

## Parental Leave Policy

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## **1 Scope**

- 1.1. This policy applies to employees of the university regardless of the employee's or their partner's gender identity. It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors
- 1.2. This policy is distinct from Shared Parental Leave.
- 1.3. This policy does not form part of an employee's contract of employment.

## **2 The Public Sector Equality Duty**

- 2.1. The Equality Act requires public bodies such as the University of Greenwich to consider how their decisions and policies affect people with different protected characteristics (or an intersection of these).
- 2.2. The university is committed to promoting equality of access and outcome for all, celebrating diversity, and providing an inclusive learning and work environment for all students, staff, and visitors. The university will ensure they pay 'due regard' to the need to:
  - a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
  - b) advance equality of opportunity.
  - c) foster good relations between people, irrespective of their age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation'.
- 2.3. Paying 'due regard' means the university will consciously consider or think about the need to do the above.

## **3 Aims**

- 3.1. The university recognises that there will be occasions when working parents wish to take time off work to care for or spend time with their child or children. This policy aims to build on the university's commitment to good employment practice and equality and diversity in the workplace.
- 3.2. An employee will not be subjected to a detriment for taking or seeking to take parental leave in accordance with this policy.

## **4 Policy**

- 4.1. Subject to eligibility and providing correct notice, employees who are parents of a child under the age of 18 can request up to 18 weeks' unpaid parental leave until the child's 18th birthday.
- 4.2. Eligible employees are entitled to unpaid parental leave from their first day of employment.
- 4.3. Whilst the university cannot refuse a request for parental leave, it reserves the right to postpone a requested period of parental leave for up to six months (see 5.5).
- 4.4. If an employee has taken part of their parental leave with a previous employer, the remaining balance continues to be their entitlement and can be taken with the

university, subject to meeting the eligibility requirements and providing correct notice.

- 4.5. The university may ask for a written declaration confirming any parental leave previous taken and may request evidence of parental responsibility e.g. a birth certificate, however, the university will not request formal evidence from a previous employer regarding the employee's prior parental leave.
- 4.6. The right to take parental leave is in respect of each child and applies to a child born to the parents or an adopted child.
- 4.7. Parental leave under this policy is unpaid. Employee's contractual provisions relating to pay and benefits are suspended during parental leave.
- 4.8. Continuity of service is not broken by taking parental leave. However, since it is unpaid, the period will not count for pension purposes.

## **5 Procedure**

### **Eligibility**

- 5.1. The employee must have, or expect to have, responsibility for the child and be taking the leave to spend time with or otherwise care for the child.

### **How to apply**

- 5.2. Parental leave may be taken in blocks or multiples of one week, subject to a maximum of four weeks, in respect of any child, in any one year. Where the child is in receipt of disability allowances/payments, parental leave may be taken one day at a time or in blocks or multiples of one day.
- 5.3. A self-certificate application form for parental leave must be submitted to the People Directorate. The university may request evidence to support the request, such as a birth or adoption certificate.
- 5.4. Eligible employees wishing to take parental leave must give the university at least 21 calendar days' notice of the date on which they would like parental leave to start and the duration of the leave. An employee wishing to take their parental leave immediately on the birth of a child, must give notice of this intention at least 21 days before the start of the expected week of childbirth (EWC). The notice must specify the EWC and the duration of the period of leave required.
- 5.5. If the requested dates for parental leave would unduly disrupt the operation of its business, the university may postpone the parental leave to a period starting up to six months later, but no later than six months. The university will not postpone parental leave if the postponement would result in the leave being taken after the child's 18th birthday. Additionally, parental leave will not be postponed when the request relates to a child's disability or if the request is for the leave to start immediately on the birth or adoption of a child.
- 5.6. If the university needs to postpone a request for parental leave, it will consult with the employee about alternative dates and notify them in writing of the reason for the postponement and the new start and end dates, no more than seven calendar days after receipt of the request for leave.

## 6 Returning to work after parental leave

- 6.1. The job to which an employee is entitled to return to work depends on how much parental leave and other statutory leave the employee has taken. Statutory leave includes maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave.
- 6.2. An employee is entitled to return to the job in which they were employed before their absence, if they take an isolated period of parental leave of four weeks or less.
- 6.3. This also applies where the employee takes four weeks or less consecutive with other statutory leave, provided the total combined statutory leave (including parental leave) does not exceed 26 weeks.
- 6.4. Where the total period of parental leave taken together with other statutory leave exceeds 26 weeks, the employee may return to the same job or, if not reasonably practicable, to another job that is suitable and appropriate and on terms no less favourable.

## 7 Other Policies and Guidance

All of the following policies are available on the university staff portal:

### **Paternity/Partner's Leave and Pay Policy**

This policy also includes neonatal care (leave and pay) provisions for employees.

### **Shared Parental Leave Policy and Procedure.**

This policy also includes neonatal care (leave and pay) provisions for employees.

### **Maternity Leave and Pay Policy**

This policy also includes neonatal care (leave and pay) provisions for employees.

### **Special Leave**

Special Leave sets out staff eligibility for discretionary leave for purposes such as a bereavement, or a funeral, time off to care for family and dependants in an emergency and Carer's Leave. Special Leave guidance can be found on the university staff portal.

This policy will be reviewed regularly.

Version No.	Purpose/Change	Author	Approved By	Date
			VCG	April 2019
			JNC	February 2020
1.1	Updated to use gender neutral language		n/a	13/09/2021
2.0	Changes to comply with the Employment Rights Act 2025.	Vanessa Roots Senior Workforce Policy Officer	n/a	11/3/2026