

University of Sussex

Parental Leave

NB Parental Leave is separate from the provisions for Shared Parental Leave, which can be shared between two eligible parents in the one-year period after the birth or adoption of their child. For more information on [Shared Parental Leave](#), please see our webpages on family friendly policies

Aim

1. The University recognises the desire of parents of young children to take time to be with them at a formative stage in their lives; share the responsibility for child care; and that parents need to balance the demands of work and family life. In its arrangements for unpaid parental leave, the University seeks to address these desires while ensuring that it continues to operate effectively.

Eligibility

2. The University will grant to a member of staff who is a parent¹ whose child has not yet reached its eighteenth birthday, up to 18 weeks' unpaid leave. The entitlement applies separately in respect of each child (eg a parent of twins would be entitled to up to 36 weeks' leave); and where both parents work for the University, each parent has a separate entitlement. The provision is available to all staff, regardless of length of service, gender, sexuality or marital status.

3. Subject to operational constraints and adequate notice, the leave may be taken in the following ways:

- (a) A block of 13 weeks with the remaining 5 weeks to be taken in a separate calendar year(s);
- (b) A number of planned, shorter blocks of absence;
- (c) A temporary reduction in working hours; or
- (d) A combination of (b) and (c) above.

Procedure

4. Requests for unpaid leave will be accommodated wherever possible, but will only be granted where the operational effectiveness of the University is not adversely affected, and where suitable arrangements for covering or rescheduling the employee's work can be made. In granting unpaid leave, Heads of Units² will take into account the effect on other staff and the need to plan adequate arrangements for covering the work of the absent member of staff. Heads of Units intending to refuse a request for leave should consult the relevant HR Business Partner before doing so.

¹ The definition of a parent is either (a) the parent named on the birth certificate of a child; or (b) a person who has adopted a child (in which case the right will exist for five years from the date on which the child was adopted or until its eighteenth birthday if this is sooner); or (c) a person who has acquired formal parental responsibility for a child.

² The term Head of Unit should be taken to mean Head of School, Dean, Director or the appropriate person in the School or Unit in which the person works.

5. The notice³ to be given by the member of staff of the intention to take leave will be twice that of the period of leave being requested, except that the minimum notice period will be one week, and as much notice as possible should be given to enable adequate arrangements to be made for cover. The notice to be given by a prospective parent or adoptive parent who wish to take leave at the time of, or straight after, the child's birth or adoption will be three months in advance of the expected date of childbirth or adoption; in such cases the leave request will automatically be granted and ten days of the leave will be paid at normal pay and will be known as 'paternity leave'. Further details of the University's paternity leave provisions can be found in the Paternity Guide.

6. The Head of Unit will be responsible for notifying Human Resources of the arrangements to enable payroll calculations to be made and a letter issued to the member of staff. It will be the Unit's responsibility to maintain records of the amount of unpaid parental leave granted to an individual. This record will be available to the member of staff on request.

7. During periods of unpaid leave, if the employee chooses to maintain their pension contributions, the University will continue to pay the employer's contributions. Employees should contact human resources to discuss the implications of such a decision⁴.

8. In the case of teaching faculty, unpaid parental leave taken under these arrangements will not count for the purposes of calculating 'entitlement' to study leave.

9. Normal entitlement to paid annual leave will continue to accrue during such periods of unpaid parental leave.

10. Sickness during unpaid leave will not attract sick pay nor the right to have the unpaid leave extended.

Human Resources, last revised August 2021 (inclusive language review)

³ For parents of a disabled child, defined as being one for whom disability living allowance is awarded, the notice period to be given before taking leave is more flexible; details are available from human resources.

⁴ NB The rules of USPAS only permit members of USPAS to suspend superannuation contributions where a period of leave is greater than one month.