

Maternity Leave and Pay Policy

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1. Introduction

At Strathclyde we know that having a new child is an important and exciting time. We want to support you during this time and on your return to work.

In this policy you'll find all the information you need on your entitlements to maternity leave and pay and the support that we can offer you, before, during and after your pregnancy.

Please note, if this policy refers to additional guidance, FAQs, online forms, or training, these are accessible to University colleagues on our [People Hub](#).

2. Who is Covered by this Policy?

This policy applies to all University employees who are pregnant. This also includes employees who are carrying a surrogate child.

You may also be thinking about sharing some of your maternity leave with your partner. If so, you should also refer to our [Shared Parental Leave and Pay Policy](#) to find out more information.

If you're hoping to adopt a child, please see our Adoption Leave and Pay policy.

If you experience pregnancy or baby loss you should refer to our [Pregnancy & Baby Loss Policy](#).

3. Letting Us Know You're Pregnant and Want to Take Maternity Leave

We encourage you to let your manager know, as soon as possible, that you're pregnant. This allows them to discuss your maternity leave plans and conduct a risk assessment of your role. By carrying out a risk assessment, you and your manager can discuss any adjustments that might be needed to protect the health and safety of your baby. Your manager should meet with you to go over the current safety measures in place, check for any new risks or hazards, and then determine if any extra precautions are needed. Supporting guidance and information is available on the [Safety, Wellbeing and Resilience SharePoint](#) (staff login required).

You need to inform us that your pregnant no later than the end of the 15th week before your baby is due. You should do this by completing a [MLI - Maternity Leave Request Form](#) (staff login required). In this form you'll be asked to include your maternity leave start date, which you should discuss and agree with your manager.

You'll also need to attach your original MATBI to your Maternity Leave Request Form. Your doctor or midwife will give this to you at around 20 weeks of your pregnancy.

Your Maternity leave Request Form with the MATBI attached will be sent directly to Human Resources (with a notification to your manager) who will then confirm the arrangements for your leave in writing.

4. What Time Off is Available?

If you're pregnant you are entitled to 52 weeks of maternity leave. It doesn't matter how long you have worked at the University or how many hours you work. How much leave you take is up to you, but you must take a minimum of two weeks after your baby is born. Your leave can't start any earlier than 11 weeks before your due date.

If you have your baby earlier than your expected maternity leave start date, you should notify your manager as soon as you're able to. Your maternity leave will automatically start from the date your baby is born.

Just so you know, if you're absent due to a pregnancy related illness in the 4 weeks before your baby is due, your maternity leave will start automatically on the day after your first day of illness.

You're also entitled to take paid time off to attend ante-natal appointments. We know appointment times are often out of your control but, if possible, you should try and arrange to attend at the start or end of the day. You should agree your time off in advance with your manager.

5. Pay During Your Maternity Leave

We want to support you through your maternity leave and minimise the impact on your pay. We offer enhanced maternity pay (referred to as University Maternity Pay, or UMP) if you also qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) and you're employed by us at the date your baby is due.

To qualify for Statutory Maternity Pay you'll need to:

- Have been employed by the University for 26 weeks or more at the beginning of the 15th week before the week your baby is due. If you're employed on a fixed-term basis and have had a break in contracts of one calendar month or less, this won't count when calculating your length of continuous service.
- Earn at least an average of £123 a week. This is based on what you have been paid during the eight-week period that ends on the 15th week before your baby is due.

If you meet the criteria above, and you're employed by us at the date your baby is due, you have the choice of claiming either:

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| Option 1 | Weeks 1 to 18 | 18 weeks at full pay – this includes your entitlement to SMP |
| | Weeks 19 to 39 | 21 weeks at SMP rate only |
| | Weeks 40 to 52 | Any leave taken during this period is unpaid. |
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| Option 2 | Weeks 1 to 9 | 9 weeks at full pay – this includes your entitlement to SMP. |
| | Weeks 10 to 27 | 18 weeks at half pay plus SMP (providing that total pay does not exceed your normal full pay). |
| | Weeks 28 to 39 | 12 weeks at SMP rate only |
| | Weeks 40 to 52 | Any leave taken during this period is unpaid. |

Just so you know, the rate of SMP will vary at different stages of your leave. It is paid as follows:

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| Weeks 1 to 6 | The current flat rate set by the Government or 90% of your average weekly earnings – whichever is higher. |
| Weeks 7 to 39 | The current flat rate set by the Government or 90% of your average weekly earnings – whichever is lower |

If you meet the criteria to qualify for SMP but will no longer be employed by the University at the date your baby is due (for example, if your fixed term contract is coming to an end), then you'll not qualify for UMP. In these circumstances, we'll pay you SMP for 39 weeks at the rates set out above.

