



Family Leave at GSU: A Faculty Guide

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In the course of their employment at Georgia State University, faculty members may need to take time off from work due to events such as the birth of a child, adoption, or to take care of a family member.

This document provides some options that are available to faculty to arrange for such leave. We encourage faculty members to discuss these options with their unit head in advance of the event (if possible) or before initiating a request.

- **Option 1:** FMLA leave concurrently with accrued sick leave. (Most Common)
 - An eligible faculty member can contact GSU's Benefits Office to request up to 12 weeks of FMLA leave due to qualifying reasons (*refer to GSU's Family and Medical Leave Policy in Resources section*). The FMLA Certification of Health Care Provider form is required.
 - To be eligible for FMLA leave, an employee must have been (1) employed by the university for at least 12 months (need not be continuous); (2) have worked at least 1,250 hours during the previous 12-monthly period (unless absent on military leave); and (3) work at a location where the university employs at least 50 persons within a 75-mile radius. The rolling FMLA leave year begins on the first day of the employee's FMLA leave.
 - To receive pay during this time, faculty will be required to use accrued sick leave concurrently with the FMLA leave. Faculty that has not accrued the necessary amount of sick leave may still request up to 12 weeks of FMLA but will receive pay only for the duration of the sick leave time. FMLA leave can be taken continuously or on an intermittent basis.
 - Tenure track faculty can apply for a tenure clock stoppage after the FMLA is approved by the GSU Benefits office, by consulting with and making the request through their Department Head or Dean's Office.

- **Option 2:** Paid Parental Leave (Used concurrently with FMLA).
 - Eligible USG employees can request up to a maximum of 240 hours (approximately 6 weeks) of paid leave because of a qualifying life event:
 - The birth of a child of an eligible employee;
 - The placement of a minor child for adoption with an eligible employee; or
 - The placement of a minor child for foster care with an eligible employee).
 - Eligibility Requirements: (*refer to the USG Paid Parental Leave Policy in the Resources section*)
 - The employee must provide their supervisor and the human resources department with notice of their paid parental leave request at least 30 days prior to the proposed leave start date (or if the leave was not foreseeable, as soon as possible).
 - The employee must follow institutional leave request procedures and provide all documentation as required by the HR department to substantiate the request and the qualifying life event. Documentation of the qualifying event may include certification

from a healthcare provider related to the birth and care of a newborn or court documents related to adoption or foster care placement.

- If both parents are USG employees who meet the eligibility criteria, each parent is eligible to receive up to the maximum 240 hours paid parental leave benefit within 12 months of the qualifying life event provided that the use of such leave does not unduly disrupt the institution's operations
 - Paid parental leave taken under this policy will run concurrently with unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Thus, any leave taken under this policy that also qualifies for FMLA leave due to the birth or placement of a child or due to adoption or foster care, will count towards any available FMLA leave. In no case will the total amount of leave—whether paid or unpaid—granted to the employee under the FMLA exceed 12 weeks during the 12-month FMLA period. After the paid parental leave is exhausted, the balance of FMLA leave may be compensated through accrued sick, vacation, or other eligible accrued leave, if approved through the normal channels.
 - Tenure track faculty can apply for a tenure clock stoppage after the parental leave is approved by the GSU Benefits office, by consulting with and making the request through their Department Head or Dean's Office.
- **Option 3:** Request temporary adjustment of workload.
- This option is useful when faculty members anticipate being able to complete part of their workload (e.g. research or service) but need release from other responsibilities (e.g. teaching) to take care of the family event.
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 - Faculty members should work with their chair and/or dean to rearrange workload on a temporary basis (e.g. taking on additional service work in lieu of teaching during the period of campus absence or teaching an additional class at a future time.)
 - Tenure track faculty **cannot** request a tenure clock stoppage under this option.
- **Option 5:** Apply for short-term disability. (Used concurrently with FMLA to receive pay during leave).
- An eligible faculty member can contact GSU's Benefits Office to request up to 12 weeks of FMLA leave due to qualifying reasons (*refer to GSU's Family and Medical Leave Policy*). The FMLA Certification of Health Care Provider form is required.
 - **The faculty must be enrolled in USG's short-term disability coverage (through MetLife) to request this option.**
 - Short-term disability is only available if the absence from work is due to the employee's health condition (e.g. the faculty member who is pregnant or experiencing a health issue).
 - The faculty member must initiate the short-term disability claim by contacting MetLife and notify GSU's Benefits Office.
 - There is a 14-calendar day waiting period/elimination period for short-term disability. The faculty member will be eligible to use their accrued sick leave during the 14-calendar day waiting period. Thereafter, the faculty member will be placed in an unpaid

leave status at GSU and receive up to 60% of their salary from MetLife for a maximum of 11 weeks.

- An employee may elect to be paid using accrued sick and vacation leave or to receive short-term disability payments through MetLife but cannot receive both paid leave and short-term disability at the same time.
 - Tenure track faculty can apply for a tenure clock stoppage after the FMLA leave is approved by the GSU Benefits office, by consulting with and making the request through their Department Head or Dean's Office.
- **Option 6:** Request a leave of absence as an accommodation under the ADA.
- Please consult with GSU Benefits Office to request an accommodation under the ADA (*refer to GSU's ADA Accommodation Policy and Procedures below*).
 - **Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA):**
The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) requires a covered employer to provide a "reasonable accommodation" to a qualified employee's or applicant's known limitations related to, affected by, or arising out of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, unless the accommodation will cause the employer an "undue hardship."
 - **Accommodation under the ADA:**
If a pregnancy-related condition is severe enough to be considered a disability under the ADA, accommodations could be explored under both the ADA and the PWFA.
- **Resources:**
- USG Policy on Leave <https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section8/C224/#p8.2.7> leave
 - USG Policy on Paid Parental Leave https://www.usg.edu/hr/assets/hr/hrap_manual/HRAP_Parental_Leave_Policy.pdf
 - HR Benefits – FMLA and other leaves <https://hr.gsu.edu/service-centers/benefits/active-employees/#4>
 - Tenure clock stoppage (from GSU P&T Manual) <https://gsu.policystat.com/policy/7711956/latest/>
 - Sick Leave (from Faculty Handbook) <https://faculty.gsu.edu/faculty-handbook/#1510846214276-b2fdd4b1-3a6a>
 - LOA w/o pay (from Faculty Handbook) <https://faculty.gsu.edu/faculty-handbook/#1510846222557-e7a13928-03de>
 - GSU Employee Handbook (section 404 and 406) https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/tje14swws12ni4mhom7gi/Updated_05092022_georgia-state-university-employee-hand-book.pdf
 - Short-Term Disability info https://www.usg.edu/hr/benefits/2019_benefits/disability
 - ADA Accommodation Policy and Procedures <https://hr.gsu.edu/benefits/accessibility-and-accommodation/>