**QUEEN’S UNIVERSITY BELFAST**

**MATERNITY LEAVE PROCEDURE**

**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 maternity pay provision to offer pregnant employees 18 weeks full pay.

**1. Maternity Leave**

* 1. A member of staff, whilst in paid employment, is entitled to take 52 weeks continuous maternity leave, provided her contract covers the whole period.
  2. The first 26 week period is known as Ordinary Maternity Leave (OML) and the remaining 26 weeks as Additional Maternity Leave (AML).
  3. There is a compulsory maternity leave period of 2 weeks effective from the day on which childbirth occurs.

**2. Maternity Pay**

All employees are entitled to Queen’s University Enhanced Maternity Entitlement, which is inclusive of Statutory Maternity Pay / Maternity Allowance, provided that they follow the correct notification procedure.

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| **Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) \*\*** | **Queen’s University Enhanced Maternity Pay** |
| Weeks 1 - 6, higher rate SMP  Weeks 7-39, lower rate SMP  Weeks 40-52, unpaid | Weeks 1 – 18, full pay \*\*  Weeks 19 – 39, lower rate SMP  Weeks 40-52, unpaid |
| \*\* Employees with less than 26 weeks service or earnings under the Lower Earning Limit (LEL) in the Qualifying Week (the 15th week before the Expected Week of Confinement (EWC)) are not eligible to receive SMP. They may, however, be able to apply to the Social Security Agency for Maternity Allowance which is paid to them directly. | |

**3. Notice of Intention to Take Maternity Leave**

* 1. A member of staff must inform the University, no later than the end of the fifteenth week before her expected week of childbirth, of the following:
* that she is pregnant;
* the week her baby is expected to be born (EWC); and
* when she wants her maternity leave to start
  1. The above information should be recorded on a Maternity Leave Notification form (copy attached) and sent to the HR Hub. A Maternity Certificate (MatB1), which can be obtained from a GP or registered midwife, is also required at the same time or as soon as possible thereafter. Paid maternity leave can only be authorised when a MatB1 Form has been received by the HR Hub.
  2. Within 28 days of receipt of the above, the HR Hub will confirm the maternity leave arrangements in writing, to include the date on which the member of staff is expected to return to work if she were to take her full entitlement.
  3. The member of staff must also inform her Head of School/ Department/Unit of her maternity leave arrangements.
  4. The member of staff may change her mind about when she wants to start her OML by informing the HR Hub and her Head of School/Department/Unit in writing. The change of date to the commencement of her OML must be given at least 28 days in advance (unless this is not reasonably practical to do so).
  5. Although entitlement is to 52 weeks leave, where possible, a member of staff should outline the leave she intends to take when completing the Maternity Leave Notification Form. However although it is understood that it is hard to know beforehand how an individual will feel after the baby is born, 8 weeks notice must be given to the University of her return to work date if the return date is altered.

**4. Commencement of Maternity Leave**

4.1 **Ordinary Maternity Leave**

OML will normally commence no earlier than the beginning of the 11th week before the expected week of childbirth and on one of the following dates:

* the date specified by the member of staff in her notification to the University; or
* during the four weeks before the start of the expected week of childbirth, if the member of staff is absent from work for a pregnancy related illness. Under these circumstances her maternity leave will start automatically, regardless of when she has previously said she wanted her maternity leave to start; or
* the day after childbirth occurs, where the OML has not commenced i.e. if the birth is earlier than expected.

Where the birth is earlier than expected, if the member of staff has not already done so, she must notify the University as soon as it is reasonably practicable, by completing the Maternity Leave Notification Form. The Maternity Leave Notification Form must be sent to the HR Hub along with an MB1 as appropriate.

4.2 **Additional Maternity Leave**

The AML period commences on the day after the last day of the OML period.

Depending on individual choice, the AML may last from 1 week up to a maximum of 26 weeks.