In the unlikely event that you don't qualify for UMP or SMP, you may still be able to claim Maternity Allowance which is paid by The Department of Work and Pensions. You will be paid this if:

- You have not worked for the University long enough to receive University Maternity Pay but were in other paid employment in the 66 weeks before the week your baby is due; or
- You were self-employed in the 66 weeks before the week your baby is due.

If you have any queries or concerns around your entitlements, please contact the [Payroll Team](#).

We also know that sometimes the birth of your baby might not go to plan. If your baby is born and needs to spend longer than 3 weeks in hospital, for example they are born prematurely or require complex care, you can speak to your manager to make a request for extended paid leave. You'll be entitled to be paid at the statutory rate for each week that your baby spends in hospital, up to a maximum of 12 weeks. This leave should be taken immediately after the planned maternity leave period.

6. During Your Maternity Leave

When you are off on maternity leave, you'll continue to be employed by us and your service will not be broken. You'll return to the same job and the same terms and conditions as you had before you started maternity leave. If for any reason, there is a need for your role to change, you will be fully consulted with.

You'll find more information on any impact to your terms and conditions below.

6.1. Annual Leave and Public Holidays

You'll continue to accrue (build up) annual leave and public holiday entitlements while you're on maternity leave. You should talk to your manager about using your leave entitlement. We encourage you to plan to use your leave either at the beginning or end of your leave where possible. It may be possible to carry over some of your leave and you should speak to your manager about this.

6.2. Pensions

If you're a member of a pension scheme, you'll continue to be a member during your maternity leave.

During any period of maternity leave where you're receiving **reduced pay**, your pension contributions will be based on your earnings at that time. However, your pension benefits won't be impacted.

During any period of **unpaid maternity leave**, your pension contributions will stop. You have the option to pay the contributions for the unpaid period when you come back to work. If you decide to do this, we will pay the employer contributions too.

For any queries or to discuss your pension further please contact the [Pensions Team](#).

6.3. Other Benefits

If there are any other benefits that you contribute to through a salary sacrifice arrangement, like childcare vouchers or the cycle to work scheme, you should contact the Payroll Team to find out how these may be impacted while you are on maternity leave.

6.4. Keeping in Touch Days

We encourage you to stay in touch with your manager during your maternity leave. This is so that they can keep you updated of any changes or information you need to know while you are off. You can also speak to your manager about allocating you a 'buddy' to support you before, during and after your leave. You will find more information in our [Family Leave Buddy System Guidance](#) (staff login required).

You can also work up to 10 Keeping in Touch (KIT) days during your leave if your manager agrees. You'll need to agree what this work will involve and when you will do it in advance with your manager. There is no obligation to work a KIT day.

For any KIT days agreed with your manager, you'll get paid your full contractual rate of pay for the hours you work. If you're in the SMP period of your leave, your pay will be 'topped up' to your normal hourly rate. This means that payment for a KIT day won't ever be more than a normal day's pay. Just so you're aware, even if you don't work a full day, this will still count as one of your 10 KIT days. To be paid for any KIT days you have worked you'll need to complete a [KIT Day Payment Form](#) (staff login required).

7. Returning to Work After Leave

We'll assume that you want to take the full 52 weeks maternity leave. But you don't have to and if you wish to return to work earlier you should let your manager and Human Resources know, in writing, as soon as possible. Ideally, this will be at least 8 weeks before you intend to return to work. Less notice may result in your return date being delayed, for example if someone is backfilling your role.

When you're coming back to work you might want to think about using a KIT day to discuss the arrangements for your return with your manager. If you're a member of Academic or Teaching staff, you may also want to think about our policy on [Family Friendly Research & Scholarship Leave](#).

If you intend to breast/chest feed when you return to work, you'll find more information to support you with this in our [Breastfeeding Support Statement](#).

8. Further Information and Support

If you have any queries about this policy, please talk to your manager or contact [Human Resources](#). Further information and guidance, for both staff and managers, can also be found in on our People Hub.

9. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed by Human Resources on a regular basis. To see when the next review is due, please see our [Policy Review Schedule](#) (staff login required) on our People Hub.