

Physics department policy – Parental leave for graduate students and postdocs

A. Parental leave for graduate students and non-unionized postdocs

Section A pertains to Masters students, Ph.D. students and non-unionized postdocs. The case of unionized postdocs is discussed separately in Section B.

The department of physics will support a student or a postdoc who wishes to take a parental leave following the birth or adoption of a child. In many cases external sources of funding are available. The student or postdoc is responsible for determining all other sources of income available to him or her during the leave, and providing documentation to the department. Taking into account the available external sources, the department will supplement the salary of the student/postdoc such that the total pay (external+departmental) matches the regular income level, as defined below. Departmental support will be provided for a duration of up to 12 months, subject to availability of funds.

The regular income of a non-unionized postdoc (for the purpose of calculating the departmental supplement) is the minimum between the yearly salary and/or stipend as noted in the official McGill offer letter and \$60,000/year. This amount will be prorated according to the duration of the leave.

The regular income of a graduate student is one RA unit and one TA unit. It is currently at \$23,000/year (up to date amount is found [here](#)). This amount will be prorated according to the duration of the leave.

To be eligible for the departmental supplement the applicant must meet the following criteria:

- The student/postdoc is one of the parents of the child and will be the primary care giver of the child for the duration of the leave.
- If the other parent of the child is also a student/postdoc in the department and is taking a parental leave supported by the department, the combined leave of both individuals should not exceed 26 weeks.
- The entirety of the leave must be taken within 12 months of the birth or adoption of the child.

As discussed above, it is the responsibility of the applicant to explore and document all external resources available to them before requesting departmental funds. Specifically, applicants must examine resources available to them through their scholarship or the grant from which they are paid (NSERC and FRQNT have generous leave policies) as well as QPIP.

Application procedure:

- A formal letter of request should be sent to the graduate program director with copies to

the department chair and the research supervisor, at least 6 weeks before the beginning of the planned parental leave.

- The letter should include a confirmation that the applicant meets the eligibility criteria, i.e. that the student/postdoc is the child's primary care giver, that the leave dates fall within 12 months of the birth, and that the combined parental leave of the applicant and partner (if applicable) does not exceed 26 weeks if both parents are supported by the department.
- The letter should provide evidence that the applicant has applied for all possible external sources of income, and specify any benefits awarded. Specifically, the applicant must verify what support is available from QPIP, their scholarship (if applicable) and the grant agencies from which they are paid. The letter should also disclose all parental leave benefits available to the applicant's partner (if applicable).
- The letter should include the current year of study, the current level of and sources of funding, and the requested dates of paid leave.
- Childbirth or adoption documentation should be provided no later than 8 weeks after the beginning of the parental leave.

B. Parental leave for unionized postdocs

The following policy pertains to postdocs bound by the collective bargaining agreement between AMURE and McGill as of August 1, 2017. Postdocs bound by this agreement will receive benefits according to its provisions, and following the procedures outlined within the document. Within this agreement, there are expenses to the employer that include an indemnity (beyond QPIP benefits) as well as ongoing benefits costs.

The research supervisor employing the postdoc may apply to the Physics department for funding to support the expenses associated with any parental leave taken by the unionized postdoc. In this case, the Physics department will reimburse the research supervisor the expenses upon conclusion of the parental leave, subject to availability of funds.

Procedure:

- The research supervisor should determine whether any external sources of funding are available through the research grant or scholarship from which the postdoc is paid.
- The research supervisor must obtain written consent from the postdoc to furnish the department with (1) information on the nature and duration of the leave and (2) documentation of the childbirth, stillbirth, or adoption.
- A formal letter of request should be sent by the research supervisor to the graduate program director with copies to the department chair. The deadline is either six weeks before the start of the proposed leave or one week after the postdoc gives formal notification to the supervisor, whichever comes later.

- The letter must specify the name of the postdoc, the dates of the leave, the benefits accorded the postdoc per the collective bargaining agreement, their current salary, an estimate of the expenses associated with the leave, and the fund from which the postdoc is currently being paid.
- The letter should attest to the non-availability of external funding or specify the extent of external funding available.
- The letter should include the written consent of the postdoc as an attachment.
- Provided that the postdoc has given consent, the research supervisor will provide the department with documentation of childbirth, stillbirth, or adoption no later than 8 weeks after the beginning of the leave.

Relevant external resources as of December 2020:

[Collective bargaining agreement](#) for postdocs

NSERC:

- Scholarship holders: 12 months paid leave (subject to fund availability), see [regulations](#).
- Students or postdocs paid from an NSERC grant (no minimum time): 12 months paid leave, see [regulations](#).

FRQNT:

- Scholarship holders: 8 months paid maternity leave, see regulations for [students](#) and [postdocs](#).
- Students paid from a FRQNT grant (see regulations for [Partnership](#), [Team](#), or [New Researchers](#)) for at least 6 months: 8 months paid leave.

QPIP: Up to 75% income replacement, see [website](#).