



TITLE OF POLICY

New Child Adjustment Policy

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to outline parameters for taking time away from the Medical Degree curriculum for family adjustments at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, School of Medicine (UNC SOM). This policy is inclusive to all students. New Child Adjustment (NCA) will be extended to students without regard to their age, sex, or gender and for any situation in which a new child is brought into a student's care, including but not limited to childbirth, adoption, foster care, or custody change.

RESPONSIBLE PARTY AND REVIEW CYCLE

The Education Committee will review this policy on an as-needed basis with input from UNC SOM Students Affairs, the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office, and Student Advocates within the UNC SOM Family Support Initiative.

LCME REFERENCE(S)

LCME 12.3: Personal Counseling/Wellbeing Programs
LCME 12.4: Student Access to Health Care Services

HISTORY OF APPROVALS AND UPDATES

Approved June 2019 by the Education Committee

DEFINITION(S)

None

POLICY

The New Child Adjustment (NCA) Policy establishes the parameters by which students can take a predetermined amount of time away from their studies to care for a new child while remaining enrolled at UNC SOM and maintaining their student benefits (e.g., student health insurance, financial aid). To maintain student status (with healthcare benefits, library benefits, financial aid), a student must have an enrollment of at least six credit hours per semester.

While the NCA option exists to accommodate students wishing to graduate and match with their original class, this policy does not guarantee that all students who want an NCA will graduate on time, and students are still responsible for completing their full graduation and course requirements. Certain policies are outside the control of UNC SOM, which may affect the extent of flexibility offered. For



instance, the NBME, USMLE, NRMP, ERAS and other organizations have policies regarding eligibility and timing.

Some students may elect to take a leave of absence or pursue an extra degree (e.g., MPH, MBA), both of which will delay graduation. Students who pursue a different degree are not officially enrolled in the UNC SOM. As such, they are unable to make up clinical work associated with Medical Degree Program requirements during that time because they are not covered by UNC SOM student malpractice insurance.

Any NCA that is significant enough to shift timing of courses will be reflected on official transcripts. They will be noted in the Medical Student Performance Evaluation (MSPE), and the student may choose to list the leave as parental, medical, or personal.

Initiation and Intent of an NCA

To pursue an NCA, students must contact UNC SOM Student Affairs as early as possible to plan their time away and make preparations for any restructuring of their schedule if needed. While advance notice is ideal and provides the best options to students, UNC SOM acknowledges that there may be circumstances in which a new child is not always expected (e.g. emergency custody situations). In these situations, students should contact UNC SOM Student Affairs as soon as possible to discuss options.

Any student who is planning on an NCA leave of more than six months must take an official leave of absence and schedule a leave of absence meeting with representatives from the following offices: Financial Aid and Registrar. It is required that the student speak with a representative from SOM Student Affairs. It is also recommended that students speak with their advisors and Health and Safety.

An NCA is designed with the student's success in mind. Staff and faculty will work alongside students to explore all possible options, including involving the student in personalizing the options available to them. An NCA is intended to be:

- **Flexible:** Each plan will be individualized to address the unique needs and goals of each student to allow for the greatest flexibility in formulating an NCA period. The student's wishes to graduate on time and meet specific academic goals will be honored whenever possible.
- **Individualized:** If students desire to receive an NCA and want to graduate on time, there are a number of options available to them to make up time. Options to achieve on-time graduation include:
 - **Electives:** UNC SOM is open to students completing academic electives during their NCA period provided that the objectives, rigor, and criteria of evaluation are approved by the elective committee.



- Banking Time: Whenever possible, students completing clinical block¹ rotations will be allowed to “bank” the time they completed within that block and re-enter that block at the conclusion of their leave. This is guaranteed if the leave taken is for 6 months or less. UNC SOM reserves the right to have the student re-start the block should circumstances require (e.g., the student needs to finish this block at another site, the student’s performance on the block thus far was not satisfactory). If the leave taken is greater than 6 months, credit for banked time will need to be specifically evaluated by the UNC SOM Office of Student Affairs.
- Moving flexible time from Individualization Phase (interview time, elective). No matter when in the Medical Degree Program a student’s NCA period takes place, elective credit and “time off” that would otherwise be used during Individualization Phase, if not already used, will be allowed to be moved to accommodate the student. Examples include pre-clinical elective credit, time off for interviews, and time off for dedicated for Step 2 preparation.
- Finishing requirements during holidays if it is not an official University holiday.

