Guidance

Title:	MATERNITY LEAVE (Version 1)

From:	Human Resources / Employee Relations	**Last updated:**	13/08/15

1. Introduction

To manage the transition from pregnancy to maternity leave and return to work from maternity leave, managers should adopt a collaborative, flexible and supportive management style. The tables below illustrate the actions that managers and employees should take to ensure that there is a smooth transition during the three key stages of the maternity process and that the employee is supported throughout. Managers and employees should contact their HR Manager or Serviceline if they have any questions about maternity leave.

2. During Pregnancy

Before announcement of pregnancy:

Employee	
	• Investigate rights/entitlements and University policies • May wish to commence financial planning • Investigate childcare options (Highfield Campus has an onsite childcare centre as does Southampton General Hospital)

Announcement of pregnancy:

Employee	Manager
• Inform employer (in writing) of pregnancy, expected week of childbirth and intended start date of maternity leave (at least 15 weeks before expected week of childbirth) • Provide manager with a copy of MATB1 when obtained • Complete copy of MAT1 letter (sent by HR) and return to HR • Inform manager of dates/times of antenatal appointments	• Congratulate the employee! • Refresh knowledge of University's practices and policies relating to maternity leave and pay • Undertake risk assessment. Makes adjustments to role if required • Request additional information/documentation from employee if necessary • Inform employee of organisation's policies and practices
Together	
Agree how to support attendance at antenatal appointments (refer to the Maternity Policy for more information).	

Preparing for maternity leave:

Employee	Manager
• Establish support network, e.g. internal or external networks (such as the Parent and Carers Network) and support groups, coaches and buddies • Check if eligible for the Sure Start Maternity Grant • Apply for shared parental leave (if intending to take it	• Consider available options for covering maternity leave (for managers in Faculty of Medicine further information is available here) • Identify and recruit (if necessary) maternity cover (try for some overlap to assist with handover) • Update risk assessment and adjust job if required
Together	

- Manager undertake job assessment (to assess maternity cover options) and develop maternity cover plan with employee input
- Discuss options for length of maternity leave, shared parental leave, parental leave and flexible working
- Inform any key stakeholders
- Develop handover plan
- If possible, progress the return-to-work plan

Prior to departure on maternity leave:

Employee	Manager
- Finalise handover and print off return-to-work plan - Start maternity leave (not before 11th week before expected week of childbirth, unless the baby arrives earlier) - Check out the childcare vouchers scheme and the tax-free childcare scheme	- Manage induction of backfill employee - Arrange send off
Together	
- Implement handover plan - Agree keeping-in-touch plan, based on employee's preferences - Celebration and send off	

3. During Maternity Leave

Following birth:

Employee	Manager
Inform manager of birth	Congratulate employee, send well wishes

Keeping up to date during maternity leave:

Employee	Manager
- Maintain regular contact with line manager and colleagues as appropriate	- Remind team and stakeholders of the importance of the employee to the University by continuing to include employee in, for example, the team's "who's who" directory and meeting circulation lists, and inviting the employee to participate in team events - Keep a list of changes in the University, e.g. vision and direction, policies and processes, contacts - Consider if you need to keep the employee informed of developments that could not have been anticipated earlier but might impact on their role, for example restructuring.
Together	
Implement keeping-in-touch plan: use keeping-in-touch days (by mutual agreement) to refresh skills and network (refer to the Maternity Policy and KIT Days Guidance for more information)	

Preparing for return from maternity leave:

Employee	Manager
- Initiate flexible working discussion with employer, if wishing to explore flexible working options - Finalise childcare arrangements and apply for childcare vouchers or tax-free childcare (if applicable) - Give employer 8 weeks' notice If intending to return to work before end of maternity leave or not intending to return to work	- Discuss with employee the details of their return to work - Keep maternity cover, team and stakeholders briefed on return-to-work plan - Ensure logistics are in place for employee's return

• Submit a request to take accrued annual leave upon completion of maternity leave	

Together
• Where mutually agreed, use keeping-in-touch days to create a phased return to work (in addition to annual leave, if appropriate) • Discuss flexible working options (refer to the Flexible Working Policy for more information) • Identify suitable facilities for breastfeeding or expressing, if required (refer to the Maternity Policy for more information)

Return from maternity leave:

Employee	Manager
Maternity leave ends	Formal welcome back
Together	
Implement return-to-work plan	

4. <u>On return to work following maternity leave</u>

Following return to work:

Employee	Manager
Build up responsibilities one step at a time and seek feedback	• Schedule return-to-work meeting to discuss plan and handover from maternity cover • Schedule informal chats at least once per week for first four weeks. Ask open questions and listen, be supportive
Together	
Review how things are going at the end of week two	

Two months following return:

Employee	Manager
Set achievable goals	Work on fostering a culture of respect and acceptance within the team
Together	
Review how things are going at two months. Discuss the employee's career options and set personal development objectives for them	