

HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY

Paternity/Maternity Support Leave Policy

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1.0 Introduction

The following details employees of the College's entitlements to Paternity/Maternity Support leave rights and benefits. It will not normally apply to casual workers or agency workers.

The College treats equality of opportunity seriously and has an equality framework that is applicable to staff in order to promote and ensure equality of opportunity. Implementation of this procedure must be clear and transparent and not subject to any unfair discriminatory practices.

The College's [Values](#) are at the very centre of our work and guide our behaviour as a community, across all levels of the College. This policy aims to protect and promote our Values of Respect, Collaboration, Excellence, Integrity and Innovation.

Line managers and supervisors are required to familiarise and understand this procedure.

Members of staff are encouraged to contact the HR Staff Hub for their department or division to discuss their entitlement.

2.0 Paternity/Maternity Support Leave

Paternity/Maternity Support Leave is available to enable members of staff, regardless of gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or whether they are transitioning, whose partners are having a baby or are adopting a child to take time off to support their partner. Paternity/Maternity Support Leave is also available where a couple are jointly adopting and the other member of the couple is taking Adoption/Surrogacy leave.

Paternity/Maternity Support Leave cannot be taken for any other purpose than as set out above.

2.1 Antenatal appointments

Members of staff, regardless of gender, gender identity and sexual orientation, whose partners are having a baby are, regardless of their length of service, entitled to paid time off to accompany their pregnant partner to two antenatal appointments, made on the advice of a doctor, registered midwife or registered health visitor. Ante-natal care is not necessarily restricted to medical examinations – for example, it could include parenting classes – as long as these are advised by a registered medical practitioner, midwife or health visitor. You should give your manager as much notice as possible of appointments and formally request your absence through the TeamSeer absence management system.

Your manager may ask you to confirm in writing the time and date of the appointment, the nature of your relationship with the pregnant person and that the purpose of the time off is to attend an ante-natal appointment.

3.0 Eligibility for Paternity/Maternity Support Leave and Pay

3.1 Who is eligible for Paternity/Maternity Support Leave and Pay?

In all cases, you must meet the following conditions:

- you¹ and your partner are having a baby, adopting a child (up to the age of 16 years), or having a baby through a surrogacy arrangement;
- you are taking Paternity/Maternity Support Leave to look after the child or your partner; and
- you have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing.

¹ To be eligible for Paternity/Maternity Support Leave and Pay, you must be a biological parent who is not taking maternity leave, or a partner of a birth parent or a partner of the (intended) parent who has elected to take adoption/surrogacy leave.

To be eligible for **College Paternity/Maternity Support Leave**, you must additionally meet the following requirements (these reflect the eligibility requirements for Statutory Paternity Leave):

- have completed 26 weeks' continuous service with the College, as an employee, by either the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth or by the end of the week you receive notification that you have been matched with a child for adoption²;
- continue to be employed by the College up to the birth/adoption of the child; and
- provide the required notice (see section 4.2 below).

² If your baby is born prematurely and before you have completed the 26 week's service, the expected week of birth will be used to calculate the necessary length of service.

To be eligible for **Statutory Paternity Pay**, in addition to satisfying the conditions outlined above, your average earnings in the 8 weeks up to and including the qualifying week must have been at least equal to the Lower Earnings Limit for NI contributions (please seek advice from the HR Staff Hub if you are at all unsure about this).

Provided you satisfy all the above conditions, you will be entitled to **College Paternity/Maternity Support Leave and Pay** of two weeks at full pay.

Please note that College Paternity/Maternity Support Pay will normally only be paid if you are eligible for [Statutory Paternity Leave and Pay](#) (please seek advice from the HR Staff Hub if you are at all unsure about this).

When in receipt of College Paternity/Maternity Support Pay, Statutory Paternity Pay is an inclusive part of that payment.

Statutory Paternity Pay is the same as the standard rate of Statutory Maternity Pay; this is the lesser of:

- £184.03 per week

or

- 90% of average weekly earnings if this is less than the flat rate.

3.2 Will my previous continuous service be recognised for the purposes of calculating my paternity/maternity support leave and pay entitlement?

The College will recognise previous continuous University or Trust service for the purposes of paternity/maternity support pay and leave for the following categories of staff: Professor, Reader, Non Clinical and Clinical Senior Lecturer, Non Clinical and Clinical Lecturer, and Clinical Research Fellows. In such cases, staff will be entitled to receive benefits as outlined in Section 4.1 below.

