



Parental Leave Policy

Human Resources Department

Lead Director: Director of Human Resources and Student Services
Date ratified by Council: January 2001
Policy issue date: January 2001 Reviewed: April 2016
Policy to be reviewed every 2 years. Date of next review: April 2018

1.0 Introduction

The right to unpaid Parental Leave is contained in the *Maternity and Parental Leave etc. Regulations 1999*, amended by the Parental Leave (EU Directive) Regulations 2013 and applies to staff who have completed one year's continuous service with their employer. Parental leave can be taken for each child born or adopted. Eligible employees can take unpaid parental leave to look after their child's welfare.

2. The University's Policy

2.1 Eligibility for Parental Leave

Employees are eligible for parental leave if the following criteria are met:

- they have completed one year's continuous service with the University
- they are named on the child's birth or adoption certificate or has obtained legal parental responsibility (through the courts) for the child
- they have or expect to have parental responsibility for the child
- the child is under 18 years old

Depending on the circumstances of an individual case, the University may give sympathetic consideration to applications for Parental Leave from staff with informal responsibility for looking after a child. This policy is regardless of gender and applies to same sex couples.

2.2 Length of Leave and when/how it can be taken

Eligible employees can take up to a maximum of 18 weeks (in total) unpaid parental leave for each child up to their 18th birthday. The leave can start once the child is born or placed for adoption, or as soon as the employee has completed a year's service, whichever is later.

Eligible staff who apply for Parental Leave will not be disadvantaged if they work part-time or irregular hours, although the length of time they are eligible to take is pro-rated to their normal working hours.

Normally, Parental Leave is taken in blocks or multiples of one week, with the exception that parents of disabled children can take leave in multiples of one day. Normally, up to a maximum of 4 weeks' Parental Leave per qualifying child can be taken in any year (i.e. rolling 12 month period), by agreement with the Head of School/Department.

2.3 Applying for Parental Leave

Applications for Parental Leave should be made on Form PL1 to the member of staff's Line Manager and copied to the Human Resources Department, along with a copy of documentary evidence that the member of staff is the parent or the person legally responsible for the child.

Normally, the member of staff is required to give at least 21 days' notice to their Line Manager that they wish to take Parental Leave and must confirm the start and end date of the period of leave.

It may be necessary for Parental Leave to be postponed if the manager considers the member of staff's absence will disrupt, unduly, the operation of that school/department, but normally such a postponement will be for not more than 3 months and the new start date must be within 6 months of the requested start date. Parental leave cannot be postponed if it means the employee would no longer qualify for parental leave, e.g. postponing it until after the child's 18th birthday.

Written notice of postponement and the reasons for it must be given within 7 days of the member of staff giving written notice that they wish to take Parental Leave. Parental Leave cannot be postponed when the member of staff gives written notice to take it immediately after the child is born or is placed with the family for adoption.

2.4 Status of the Contract of employment

The member of staff will remain employed while on Parental leave and the employment contract will continue to apply; (for example, some terms and conditions of employment, such as contractual notice, redundancy terms and disciplinary and grievance procedures will still apply and the member of staff will be entitled to receive the customary annual increment on their salary with effect from the normal incremental date), unless the contract is terminated by the employer or member of staff.

2.4.1 Annual Leave

A member of staff's entitlement to annual leave will accrue as usual during the period of Parental Leave.

2.4.2 Pension

During a period of unpaid parental leave, the University will continue to pay employer and employee pension contributions, and the member of staff's pensionable service will also continue, as long as the member of staff has agreed to return to work.

2.4.3 Returning to Work

At the end of Parental Leave a member of staff has the right to return to the same job as before, or, if that is not practicable, to a similar job which has the same or better status, terms and conditions as the old job. Where the leave taken is for a period of 4 weeks or less, the member of staff will be entitled to return to the same job.

2.5 Keeping Records

Employers are not required to keep statutory records of Parental Leave taken. However, when a member of staff changes jobs, other employers can make enquiries of a previous employer or seek a declaration from the member of staff about how much Parental Leave they have taken. Managers are therefore advised to record Parental Leave taken and to keep a record for one year after a member of staff has left the University (in case of enquiries by another employer).

2.6 Equality Monitoring

The University will audit, normally on an annual basis, requests made for parental leave. This will include equality data.

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Application for Parental Leave

Please read the University's *Parental Leave Policy* (available from the Human Resources Department before you complete this form). If you require any advice, please do not hesitate to contact the Human Resources Department. This form should be completed and returned to your Head of Unit.

Section A: To be Completed by the Member of Staff

FULL NAME: TITLE :.....

JOB TITLE:

UNIT: MANAGER:

HOME ADDRESS:
 (Please inform your Head of Unit and the Human Resources Department if your home address changes during your parental leave.)

POST CODE: TEL No: (Work) (Home)

I wish to apply for the following period of parental leave:

From: To:

Signed: Date:

Section B: To be completed by the Head of Unit

Date request for leave received:

I agree to the period of Parental Leave for the above named member of staff

Signature of Head Unit: Date:

Note: if you are not able to agree to the period of leave requested, please contact your Link Human Resources Manager or Officer for advice as soon as possible so any legal implications may be considered.

Please return this form to the Human Resources Department and retain a copy of the form on the member of staff's Personal file kept within the Unit.