

## **LDEO Medical & Infant Care Leave Policy for Postdoctoral Scientists and Fellows**

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This document outlines the policy for medical and infant care leaves for Postdoctoral Research Scientists (PDRS) and Postdoctoral Research Fellows (PDRF) at Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory. For the purposes of this document, the following definitions apply:

- Postdoctoral Research Scientists (PDRS): A PDRS receives a salary from Columbia University, where the salary is either from institutional funds or external funds routed through CU Contracts & Grants.
- Postdoctoral Research Fellows (PDRF): A PDRF receives funding from an external source not routed through CU Contracts & Grants.
- Lamont Fellow: A recipient of the two-year Lamont Postdoctoral Fellowship, supported by institutional funds. Lamont fellows usually have a CU designation of PDRS, except in instances where after the two year period they receive external funding not routed through CU Contracts & Grants, in which case their CU designations becomes PDRF.
- Medical leave: The medical/disability leave for a pregnant PDRS or PDRF surrounding the birth of her child as defined by her physician.
- Infant care leave: Full or partial leaves to care for a newborn child or a newly adopted child of less than school age, or if the child is disabled or meets the New York State legal definition of “hard to place,” and is less than 18 at the time the leave begins. The leave is without salary if the parent is not working at all; it can be with partial salary if the parent carries a reduced workload while caring for the newborn or newly adopted child. The workload can be increased and the salary correspondingly increased during the period of the leave if the parent wishes. Male parents make take a full or partial infant care leave for up to 12 months. The total period of medical and infant care leave for women normally may not exceed 12 months.
- Primary caregiver: The parent primarily responsible for the care of a child. For the purposes of this policy, a PDRS or PDRF is considered a primary parent if s/he is a single parent or, where there are two parents, if his/her spouse is employed full-time out of the home or is enrolled as a full-time student. The parent(s) may employ a day-care provider and still qualify for this designation. When both parents work at the University, only one may be considered primary at any given time.

### **I. Postdoctoral Research Scientists (PDRS)**

#### *Medical Leave:*

A salaried, full-time Postdoctoral Research Scientist (PDRS) at LDEO who is pregnant may take a paid medical leave of absence (Disability Leave) for the period surrounding the birth of her child as prescribed by her doctor. The salary for this leave will be paid by

LDEO for the period that the PDRS's doctor certifies that she is unable to work. A disability period up to 6 months (if certified by the doctor) will be covered by LDEO. A disability leave lasting longer than 6 months is subject to the terms of the University's Long-Term Disability (LTD) program.

### *Infant Care Leave*

A salaried, full-time PDRS (male or female) at LDEO may take infant care leave following the birth or adoption of a child if s/he is the primary caregiver. The combined duration of the disability leave and infant care leave cannot normally exceed one year. Infant care leave may be unpaid or with partial pay, i.e. the PDRS performs a partial workload, with salary being pro-rated accordingly. The partial workload may be adjusted over the period of the leave as appropriate. If the PDRS does not work during the leave, the individual does not receive any salary while on leave.

### *Procedure to Request Leave*

To request medical leave, the PDRS must notify her divisional Associate Director in writing, indicating the dates she expects to go on leave. She should copy the LDEO HR Manager on her request. She should also indicate, to the extent possible, any intention to take infant care leave following the medical leave. If she is funded through an external grant routed through CU, she must indicate that she is in contact with her program manager about this leave. The Associate Director forwards this information to the Director, LDEO, copying the Deputy Director and the Assistant Director for Academic Affairs & Diversity. The Director, LDEO forwards this request to the Provost's Office.

In order to maintain confidentiality, the doctor's certificate for the disability leave should not be submitted to the Associate Director or Director, LDEO, but to the Manager, CUHR Disability Office (currently Hana Bloch at [hb356@ais.columbia.edu](mailto:hb356@ais.columbia.edu)). Hana Bloch will inform the Provost's Office and LDEO HR when she receives the doctor's certificate. Following this, the Provost's Office reviews the request and informs the Director, LDEO accordingly. In the event there is a change in the disability period, the doctor must send the revised information to Hana Bloch, who will update the information, i.e. the PDRS does not need to make a new request.