4.0 Paternity/Maternity Support Leave

4.1 How much Paternity/Maternity Support Leave can I take?

Provided you meet the all the conditions set out at section 3.1 above, you are entitled to take two weeks' paid Paternity/Maternity Support leave. If your baby is due on or after 7 April 2024, you can choose to take the leave as either two consecutive weeks or two separate one week blocks. It cannot be taken as odd days.

You can choose to start your leave:

- from the date of your child's birth (whether this is earlier or later than expected); or
- from a chosen number of days or weeks after the date of your child's birth (whether this is earlier or later than expected); or
- from a chosen date later than the first day of the week in which your baby is expected to be born.

Leave can start on any day of the week on or following the child's birth, but if your baby is due on or after 7 April 2024 it must be completed:

- within 52 weeks of the actual date of birth of your child or date of placement of your child for adoption
- if your child is born early, within the period from the actual date of birth, up to 52 weeks after the first day of the expected week of birth.

If you specify the date of birth as the day you wish to start your leave and you are at work on that day, leave will begin on the following day.

Only two weeks of leave will be available to you, irrespective of whether more than one child is born as a result of the same pregnancy or placed together as a result of the adoption.

Following your period of Paternity/Maternity Support Leave, an additional four weeks of unpaid leave may be applied for under the Parental Leave scheme. Further information on Parental Leave is available in the [Special Leave Policy](#).

Eligible staff may also wish to consider [Shared Parental Leave](#) as an option.

4.2 How do I apply for Paternity/Maternity Support Leave?

To apply for this leave, and to qualify for paid leave, you should let your manager know you're planning on taking leave and complete the online [Paternity/Maternity Support/Adoption Pay and Leave Request form](#) on the HR Portal. If your baby is due on or after 7 April 2024, you must give at least 28 days' notice, or notice within 7 days of being notified by the adoption agency that you have been matched with a child for adoption, before each period of leave. If you are unable to meet these timescales, notice must be provided as soon as is reasonably practicable. HR will add the leave onto your TeamSeer absence management system record.

5.0 During the Paternity/Maternity Support Leave Period

5.1 What happens to my annual leave during my Paternity/Maternity Support Leave?

You are entitled to receive full contractual annual leave, both holiday and mandatory leave, during your ordinary paternity/maternity support leave period.

Any mandatory leave days which fall during your ordinary paternity/maternity support leave period should be added to and taken as holiday leave. Mandatory leave days which fall before or after the ordinary paternity/maternity support leave period should be taken as normal.

6.0 What is Shared Parental Leave?

Shared Parental Leave provides eligible parents with the opportunity to choose to share the care of their child during the first year following the child's birth/adoption. Its purpose is to give parents greater flexibility in considering how to best care for, and bond with, their child. It is expected that members of staff will discuss their plans for Shared Parental Leave. Further information including eligibility requirements and full details of the Statutory and College Shared Parental Leave Schemes is available in the [Shared Parental Leave Policy](#).

7.0 College Support

7.1 Early Years Education Centre

Childcare for children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years is available, by application, from the College's Early Years Education Centre. For details of fees and how to apply for a place, please contact the Manager, or the Supervisor, on telephone number 020 7594 5120 / 5121 or visit: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/early-years>.

7.2 Parent Buddy Scheme

The College operates a Buddy Scheme, available both prior to and post-maternity, adoption, surrogacy and shared parental leave. The scheme provides the opportunity to be paired up with a returner from one of those categories of leave who has been back in the workplace for a few months and who can act as a sounding board to answer any questions.

7.3 Flexible Working

If you are thinking about changing your work pattern when you return to work, please speak to your line manager as soon as possible. Further information can be found in the [Flexible Working Policy](#).

8.0 Glossary of Terms Used

Expected Week of Childbirth	The week, beginning with midnight between Saturday and Sunday, in which it is expected that childbirth will occur
Keeping in Touch Days	Days agreed between a member of staff and their manager when they will carry out work or attend training
TOIL	Time off in lieu
Paternity/Maternity Support Leave	A leave of absence from work granted to an eligible member of staff to care for a new born child or child recently adopted

If you require any additional guidance, please consult the HR Staff Hub.

9.0 Other family-related policies

[Maternity Policy](#)

[Adoption](#) and [Surrogacy](#) Leave

[Shared Parental Leave](#)

[Special Leave Policy](#)

[Flexible Working Policy](#)