



Parental Leave Policy

1. Policy Statement

The purpose of the statutory parental leave scheme is to enable employees to take unpaid time off work to spend with their child prior to its 18th birthday. It should not be confused with shared parental leave which enables parents to share a mother/lead adopter's maternity/adoption leave and pay entitlement to care for their child in the first year following its birth/placement. The University's policy on shared parental leave can be found [here](#).

Employees also have the right to reasonable time off to deal with an unforeseen matter or emergency involving their child. The University's Policy on Time-off for Dependants can be found via http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/HumanResources/Policies/Time_Off-For_Dependants.pdf

2. Scope and Purpose

This policy applies to all employees of the University.

The purpose of this policy and associated procedures is to:

- Outline the statutory entitlements for Parental Leave
- Outline the notification steps employees must take to apply for parental leave and book time off
- Ensure managers¹ are aware of their responsibilities to employees who are covered by this policy.

3. Employee's Responsibilities including Early Notification Requirements

In order to access the benefits outlined in this policy, employees must meet the formal requirements set out below including the various notification procedures.

¹ For the purposes of this policy the term 'manager' will be defined so as to include the nominated or line manager or another designated person of suitable seniority and responsibility within the relevant work unit or group

4. Eligibility for Parental Leave

Employees who have completed one year's continuous service with the University are entitled to 18 weeks of unpaid parental leave for each of their children. In addition, the employee must be:

- Named on the child's birth certificate, or
- Named on the child's adoption certificate, or
- Have legal parental responsibility for the child

If the employee doesn't live with the child, they still have the right to parental leave if they have retained formal parental responsibility.

Parental Leave can start once the child is born or placed for adoption with the employee or as soon as the employee has completed a year's continuous service, whichever is later.

5. Entitlement

Where the employee meets the eligibility requirement, they are entitled to take 18 weeks' unpaid leave for each child up to their 18th birthday.

Parental leave applies to each child, not to an individual's job, so any leave taken with previous employers will count towards the employee's total entitlement of 18 weeks.

Leave may be taken in blocks of one week, normally subject to a maximum of 4 weeks' leave (per child) being granted in any one calendar year, with part of a week counting as one week. This restriction does not apply to parents of disabled children², who may take their leave in multiples of one day.

6. Notification

6.1.1 Requesting Leave

Employees must give at least 21 calendar days' notice of the period of leave they wish to take. Parents wishing to take less than one working week's leave to spend time with a disabled child must give at least 7 calendar days' notice. The Parental Leave request form can be found at:

http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/HumanResources/forms/Parental_Leave_Request_.docx

² A disabled child is defined as a child for whom the parent is in receipt of disability living allowance in respect of the child

6.1.2 Postponing Leave

Whilst the University encourages line managers not to refuse any reasonable requests, leave may be postponed for no longer than six months where, for business reasons, it cannot be granted when requested.

In cases of postponement, the manager must write to the employee within seven calendar days of the original request explaining why the request cannot be granted and offering an alternative start date beginning no later than six months after the requested start date for the same number of weeks' leave as originally requested.

If a line manager is considering refusing a request for Parental Leave, they should discuss the matter with their College/Support Group HR Team before making a decision.

7. Additional Leave

Whilst Parental Leave is a statutory provision, employees of the University do have the opportunity to apply for more time off work for a number of reasons, including looking after their children, if their entitlement to Parental Leave has been exhausted.

Employees should speak to their managers if they require further time off work in these circumstances, to agree how best this can be provided for where possible.

7.1 Antenatal appointments

Employees have the right to attend up to two antenatal appointments. The time off is capped at six and a half hours for each appointment. Further guidance is available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/351413/bis-14-1063-time-off-to-accompany-a-pregnant-woman-to-ante-natal-appointments-employer-guide.pdf

8. Rights during Parental Leave

Continuity of employment is maintained during Parental Leave, which means there is no break in service during the employee's absence from work.

All terms and conditions of employment remain in force during an employee's period of Parental Leave except for those terms relating to pay. However, employees will receive all pay awards and increments that apply during their Parental Leave.

Employees are entitled to continue to receive all non-cash benefits applicable to them during their Parental Leave, such as childcare vouchers and accrual of annual leave.

During unpaid Parental Leave, neither the employee nor the University makes pension contributions. The employee's membership of the pension scheme is suspended and the period of unpaid Parental Leave does not count as pensionable service. Temporary absence from a pension scheme during a period of unpaid leave can also mean temporary suspension of life cover, not just loss of pensionable service, unless payments continue to be paid. The employee must contact the University Pensions office pensions@ed.ac.uk to seek advice and discuss any pension implications, in advance of the leave period.

Upon returning to work, the employee will have the opportunity to pay additional contributions to make up the difference so that the period of suspended membership can then count as pensionable service.

9. Policy History and Review

This policy was approved by CJCNC on 28th April 2015. It was reviewed in October 2015 in light of the publication of the University's Shared Parental Leave Policy and again in February 2016. In the event of any significant change to the legal position on parental leave, any relevant statutory requirements or any other related matter, this policy will be subject to immediate review in consultation with the Trade Unions. In the absence of such a change, the policy will be reviewed by April 2016.

9.1 Change Control Record

No.	Approval date:	Amendment made:	Approved by:
1.	25 April 2012	Minor textual amendment clarifying what is meant by 'parent' in the context of this Policy.	HRPDG and CJCNC
2	8 March 2013	Minor legislative amendment: unpaid parental leave increasing from 13 to 18 weeks to comply with the revised EU parental directive	HRPDG
3.	29 July 2014	Minor amendment to clarify pension rights and process during unpaid periods of leave.	HRPDG
4.	1 Oct. 2014	Legislative Amendment: Addition of right to unpaid time off to attend up to two antenatal appointments for the mother's partner (or father or parent of the child and intended parents under a surrogacy arrangement)	HRPDG
5.	6 April 2015	Legislative Amendment: The right to unpaid parental leave is now extended to parents of any child under the age of 18 years	HRPDG and CJCNC
6	28 October 2015	Minor amendments to 'policy statement' to differentiate parental leave from shared parental leave and to 'entitlement', clarifying right to take leave in one week blocks (in line with shared parental leave) and that leave is per child as opposed to per employment	HRPDG
7	24 February 2016	Minor amendment to clarify, in cases of postponement, the legal requirement to inform the employee of the postponement within 7 days of the original request.	HRPDG

10. Alternative Formats

If you require this document in an alternative format please email UHRS@ed.ac.uk or telephone 0131 650 8127.