To request infant care leave that does not immediately follow a medical leave, a PDRS (male or female) must make a written request to the divisional Associate Director (copying the LDEO Human Resources Manager). The Associate Director forwards this information to the Director, LDEO, copying the Deputy Director, LDEO and the Assistant Director for Academic Affairs & Diversity. The Director, LDEO forwards this request to the Provost's Office.

All requests for leave must be made in advance of the anticipated leave, with the Provost's approval necessary before the leave can commence. PDRSs who are funded through external grants routed through CU must comply with the rules of their funding

agency pertaining to disability and child-care leave. LDEO will not provide salary for any portion of the disability leave for which salary will be paid by another institution.

## **II. Postdoctoral Research Fellows (PDRF)**

### *Disability Leave:*

A full-time, externally funded Postdoctoral Research Fellow (PDRF) at LDEO who is pregnant may take a paid medical leave of absence (Disability Leave) for the period surrounding the birth of her child as prescribed by her doctor. If the funding agency does not provide paid maternity/disability leave, the salary for this leave will be paid by LDEO for the period that the PDRF's doctor certifies that she is unable to work.

### *Infant Care Leave*

A full-time PDRF (male or female) at LDEO may take infant care leave following the birth or adoption of a child if permitted by the rules of the funding agency. If permitted, PDRFs may take infant care leave without pay or with partial pay, with the combined duration of the disability leave and infant care leave not exceeding one year.

### *Procedure to Request Leave*

To request medical leave, the PDRF must notify her divisional Associate Director in writing, indicating the dates she expects to go on leave. She should copy the LDEO Human Resources Manager on her request. She should also indicate, to the extent possible, any intention to take infant care leave following the disability leave. If she is normally funded by an external agency, she must indicate that she is in contact with her program manager about this leave, and provide documentation that the agency has approved the infant care leave. The Associate Director forwards this information to the Director, LDEO, copying the Deputy Director, LDEO and the Assistant Director for Academic Affairs & Diversity. The Director, LDEO forwards this request to the Provost's Office.

In order to maintain confidentiality, the doctor's certificate for the disability leave should not be submitted to the Associate Director or Director, LDEO, but to the Manager, CUHR Disability Office (currently Hana Bloch at [hb356@ais.columbia.edu](mailto:hb356@ais.columbia.edu)). Hana Bloch will inform the Provost's Office and LDEO HR when she receives the doctor's certificate. Following this, the Provost's Office reviews the request and informs the Director, LDEO accordingly. In the event there is a change in the disability period, the doctor must send the revised information to Hana Bloch, who will update the information, i.e. the PDRF does not need to make a new request.

If permitted by the rules of the funding agency, a PDRF (male or female) may request infant care leave that does not immediately follow a disability leave by making a written request to the divisional Associate Director (copying the LDEO Human Resources Manager) and providing documentation that the agency has approved the infant care

leave. The Associate Director forwards this information to the Director, LDEO, copying the Deputy Director, LDEO and the Assistant Director for Academic Affairs & Diversity. The Director, LDEO forwards this request to the Provost's Office.

All requests for leave must be made in advance of the anticipated leave, with the Provost's approval necessary before the leave can commence. PDRFs must comply with the rules of their funding agency pertaining to disability and child-care leave. LDEO will not provide salary for any portion of the disability leave for which salary will be paid by another institution.

### **III. Part-Time Postdoctoral Research Scientists**

Part-time PDRSs can use the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993 to take medical leave or infant care leave if they have been employed by the University for at least 12 months immediately preceding the leave and have worked for 1,250 hours during that period. Under FMLA, part-time PDRSs may take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for a newborn or newly adopted child. Further information on FMLA may be found in the Columbia University Faculty Handbook available at <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/vpaa/handbook/>