

FAMILY-FRIENDLY RESEARCH LEAVE POLICY

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FAMILY-FRIENDLY RESEARCH LEAVE

POLICY

1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF POLICY

The University is committed to supporting parents to return from Relevant Family Leave and recognises that for Academic Staff, additional support may be required to:

- help them balance their return to work with the demands of their research; and
- help the University to recruit and retain staff with parental responsibilities, who have or may wish to take Relevant Family Leave.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedure for staff making an application for Family-Friendly Research Leave, together with the support the University offers to staff returning from Relevant Family Leave.

2 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

This policy applies to University staff, who:

- are employees;
- are classified as Academic Staff; and
- have returned from any period of maternity, adoption or shared parental leave of 4 calendar months or more (“Relevant Family Leave.”)

3 DEFINITION OF FAMILY-FRIENDLY RESEARCH LEAVE

Eligible staff will be entitled to a continuous period of up to three calendar months’ paid research leave (“FFR Leave”):

- during which the individual will have no teaching duties so that he/she is able to re-engage with his/her research duties (and where appropriate his/her knowledge exchange and citizenship); and
- which will normally commence on return from Relevant Family Leave. Where the member of staff returns to work during a period where they have no scheduled teaching duties, the individual may not require a specific period of FFR Leave or the FFR Leave granted may be shorter than three calendar months, provided always that the member of staff has three months’ continuous relief from teaching duties so as to enable them to re-engage with their research duties (and where appropriate their knowledge exchange and citizenship). In cases to be agreed with the Head of Department, a member of staff may defer their FFR Leave from their return from Relevant Family Leave, provided that it is taken within either (i) one calendar year; or (ii) two complete semesters (whichever is greater) from the date upon which the member of staff returns from the Relevant Family Leave.

4 TEACHING BACKFILL ARRANGEMENTS

Staff will have their teaching duties removed for the duration of their FFR Leave.

Staff wishing to take FFR Leave are encouraged to assist with the search for a suitable teaching backfill candidate wherever possible. However the overall responsibility and final decision on a teaching backfill appointment rests with the Head of Department for the relevant area.

[Guidance for departments](#) on how to resource the teaching backfill requirements during FFR Leave is available on the University website.

5 SCOPE OF FAMILY-FRIENDLY RESEARCH LEAVE

5.1 No impact on sabbatical leave

The University recognises that there are often local arrangements made by departments who offer sabbatical leave to Academic Staff.

It should be noted that taking FFR Leave must have no impact on decisions made about an eligible member of staff's access to sabbatical leave and/or about the usual timing of their access to that leave. Where a member of staff's FFR Leave would coincide with their opportunity to take sabbatical leave, departments must ensure that the member of staff can take sabbatical leave at the earliest practical opportunity and at the latest, within one year of their return from FFR Leave.

5.2 Commencement of FFR Leave

The FFR Leave will normally commence on return from Relevant Family Leave. In cases to be agreed with the Head of Department, the member of staff may defer the FFR Leave from their return from Relevant Family Leave, provided that it is taken within either (i) one calendar year; or (ii) two complete semesters (whichever is greater) from the date upon which the member of staff returns from the Relevant Family Leave

The preferred commencement date of the FFR Leave will be communicated by the member of staff by submitting the [FFR Leave Request Form](#), to their line manager/Head of Department by no later than three months before the FFR Leave is due to commence. The member of staff and their line manager/Head of Department should then meet to discuss the FFR Leave Request Form and any practical arrangements that need to be made before the FFR Leave commences. In circumstances where the member of staff wishes to defer the FFR Leave to a date later than the end of Relevant Family Leave, they must discuss this with their Head of Department with a view to obtaining his/her agreement. An individual who is returning from Relevant Family Leave at a point in the year when they have a clear three months' free from teaching duties without the need for FFR leave will not be able to delay their FFR leave until the later re-commencement of their teaching.

Eligible staff are encouraged to have early discussions about their intentions with their line manager/Head of Department, in particular to assist with the teaching backfill process.

5.3 Duration of FFR Leave

FFR Leave will normally last for a period of three calendar months. Where the member of staff returns to work during a period where they have no scheduled teaching duties, the individual may not require a specific period of Family Friendly Research Leave or the leave granted may be shorter than three calendar months, provided always that the member of staff has three months' continuous relief from any teaching duties and the opportunity to re-engage with their research duties (and where appropriate their knowledge exchange and citizenship).

5.4 Purpose of FFR Leave

The purpose of FFR Leave is to allow the member of staff to re-engage with their research duties (and where appropriate their knowledge exchange and citizenship), in a supportive environment which recognises the new demands of their family life. The member of staff is also encouraged to plan their personal development during this time.

5.5 FFR Leave Statement - Part 1

The member of staff must complete and submit Part I of the [FFR Leave Statement](#) to their line manager/Head of Department by no later than one month before the FFR Leave commences. The member of staff and their Head of Department should meet to discuss Part I of the FFR Leave Statement, before the FFR Leave commences.

[Guidance](#) on the content of Part I of the FFR Leave Statement is available on the University website.

5.6 FFR Leave Statement - Part 2

By no later than one calendar month after the FFR Leave ends, the member of staff must complete and submit Part 2 of the [FFR Leave Statement](#) to their line manager/Head of Department.

[Guidance](#) on the content of Part 2 of the FFR Leave Statement is available on the University website.

Part 2 of the FFR Leave Statement should summarise:

- The activities undertaken during the FFR Leave;
- The extent to which the activities matched Part 1 of the FFR Leave Statement; and
- The benefit to both the member of staff and department.

5.7 Location during FFR Leave

Whilst staff on FFR Leave will not be expected to do teaching or administrative duties, in order to support their re-engagement with their research they will normally be based within their department during the FFR Leave. This will enable them to engage with other research staff and to re-familiarise themselves with the normal routine of the department.

6 FAMILY-FRIENDLY MENTORING SUPPORT

Eligible staff can also access Family-Friendly (FF) mentoring support, whether or not they choose to take FFR Leave.

FF mentoring support will be available during Relevant Family Leave and/or FFR Leave, where a suitable mentor is agreed. The content and frequency of the FF mentoring support shall be a matter of agreement between the member of staff and the mentor.

The purpose of the FF mentoring support is to:

- Support and encourage the member of staff in their career and professional development, during Relevant Family Leave and/or FFR Leave;
- Provide advice and suggestions about how to maximise the benefit of Keeping In Touch (“KIT”) and/or Shared Parental Leave In Touch (“SPLIT”) days, if the member of staff chooses to take them;
- Provide advice and suggestions about how to maximise the benefit of the teaching backfill member of staff, whilst on FFR Leave;
- Where required, maintain and/or increase the confidence of the member of staff during Relevant Family Leave and/or FFR Leave; and
- Provide practical advice, share experiences and provide suggestions on how to balance the demands of an Academic Staff role with family life, involving the Human Resources team where required.

Staff interested in accessing FF mentoring support should in the first instance notify the [Organisational and Staff Development Unit \(OSDU\)](#).

7 CONCERNS

Staff who are concerned they are experiencing difficulties as a result of intending to take, taking or having taken FFR Leave, are encouraged in the first instance to discuss their concerns with their Head of Department in the first instance or with Human Resources, with the aim of seeking resolution of the issue.