Modified Duties for Tenure System and Health Programs Faculty with New Dependent Children¹

Approved by the University on Faculty Affairs on February 1, 2011.

This policy addresses the balance of commitments of family and professional work that arise when a tenure system or Health Programs faculty member is responsible for teaching² and a new child enters the home. Such faculty are permitted to request a modified workload and flexible schedule for up to one semester, within twelve months after the child enters the home.

Upon request, tenure system and Health Programs faculty members who have a new child (or new children) in the home under the age of 6 and/or not attending school full-time may be granted a period of modified duties for up to one semester without a reduction in effort and salary. Eligibility for modified duties is in addition to any paid short-term disability and/or parental leaves received by the faculty member. If approved, the department/school (and/or College) is responsible for arranging for coverage of direct teaching responsibilities for the period of modified duties.

DESCRIPTION OF MODIFIED DUTIES

The period of modified duties is not a leave of absence. Faculty members with modified duties status will generally be relieved of teaching but will be expected to be fully employed by fulfilling their other professional responsibilities that can be scheduled around the child’s needs at a higher percentage of effort (e.g. preparation of research proposals, papers, and course materials; supervision of graduate student research; and academic service.³) A written statement of all duties and related expectations must be agreed upon by both the department chairperson/school director and faculty member. For faculty members with significant direct clinical responsibilities, limited teaching obligations, or for whom teaching is integral to the provision of clinical care, other modifications appropriate to the circumstances may be negotiated between the faculty member and the department chairperson/school director.

Because the period of modified duties is not a leave, it is not subject to any requirement for payback. Modification of duties must not result in additional duties during the subsequent semester (i.e., the faculty member may not be asked to make up the released teaching before or after the period of modified duties).

A period of modified duties does not automatically change the tenure system probationary appointment end date. The probationary appointment end date may be

¹ Applies to situations including the birth of a child, adoption of a child, temporary custody of a child and foster care.
² Unlike most responsibilities, teaching responsibilities are held to a rigid schedule, whereas other responsibilities (i.e., advising, research) might provide more flexibility.
³ If academic service expectations require frequent on-campus attendance, modifications may be negotiated as well.
extended under the provisions of the policy on Implementation Practices (Stopping the Tenure Clock) at http://www.hr.msu.edu/documents/facacadhandbooks/facultyhandbook/implementation.htm.

EXPECTED DURING MODIFIED DUTIES
During the period of modified duties, faculty members will be expected to remain available to their colleagues and students, including continuation of responsibilities for which the faculty member is uniquely qualified, such as advising doctoral candidates. The period of modified duties cannot be used for extensive professional travel or other increased professional activities (including consulting) that do not meet the goals of the policy. (Absences from the community require any usual approvals that may be mandated by the department/school and college.)

DURATION OF MODIFIED DUTIES
The maximum period for which modified duties will be assigned is up to one semester, or an equivalent amount of time for those faculty members whose responsibilities are not tied directly to teaching on the academic calendar. The period of modified duties must occur in the time period beginning on the date the child first enters the home and ending the day immediately prior to this anniversary date. This limit applies even if more than one child has entered the home (as in the case of a multiple birth or the simultaneous adoption of more than one child). If both parents are in the same department, they would generally be expected to request modified duties in different semesters.

PROCEDURES
Faculty members must submit a written request for modified duties as early as possible so the department/school can plan appropriately. The request should be made no later than three months (earlier if possible) in advance of the affected semester or activities. This will allow time for the department/school to identify alternate faculty to teach the affected courses, if relevant, or to make arrangements for coverage of other duties.

The request must include the following information:
- Statement that the faculty member is the primary, or a co-equal caregiver
- Date the child entered (or is estimated to enter) the home
- Requested period of modified duties
- Reason(s) for modified duties
- A plan of proposed activities, developed in consultation with the department chairperson/school director. (Once approved, modified duties may be changed only with the written agreement of the faculty member and the department chairperson/school director)

Policy implementation and funding are the responsibility of the department/school and/or college. While there is an expectation that modified duty requests will be granted, the policy does not create an entitlement if there are legitimate business reasons for denying a faculty member’s request. The request must be approved by the department chairperson/school director and dean. If the department chairperson/school director does...
not support the request, reasons for denial shall be provided in writing and the request shall be automatically forwarded to the dean and the Associate Provost for Academic Human Resources for further review and decision.
APPLICATION FOR MODIFIED DUTIES

Faculty Name:

Department/School and College:

Faculty member is:

☐ Primary Caregiver
☐ Co-Caregiver

Date the child entered (or is estimated to enter) the home:

Date of Birth of Child:

School Schedule for Child:

Requested period of modified duties:

Reason(s) for modified duties:

A plan of proposed activities, developed in consultation with the department chairperson/school director/dean (if in a non-departmentally organized college):

Faculty Signature: _____________________________ Date: ____________

Chairperson/Director Signature: __________________________ Date: ____________