

Support for maternity leave: Checklist for managers

Starting or expanding a family while maintaining a career can be a significant challenge for staff. The University expects managers to support staff before and during periods of maternity leave, and in achieving an effective work-life balance on return to work. This checklist should be used to ensure that appropriate plans are made to manage and cover a member of staff's work during maternity leave, and that proper support is provided to staff on return from maternity leave. An example action log is provided at the end of this document, to help you plan the maternity leave during your meetings with the member of staff.

Before maternity leave starts

Initial meeting with the member of staff:

- Make sure the staff member is aware of the UoS maternity guide and discuss it with them.
- Discuss time off for antenatal care.
- Arrange to carry out a [Health and Safety risk assessment](#). If the staff member works in a science lab then consult the Technical Manager for the School, or contact the University's Health and Safety Department.

During the pregnancy:

- Keep in regular contact with staff member about their health and discuss ways to mitigate any related problems (e.g. nausea, fatigue, back pain etc.)
- Discuss which key projects/pieces of work need to be prioritised before maternity leave and what support is needed to complete these projects/pieces of work.
- The University is committed to always backfilling parental leave of any period longer than three weeks. Therefore, you should discuss plans for maternity cover with the staff member, for example, whether the whole job needs to be covered and which the key tasks are that will need to be covered during the absence, in order to plan thoroughly. Consider whether the maternity cover could be offered as a secondment opportunity to existing staff, or whether an external replacement is needed. Consider what the implications are of not covering aspects of the role and ensure enough time is allowed to recruit the cover and have an adequate handover.
- Discuss the timing of finishing work before the baby is due. The date the staff member will finish work is their choice (subject to the parameters in the [maternity policy](#)).

Closer to the start of maternity leave:

- Discuss handover to maternity cover appointment, e.g. how & when will this take place?
- Make sure the staff member is aware of the [UoS Flexible Working policy and Shared Parental Leave policy](#) and discuss them with them, if necessary.
- Discuss the accrual of annual leave during maternity leave and the carrying forward of untaken leave. It is often useful for a member of staff to tag any untaken annual leave onto the end of their maternity leave, but this needs to be agreed with the manager.
- Discuss how you and the staff member will communicate throughout maternity leave
- Discuss the use of "keeping in touch" (KIT) days, and, if appropriate (shared parental leave) SPLIT days with the staff member. Ask if she has any thoughts on what she

would like to use the KIT/SPLIT days for so that you can plan for this. These are paid by the manager completing a [KIT/SPLIT payroll form](#).

During maternity leave:

- Contact the staff member as discussed in your meeting before they went on leave, ensuring that you keep them informed of any important changes within the department or any new roles within the team that they may wish to apply for.
- Towards the end of their maternity leave you should also discuss their return to work date and whether they wish to take any of their accrued annual leave before they return. Please also ensure that the HR department are aware of this return to work date so that they can return the staff member to the payroll.
- If they wish to apply for a reduction in hours or change of working pattern, please advise them to complete the [flexible working application form](#) and return this to you for approval.

While on maternity leave

Over the maternity leave:

- Keep in touch with staff member as agreed, e.g. progress on projects, invite to work social events.
- Discuss KIT/SPLIT days if the member of staff has indicated they may like to take these and you agree. These could be used for e.g. meetings; one-off tasks; critical stages of a project; keeping up to date with developments at work before returning to work.

Closer to the point of return:

- Prepare for the staff member to return to work and discuss it with them. The date the staff member will return is their choice (subject to the parameters in the maternity guide, and to the member of staff giving 8 weeks' notice if returning early).
- Discuss arrangements for taking any outstanding annual leave.
- They may wish to use a KIT/SPLIT day to meet with you to plan their return. If so, ask her how you can best organise her return to work to ensure an effective return to work.
- Consider what they need from you/colleagues to help prepare for the return.
- Make arrangements for breastfeeding/expressing if required
- Consider the stage the work needs to be at by the time they return, so that it can be picked up again.
- Discuss a handover plan to resume responsibilities. Encourage discussions on working pattern before return, deal with any flexible working request in a timely fashion in accordance with the UoS flexible working procedure. Check whether the individual is considering taking any Shared Parental Leave and if so, how she plans to take this.
- Ensure that if the staff member is reducing their hours, their workload is reduced accordingly

On return to work

- Meet the staff member on the first day back and make sure appropriate arrangements are in place such that they feel expected & welcomed. They should be introduced to new team members and made aware of any changes to process/working practices that have taken place during their absence. The process should be similar to the induction process for a new starter.
- Discuss any support/training staff member may need on return to work.
- Review how things are going after a few days, then hold regular meetings over the first few months.
- Meet the staff member to review objectives and career aspirations.

For HR guidance, policies & forms please see :

HR Maternity guide:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/humanresources/documents/e48.pdf>

Occupational Health guidance:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/humanresources/occupationalhealth/maternity>

Family friendly policies:

<https://www.sussex.ac.uk/humanresources/business-services/carer-support-policies>

Overtime claim form (send to HR payroll):

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/humanresources/documents/overtime-form.doc>

For further advice, please speak to your Human Resources Adviser.

Action log: Action required	Who is responsible for this action?	By when?	Support needed?	Outcome	Completed
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