benefits (OSU HR)
    - gradhealth@oregonstate.edu
    - (541) 737 – 7568
Appendix

CGE Contract (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2024)

ARTICLE 31 – FAMILY LEAVE AND POLICIES

Section 1 – Family Leave
All eligible Graduate Employees may take up to twelve weeks of a continuous block of leave from an active appointment as parental leave or to care for their own serious health condition or that of a family member. Qualifying events for this leave include the birth, adoption, or fostering of a child. Starting October 1, 2020, the Employer will cover the time with pay three (3) weeks at the Graduate Employee’s current FTE. The Graduate Employee will have access to a continuation of benefits for the duration of their family leave for both paid and unpaid leave. To be eligible for family leave, a Graduate Employee must be on a current appointment or have been on an appointment in the term immediately prior to the leave of absence. Employing units will not intentionally decrease or terminate the assistantship of a Graduate Employee seeking family leave as a means of reducing the Graduate Employee’s access to family leave benefits. Graduate Employees who take family leave will be guaranteed an appointment at or above the same FTE and funding amount upon their return to a current appointment.

Section 2 - Consultation and Notification
The administration agrees that the current Medical and Family Leave policy which pertains to Graduate Employees will not be substantially changed without consultation with CGE. Additionally, CGE may provide input regarding the policy, including recommending modifications for consideration by the policy-makers.

All Graduate Employees seeking Medical and Family Leave will be informed that they may request a CGE advocate to help them through the process at any point. Office of Human Resources will also provide this information to any Graduate Employee currently on Medical and Family Leave.

Contact Information

- **Protected Leaves team (OSU HR)**
  - Talk to them for:
    - Help with signing up for GAFML
      - medical.leave@oregonstate.edu
  - **Graduate Employee Benefits (OSU HR)**
    - Talk to them for:
      - All questions regarding maintaining your health insurance benefits
      - Adding your new child onto your health insurance
      - gradhealth@oregonstate.edu
      - (541) 737 - 7568
  - **Graduate School**
    - The Graduate School must receive and accept a request for Protected Leave.
      - Karen Hanson (Director of Graduate Success, creator of the Comparison Tool)
      - Karen.Hanson@oregonstate.edu