



Policy on parental leave

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1. Introduction

Parental leave allows for parents to take a period of unpaid leave to look after their child. The reasons for leave need not be connected with the child's health.

2. Eligibility

A member of staff has a right to unpaid parental leave if:

- s/he has 12 months continuous service; and
- is the mother/father or has legal parental responsibility of a child.

3. Leave entitlement

- 3.1. A member of staff is entitled to 18 weeks unpaid leave in total for each child.
- 3.2. Part time staff are entitled to parental leave pro rata to the time worked.
- 3.3. If both parents are employed by the University each parent has the right to 18 weeks unpaid leave for each child.

4. Applying for parental leave

- 4.1. Members of staff should apply in writing to their Head of School/Service for parental leave giving at least 21 days notice. For the first request, the child's birth certificate should be enclosed (this notice requirement does not apply to parents of disabled children.)
- 4.2. Leave must be taken in blocks of one week and a maximum of four weeks per year per child can be taken (for parents of disabled children leave can be taken for periods as short as a day.)

- 4.3. Leave should be taken before a child is 18 years old.
- 4.4. The Head of School/Service should respond to the request within 7 days.
- 4.5. Leave may be postponed for up to six months where the taking of the leave causes difficulties within the department. In such circumstances there should be good business reasons for the delay and a request for leave should not be postponed without discussion with an HR manager. Postponement of leave is not permissible where a father wishes to attend the birth or be with the child immediately following the birth.

5. Terms of employment during parental leave

- 5.1. A member of staff will remain employed during the parental leave period, but will not be paid and will not be bound by any contractual terms and conditions with the exception of terms relating to good faith and confidentiality. The University will equally be responsible for the latter.
- 5.2. During the leave period a member of staff is entitled to continue pension contributions if they wish. In these circumstances the University will continue to maintain the employer's contributions. If the member of staff does not wish to maintain employee pension contributions the University similarly is not obliged to maintain the employer's contributions.
- 5.3. There will be no entitlement to accrue holiday during the leave period.
- 5.4. After taking parental leave (for periods of four weeks or less) a member of staff will be entitled to be given his or her old job back. If the period of leave exceeds four weeks and it is not reasonably practical to allow the member of staff to return to the same job, he or she will be able to return to a role which has the same or better status, terms and conditions of the previous role. Seniority or pension rights that have accrued before taking parental leave will not be affected.

6. Record keeping

- 6.1. Departments should inform HR of all staff requesting and taking parental leave.
- 6.2. Departments are expected to maintain their own records.

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