PROCEDURE(S)

Multiple resources are available to students who have questions about navigating the process of requesting and planning an NCA. Students are encouraged to approach any of the following departments/staff or faculty members to address their questions:

1. Associate and Assistant Deans for Student Affairs
2. Director of Student Affairs
3. Wellness Coaches
4. Office of Academic Excellence
5. Director of Academic Affairs
6. College Advisor
7. Family Support Initiative: Student Advocates

Before finalizing plans for the NCA, students can request a round table meeting with Student Affairs, financial aid, college advisor or other chosen faculty advocate, the educational resources coordinator, course director, campus director, and/or a Title IX representative, either in person or over the phone to synthesize an individualized plan. It may not be possible to guarantee the participation of all of these individuals at the same time, but all of them should be involved in the decision making to optimize the number of options reviewed and to ease coordination and logistics of final plan. (Similar to the process done for academic delays).

Students with questions about this policy should contact Dr. Alice Chuang in Student Affairs. Any concerns regarding the implementation of this policy or perceptions of mistreatment based on parental status, lactation, or use of the NCA policy should be directly reported to the Equal Opportunity and

¹ A course is a unit of study for which a final grade is administered. (e.g., MTEC 101, HISC). A block is a segment of a course (e.g., Reproductive Medicine block, HISC-Surgery). A rotation is a unit of study that takes place within a clinical block (e.g., Labor and Delivery rotation in the CSP course during the Ob/Gyn block).



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Compliance Office (eoc.unc.edu). Additionally, students can discuss concerns with Dr. Alice Chuang or through UNC's mistreatment [link](#).

See addendum on next page



ADDENDUM

The following information provides considerations for each curricular phase when pursuing an NCA.

Foundation Phase

For any student taking an NCA period during Foundation Phase, makeup work can be completed during the summer between MS1 and MS2 year, spring break, the winter holiday of either year, or dedicated study period for Step 1.

Application Phase

For any student taking an NCA period during Application Phase, important considerations include:

- 1) A student cannot enter a course or rotation after it has started so the student does not miss important information provided at orientation. An exception may be made, depending on individual circumstances, if a student is willing to attend the orientation and then continue their NCA, making up missed work later.
- 2) A student who takes an NCA in the middle of a course will receive an INC which is a temporary grade and will be replaced with a final grade once the coursework is completed.
- 3) It cannot be guaranteed that a student will receive the same placements (site or specific clinical service) for a course or rotation if completing makeup work. All course/rotation assignments are based on capacity in the moment.
- 4) Consideration should be given to optimize the student's learning curve, i.e. there may be a portion of the course or an assessment that is intentionally conducted towards the end of course because success requires previous elements of the course. Summative assessments (e.g., OSCE, NBME) should be scheduled after the student has completed the majority of the course.
- 5) NCA periods which fall in 2 separate courses will need to be negotiated with input from both course directors in order to ensure that coursework is completed in a way that meets the objectives of the course and in an efficient manner.
- 6) Regional Campus students need to discuss the specifics of their schedule with leadership at those campuses because of the unique considerations of scheduling remediation for a longitudinal course.

Individualization Phase

For students who take an NCA period during Individualization Phase, many of the same considerations exist as for students who take an NCA period in Application Phase, with the following additional considerations:

- 1) Individualization Phase is 14 blocks long with 11 blocks of course requirements.
- 2) Individualization Phase has 3 free blocks built in: 1 block for completing Step 2 CS and CK and 2 blocks for interviewing. These can be shifted into Application Phase. However, these shifts may only be minimally beneficial depending on if the student is able to complete Step 2 exams.



- 3) Many Individualization Phase courses are non-clinical offering some flexibility to students and allowing them to complete them during an NCA period.
- 4) Many Individualization Phase courses have some elements which require in-person attendance and other elements that do not allow sufficient flexibility for taking these during an NCA period.
- 5) Individualization Phase also allows for Special Electives which are created by a student and a preceptor. These are created using the Special Elective Form and must have learning objectives as well as evaluation methods. These also offer flexibility.