1. **Annual Leave**
   1. A member of staff accrues contractual annual leave entitlement while on OML and during AML.
   2. A member of staff is expected, where possible, to take her full annual leave entitlement in a particular leave year. However, should this not be possible due to maternity leave arrangements or exceptional circumstances, she will be able to carry over up to the full complement of leave (43 days) to the next leave year, the scheduling of which must be taken by agreement with the Head of School/Department/Unit.
   3. Annual leave may be taken at the end of OML, (where AML is not taken) or at the end of AML, by agreement with the Head of School/ Department/ Unit, details of which should be confirmed in writing on the Maternity Leave Notification Form.
2. **Pension**

* 1. Pensionable service will continue to accrue as normal as long as the member of staff is receiving salary or statutory maternity pay.
  2. A member of staff who takes unpaid leave including from week 40 of her Maternity Leave onwards, will not normally be able to make pension contributions for the period of unpaid leave.

1. **Career Break** 
   1. A member of staff on career break will have no entitlement to maternity pay other than Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP), subject always to eligibility requirements for SMP which can be affected during periods of unpaid leave.
2. **Return to Work**

A member of staff who wants to return to work from Maternity Leave either earlier or later than first agreed, must give the University 8 weeks' written notice of the date on which she wants to return to work.

* 1. Ordinary Maternity Leave

A member of staff is entitled to return from OML to the 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.

* 1. Additional Maternity Leave

A member of staff who takes AML 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.

1. **Other Information**
   1. Antenatal Care

A member of staff is entitled to paid time off work to attend antenatal appointments, which should be made on the advice of a registered medical practitioner, a registered midwife or a registered midwife/ health visitor. The individual must notify her Department in advance. A Department has the right to ask for an appointment card or other document that shows an appointment has been made.

* 1. Still Births

The University does not make any distinction between still and live births in the granting of its maternity leave.

* 1. Keeping in Touch Days

A member of staff is entitled to work for a period of up to 10 days during Maternity Leave, known as Keeping in Touch Days, without loss of Maternity Allowance or Statutory Maternity Pay or without triggering a return to work. These days should be by agreement with the Head of School/Department/Unit.

The University is entitled to make reasonable contact with a member of staff on Maternity Leave for a number of reasons, such as to help plan and to discuss arrangements for her return to work.

* 1. Work Life Balance Policies

The University has also a number of Work Life Balance Policies:

* Dependant Leave
* Career Break
* Flexible Working
* Adoptive Leave

* Parental Leave
* Paternity Leave
* Childcare Voucher Scheme
  1. Not Returning to Work

A member of staff who does not wish to return to work at the end of her OML or AML is required to give notice, in writing, of termination of the contract.

* 1. Statutory Provisions

Where, in exceptional circumstances, any requirements imposed by the University or under any relevant statutory provision prohibits an employee from working for any period after the end of the ordinary maternity leave period by reason of her having recently given birth, her ordinary maternity leave period continues until the end of the later period.

If you have a specific query relating to your maternity leave, please contact your HR Business Partner or the HR Hub on extension 3000, or email [hrhub@qub.ac.uk](mailto:hrhub@qub.ac.uk).

QUEEN’S UNIVERSITY BELFAST

### PEOPLE AND CULTURE

# MATERNITY LEAVE NOTIFICATION FORM

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| Please read the Maternity Leave Procedure and return this form to the HR Hub no later than the end of the fifteenth week before your expected week of childbirth. This form must be accompanied by a Maternity Certificate (Form MB1). Maternity payments can only be made when Form MB1 has been received.  If it is not possible to give the required notice, ie if the birth is earlier than expected, please complete this form as soon as possible and return it to People and Culture, HR Hub. |

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| My Expected Week of Childbirth (EWC) is: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  **ORDINARY MATERNITY LEAVE (OML)**  I wish to take \_\_\_\_ weeks OML (maximum available 26 weeks) and my OML to commence on:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.  **ADDITIONAL MATERNITY LEAVE (AML) (maximum available 26 weeks)**  I wish / I do not wish to add \_\_\_\_\_\_ weeks paid AML (maximum available 13 weeks)  plus \_\_\_\_\_ weeks unpaid AML (maximum available 13 weeks) to the end of my OML period.  My AML will commence on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ until \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

