



## Introduction

Queen's University is an equal opportunity employer committed to supporting the work life balance of its employees and as such has enhanced the statutory parental leave provision to offer it to employees irrespective of their length of service.

Parental leave gives members of staff, both fathers and mothers, a right to take time off work to look after a child or to make arrangements for the child's welfare. Members of staff can use parental leave to spend more time with their children and strike a better balance between their work and family commitments.

Statutory Parental Leave Entitlement	Queen's Enhanced Parental Leave
Must have completed one year's service.	No length of service requirement.
Maximum of 4 weeks in any one year in respect of any individual child.	Maximum of 6 weeks in any one year in respect of any individual child.
Total of 18 weeks entitlement.	Total of 18 weeks entitlement.

### 1. Commencement and Duration of Parental Leave and Pay

Parental leave is unpaid leave and can be taken up to the child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

A member of staff is entitled to parental leave if he/she has a child who is under 18 and is:

- Is the parent (named on the birth or adoption certificate) of the child; or
- Has adopted a child who is under 18 years of age; or
- Has acquired legal responsibility for the child.

Parental leave must be taken in individual or multiples of 1 week blocks, except in extenuating circumstances, where alternative arrangements can be agreed with the Head of School/ Department/ Unit.

A member of staff who has a child with a disability can chose to take parental leave in blocks or single days.

A member of staff may take a maximum of 6 weeks parental leave in respect of any individual child in any one year.

As parental leave is for an individual child, if twins are born each parent will have the right to take 18 weeks leave for each child.

## **2. Notice of Intention to take Parental Leave**

- A member of staff must inform his/her Head of School/ Department/ Unit, in writing, of his/her intention to take parental leave no later than 21 days before the date on which he/she wishes to take parental leave (unless this is not reasonably practicable to do so). The information should be recorded on the Application for Parental Leave form.
- The same period of notice is required where a member of staff wishes to take a period of parental leave following immediately after Ordinary or Additional Maternity Leave and Ordinary or Additional Adoption Leave.

### **Postponement of Leave**

- A member of staff's request for parental leave may be postponed by the University for up to 6 months, where work would be unduly disrupted if the leave were to be taken at the requested time.
- Where the Head of School/ Department/ Unit postpones a request for parental leave the reason for the postponement will be discussed with the member of staff and the reasons for the postponement will be given, in writing, within 7 days of application.
- The Head of School/ Department/ Unit will also reach an agreement with the member of staff on when the leave can be taken. The length of leave must be equivalent to the employee's original request.
- The University cannot postpone parental leave when a member of staff gives notice to take it immediately after the birth of a child or when a child is placed for adoption.
- The University cannot postpone leave so that it ends after a child's 18th birthday.

## **3. Annual Leave**

- A member of staff accrues annual leave entitlement while on parental leave.
- A member of staff is expected, where possible, to take his/her full annual leave entitlement in a particular leave year. However, should this not be possible due to parental leave arrangements or exceptional circumstances, he/she will be able to carry over up to 5 days, the scheduling of which must be taken by agreement with the Head of School/ Department/ Unit.

## **4. Pension**

The University's pension contributions are not paid during the member of staff's unpaid parental leave. If the member of staff would like to make up their contributions, then the University will make up the employer's contributions.

This has to be agreed with the Pensions Office before the absence commences as contributions cannot be maintained retrospectively.

## **5. Return to Work**

A member of staff is entitled to return from parental leave to the job in which he/she was employed before his/her absence under the original contract of employment and on terms and conditions not less favourable than those, which he/she would have received had he/she not been absent, if the period of leave was for 6 weeks or less.

If the member of staff is on parental leave for a period of more than 6 weeks he/she is entitled to return to the job in which he/she was employed before his/her absence or if this is not reasonably practicable, to another job which is both suitable for him/her and appropriate for his/her in the circumstances on equivalent terms and conditions.

Where a member of staff's parental leave follows Ordinary Maternity Leave the member of staff is entitled to return to the same job in which she was employed before her absence under the original contract of employment and on terms and conditions not less favourable than those, which she would have received had she not been absent.

Where a member of staff's parental leave follows Additional Maternity Leave the member of staff is entitled to return to the job in which she was employed before her absence or if this is not reasonably practicable, to another job which is both suitable for her and appropriate for her in the circumstances on equivalent terms and conditions.

A member of staff returning to work after parental leave is entitled to benefit from any general improvements to the rate of pay (and any other terms and conditions) which the University may have introduced for their grade or class of work while they were on parental leave.

## **6. Further information**

Please contact the HR Hub for further information and advice on the application of this policy.

The HR Hub can be contacted on Extension 3000, by emailing [hrrhub@qub.ac.uk](mailto:hrrhub@qub.ac.uk).

## **7. Other Work Life Balance Leave**

Please see also the University's procedures in relation to:

- Adoptive Leave
- Career Break
- Dependant Leave
- Flexible Working
- Maternity Leave
- Paternity Leave
- Shared Parental leave

Further information on these policies can be accessed through the web at the following address:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/annual-family-other-leave/work-life-balance-policies/>

**If you have queries regarding any of the above please contact the HR Hub, extension 3000 or e-mail [hrhub@qub.ac.uk](mailto:hrhub@qub.ac.uk) .**

*Revised January 2019*