

February 2025

Student and postdoctoral fellows' rights during pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum at the Weizmann Institute of Science

Organized in collaboration with the Mothers' Forum (WISMom), the Weizmann Women in Chemistry (WWIC) forum, and the Weizmann School of Science (hereinafter "the School of Science")

The School of Science's goal is to promote equal opportunities and to support all male and female students and postdoctoral fellows on the subject of parenting and family.

The Procedure below summarizes the key rights relating to these matters, however it does not purport to exhaust them all. Therefore, with respect to an issue that is not addressed below, including surrogacy, adoption, foster care, or rights related to another family unit not specified, it should not be concluded that the rights do not exist. The Head of the Scholarships and Individuals Department at the School of Science, Adi Moulia, Adi.Moulia@weizmann.ac.il, should be contacted for additional information, clarifications, and assistance.

All of the following are conditional on reporting the birth to the Scholarships and Individuals Department at the School of Science, together with all relevant documents.

High-Risk Pregnancy - Bed Rest

- Eligibility is granted to a female student/postdoctoral fellow (hereinafter: "The Student") who is pregnant and who, according to a written certificate from an obstetrician, is required to be on bed rest.
- A student who is on bed rest is ordinarily entitled to a stipend payment (funded from the Institute's budget), provided that the first period of absence for bed rest exceeds 30 consecutive days. Any additional period of absence due to bed rest must be for at least 14 days in order to be eligible for continued payment of the stipend.
- If an absence does not meet these criteria, the absence must be reported as sick leave. For any absence exceeding 7 consecutive days, a doctor's certificate of illness must be presented.

Maternity Leave

- From the day the birth is reported, the female student giving birth is entitled to 15 weeks (105 calendar days) maternity leave ("Maternity Leave").
- During this period, the stipend payment continues as usual, funded by the Institute's budget. During the maternity leave period the student will not be required to come to the laboratory and participate in research activities, however, may participate in courses if she so chooses.
- If a student chooses to participate in a course that mandates attendance, the following rules will apply: A student who has given birth is entitled to be absent from 30% of all classes in each course that mandates attendance for a period of 15 weeks following the date of birth. Notwithstanding the above, a student who

has given birth is entitled to an alternative absence (i.e. full absence) from all classes in which attendance is mandatory for a period of six weeks from the date of birth, pursuant to the highest absence rate.

- In the case of giving birth to more than one child, maternity leave will be extended by 3 weeks for each additional child. For example, twins 18 weeks, triplets 21 weeks, and so on.
- In the case of hospitalization of the mother or newborn, additional adjustments may be made regarding extending the maternity leave. For example, hospitalization for 15 days, even if not consecutive, will entitle you to an additional extension of maternity leave according to the number of days of hospitalization (the maximum extension for hospitalization of the mother is no more than 4 additional weeks, the maximum extension for hospitalization of the newborn(s) is no more than 20 additional weeks).
- Shortening maternity leave: The mother is entitled to return to studies and research before the end of maternity leave, provided that 6 weeks have passed from the date of birth.
- If the mother has a stillbirth from week 22 + one day onwards, or the child dies after birth – the mother will be entitled to leave of absence for 15 weeks and will be paid a regular stipend.
- A student who gives birth within 6 months of completing her studies/training (graduation = "final account") will be entitled to a one-time payment in the amount of a stipend for 105 days.
- Travel budget funds cannot be used during maternity leave or unpaid leave (extended maternity leave).
- In cases where the parent has undergone a gender transition, the guidelines outlined in this document will apply accordingly.

Extending Maternity Leave

- The student who gives birth is entitled to extend her maternity leave up to six months from the date of birth, whereby after the 15 weeks her status will be as an unpaid leave status, during which she is not entitled to a stipend payment.
- During the unpaid leave period, there is no accumulation of vacation days or sick leave days.
- Extending maternity leave to up to six months is subject to the Advisor's approval. If there is more than one advisor - approval from all advisors is required. If an advisor has not yet been appointed – approval is required from the Chair of the Board of Studies (BOS) and the advisor with whom the rotation is being carried out if the student is on rotation.
- Extending maternity leave for an additional period exceeding six months is possible with the approval of the advisor and the School of Science.

Spouse's Maternity Leave

- Maternity leave can be substituted with your spouse commencing from the seventh week of maternity leave. The period from the date substituted and until the end of the 15-week period from the date of birth will be considered maternity leave for the spouse who was substituted. If the substituted spouse is a student, they will be eligible for continued payment of a regular stipend.
- Such absence will be approved subject to the submission of an official statement from the relevant authority attesting to the mother's return to work/study.

Parental Leave

- A spouse who is a student is entitled to an absence of 14 days leave from the moment the newborn is born (calendar days, including Friday and Saturday). The exercise of parental leave cannot be deferred.

- This is a benefit that the Institute provides to families, and therefore these days are not deducted from the annual vacation quota.

Vacation Days

- Masters students are entitled to 14 days vacation per academic year.
- Doctoral students are entitled to 22 days vacation per academic year.
- Postdoctoral fellows are entitled to 22 days vacation per academic year.
- At the end of an academic year, unused vacation days are deleted and are not accumulated from year to year.

Sick Leave

- Students are entitled to 30 days sick leave per academic year.
- Doctoral students are entitled to 30 days sick leave per academic year.
- Postdoctoral fellows are entitled to 30 days sick leave per academic year.
- Up to 7 days sick leave can be attributed on account of treatments/tests related to the spouse's pregnancy or due to childbirth.

Additional Exam Date

A student who was unable to sit an exam due to bed rest or maternity leave, or a student who was unable to sit the exam due to a spouse's maternity leave on the original exam date that was scheduled or to prep for it appropriately, may contact the courses coordinator and request an alternative exam date.

A student whose spouse has given birth will be entitled to request an alternative exam date if he is absent from an exam that took place within 3 weeks of the birth.

Extra Time in Exams

A pregnant student is entitled to an additional 15 minutes for each exam hour.

Academic Reports

A student on maternity leave, including approved unpaid leave, is entitled to an extension of the deadline for submitting academic reports in accordance with the length of the approved maternity leave period, including the unpaid leave period.

The above will also apply to a spouse on maternity leave.

Call for Applications for Scholarships and Awards

To the extent possible, and in accordance with the provisions of the specific call for application, the period of absence during maternity leave will be taken into account when making a decision regarding compliance with the eligibility deadlines for submitting applications for awards, scholarships, and merit grants.

Laboratory courses and laboratories in which there is exposure to hazardous materials

A pregnant student, a student undergoing fertility treatments, or a nursing student, who conducts research in laboratories wherein there is exposure to hazardous materials, is required to act in accordance with the laboratory's individual safety plan. For questions regarding the implementation of the safety plan or in the event

of exposure to hazardous materials in laboratory courses, please contact the Institute's Safety Department for consultation.

Updating

It is the student's responsibility to inform all of the following parties about going on maternity leave, unpaid leave, bed rest:

1. The head of the relevant academic field at the School of Science
2. Scholarships and Individuals at the School of Science
3. The relevant administrative officer at the mother's department
4. Group Leader - PI

For details about nursing rooms across the campus, [click here](#).

The school is committed to supporting students' pregnancy and childbirth rights while creating an inclusive, safe, and enabling environment. For any questions, clarifications, or the need for personal guidance, you may contact the Head of the Scholarships and Individuals Department at the School of Science, Adi Moulia Adi.Moulia@weizmann.ac.il or the Head of the Academic Department - Chemistry and Physics, who is responsible for promoting female students on behalf of the school, Michal Kiri michal.kiri@weizmann.ac.il.