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| **HOLIDAY ENTITLEMENT**  I wish\*/do not wish\* to add holiday entitlement to the end of my Maternity Leave period (\*delete as appropriate) - Leave year \_\_\_\_; number of days \_\_\_\_; Leave year \_\_\_\_; number of days: \_\_\_\_.  The dates for holiday entitlement are from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ until \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  NB (i) A member of staff is expected, where possible, to take her full annual leave entitlement in a particular leave year. However, should this not be possible due to maternity leave arrangements or exceptional circumstances, she will be able to carry over up to the full complement of leave (43 days) to the next leave year, the scheduling of which must be taken by agreement with the Head of School/Department/Unit.  (ii) If taking Additional Maternity Leave, holidays cannot be taken until the end of this period.  Approved by Head of School / Director / Line Manager: Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

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| **WORKING PATTERN (If applicable)**  If you are employed on a part-time contract and work specific days please specify below, i.e Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name:** | **Staff ID:** |
| **School/Dept/Unit:** | **Staff**  **Category:** |
| People and Culture will keep you informed of internal advertisements for your category of staff at your grade and one grade above during your Maternity Leave. Please provide an email address to facilitate this (if you do not supply an email address we will assume you do not wish to be contacted regarding internal advertisements):  Email address: | |
| In the event that we need to contact you please indicate the preferred method of contact and provide details:  **Telephone No: and/or Email address:** | |

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| **Signed:** | **Date:** |

PLEASE RETURN TO PEOPLE AND CULTURE, HR HUB, LEVEL 4, ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

PLEASE RETURN TO HRHub, LEVEL 4, ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

**Pre-Maternity Leave Checklist for staff**

This checklist is optional – it is intended to help to ensure that all necessary steps are taken prior to and during maternity leave. Employees and line managers may find it helpful to use this.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Action by:** | **Action:** | **Completed / Notes:** |
| **BEFORE MATERNITY LEAVE** | |  |
| Employee | Inform line manager at the earliest opportunity. |  |
| Manager & Employee | Familiarise yourself with the Maternity Leave procedure and your respective guidance booklet for Line Manager or Expectant Mothers. |  |
| Manager | Carry out a [risk assessment](https://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/EstatesDirectorate/UniversitySafetyService/HealthandSafetyPoliciesandGuidance/PoliciesandProceduresLibrary/NewandExpectantMothers/) |  |
| Manager & employee | If you are on a FTC / grant funded post - discuss how this will be affected – explore options available in the terms of the grant/funding with the PI / research funder. |  |
| Manager & employee | Calculate annual leave and agree dates when this will be taken (pre and post maternity) |  |
| Employee | Complete form ML1 and give to line manager and HRHub, before the end of the Qualifying Week (15th week before EWC). Send MATB1 form also. |  |
| HR Services | Will confirm leave arrangements in writing. |  |
| Employee | Check the arrangements for payment of staff benefits during your leave (eg. car parking, cycle scheme, childcare vouchers, nursery fees.) |  |
| Manager & employee | Discuss work /teaching cover and handover arrangements. |  |
| Manager & employee | Discuss arrangements for keeping in touch during maternity leave – how to contact, frequency, purpose, KIT days. |  |
| Manager & employee | If the employee is on probation - discuss whether this will affect the probation period. |  |
| Employee | Review your PDR and personal development plans – take stock of where you are and what your goals are, this will make it easier to refresh yourself on your return to work. |  |
| **DURING MATERNITY LEAVE** | | |
| Manager & Employee | Maintain contact in line with your agreed arrangements |  |
| Manager & Employee | To request to alter your working hours/arrangements for your return, you must complete a [flexible working request](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/DiversityandInclusionUnit/PoliciesandProcedures/WorkLifeBalancePoliciesApplicationForms/) and discuss with your line manager |  |
| **RETURNING FROM MATERNTIY LEAVE** | |  |
| Employee | Notice to return – if you intend to return to work on your previously agreed date you do not need to give any further notice.  If you wish to return to work on an alternative date you must provide at least 8 weeks’ notice (of your original / new date – whichever is soonest) in writing to your line manager and HRHub. |  |
| Employee | Consider whether you want to pay pension contributions on your return to work for any unpaid period of leave. Contact the Pensions Office for more information on this. |  |
| **NOT RETURNING TO WORK** | |  |
| Employee | If you decide not to return to work you must resign giving your contractual notice in writing to your line manager and HRHub. |  |
| Employee | If your FTC ends during your leave, you do not need to do anything further. Any outstanding SMP owing will be paid to you. |  |

**Completed form to be kept by employee and/or Line Manager.**

**Return to Work Interview Checklist for Maternity Leave**

Following a period of maternity, it is important to ensure that the employee is supported back into work. The purpose of such an interview is to help them to settle back into their role as smoothly and quickly as possible. Please discuss the following issues either on return to work or during a KIT day. Agree and note down any further steps which should be taken.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| How long have you been away from work? |  |
| Did you undertake any keeping in touch days? How beneficial were they?  *(to claim payment complete KIT days record)* |  |
| Do you have any childcare issues causing you concern? Are you aware of the support available through the University? *(nursery fees salary sacrifice/on site nurseries/breastfeeding support).* |  |
| Have you had any health problems whilst away? Is there any condition which is still causing concern? |  |
| Do you need to be referred to Occupational Health, Counselling etc? |  |
| Are any adjustments in the workplace required? (e.g. for breast feeding). *(Liaise with Safety Services if so)* |  |
| Discuss and clarify work pattern and affect on the role requirements, if returning to different hours.  Are any adjustments required to the role? |  |
| Update on any changes which have occurred in the workplace during your absence (for example – introduce to any new staff; explain any changes in structure, procedures, etc). |  |
| Update on the role, any work that has been undertaken in your absence and what current work is required. |  |
| Is any training required to bring you back up to speed? |  |
| Are there any other areas that you wish to discuss? |  |
| **Employee name:** | **Manager name:** |
| **Employee signature:** | **Manager signature:** |
| **Date completed:** | **Date completed:** |

**Completed form should be kept on file locally by the Line Manager.**

**Arrange a touch base meeting to follow up with the employee to ensure they are settling back into work effectively. Schedule this for a timeframe suitable for you both.**

**Keeping in Touch (KIT) Days Record**

Please complete this record on your return to work from maternity.

You are entitled to work up to 10 days during your maternity leave without curtailing your maternity pay. You may receive additional payment for the hours you work calculated as follows:

* Working a KIT day whilst receiving OMP (i.e. during weeks 1-18 at full pay) – no additional payment will be made
* Working a KIT day whilst receiving SMP/MA (i.e. during weeks 19 – 39 at statutory rate) – the statutory rate will be topped up to your normal basic pay for the hours you work
* Working a KIT day whilst on unpaid maternity leave (i.e. during weeks 40 – 52) – you will receive your normal basic pay for the hours you work

**If you work only a couple of hours on a day, you will still have used one full KIT day from your entitlement.**

KIT days do not extend your period of maternity or adoption leave.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **DATE** | **TIME** | **NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED** | **ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION (optional)** |
| **1** |  |  |  |  |
| **2** |  |  |  |  |
| **3** |  |  |  |  |
| **4** |  |  |  |  |
| **5** |  |  |  |  |
| **6** |  |  |  |  |
| **7** |  |  |  |  |
| **8** |  |  |  |  |
| **9** |  |  |  |  |
| **10** |  |  |  |  |
| **Employee declaration:**  I confirm that I worked the above hours and wish to claim additional payment (where appropriate) in respect of these | | | | |
| Employee Name: | | | Employee Number: | |
| Employee Signature: | | | Date: | |
| **Payment authorised by:** | | | | |
| Manager Name: | | | Date: | |
| Manager Signature: | | |  | |

**Manager to send a scanned copy of the completed form to HRHub for payment.**