

Maternity Leave Policy and Procedures

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy sets out the Occupational Maternity Leave Scheme provided by the University of Manchester Conferences Limited (UMC Ltd) (“the company”) to its employees and explains the statutory rights to Maternity Leave and pay.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Shared Parental Leave Policy, which:
- i. Provides parents with more flexibility in how to share the care of their child in the first year following birth
 - ii. Allows mothers to curtail their maternity leave early and to share the remaining leave and pay entitlement with their partner, and thereby enables parents to choose to be off work at the same time and/or take it in turns to have periods of leave to look after their child
- 2.2 This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and the company may amend it at any time.

3. Aims

- 3.1 The aims of this policy are to:
- i. support employees to balance work and family life
 - ii. maintain contact with employees and assist them in their return to work
 - iii. retain employees and thereby encourage equality and diversity within the workplace.

4. Eligibility for leave and pay

- 4.1 All employees are statutorily entitled to Ordinary Maternity Leave for 26 weeks and Additional Maternity Leave for 26 weeks. 52 weeks in total, regardless of length of service.
- 4.2 To qualify for paid leave employees must have completed at least 26 weeks of continuous service with the company by the Qualifying Week (i.e. the 15th week before the expected week of confinement (EWC)).

4.3 The EWC is the week, beginning at midnight between Saturday and Sunday, in which it is expected that the child will be born. The week in which the child is actually born is the Week of Childbirth.

5. Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP)

5.1 SMP is a State benefit for women on maternity leave, the conditions for which and the amount of which are determined by the Government but it is paid by the employer.

5.2 The first 6 weeks of Ordinary Maternity Leave are paid at 90% of the employee's average earnings.

5.3 Thereafter, employees receive the Standard Rate or 90% of average earnings if this is less, for 33 weeks

5.4 Average earnings are calculated based on earnings over the eight weeks prior to the end of the qualifying week.

5.5 SMP may start on any day of the week.

5.6 To qualify, the employee must have:

- i. Completed at least 26 weeks of continuous service with the University by the Qualifying Week
- ii. Average earnings above the lower earnings limit for National Insurance contributions...
- iii. ...and have followed the application procedures set out below in section 16, indicating that they intend to return to work for at least 12 weeks following the maternity leave period (excluding sickness-absence and extended un-paid leave).

5.7 All eligible employees will receive SMP whether or not they intend to return to work after Maternity Leave.

5.8 Employees who do not meet the above criteria for SMP should contact their local social security/Jobcentre Plus office to enquire about eligibility for Maternity Allowance (MA); unlike SMP it is not paid by the employer, instead payment is made by the social security/Jobcentre Plus office.

6. Occupational Maternity Pay (OMP)

6.1 OMP is provided by the company to give enhanced benefits to employees who intend to return to work after Maternity Leave. It comprises of:

- i. Full pay for 26 weeks during the period of Ordinary Maternity Leave, which will include any payments of SMP/ MA. Or SMP/MA alone where this is greater.
- ii. SMP/MA only for the first 13 weeks of the period of Additional Maternity Leave and the remainder will be unpaid.

6.2 To qualify, employees must have:

- i. Completed at least 26 weeks of continuous service with UMC Ltd by the Qualifying Week...
- ii. ...and have followed the application procedures set out below in section 16 informing UMC Ltd in writing that they intend to return to work at the end of the period of maternity leave for at least 12 weeks (excluding sickness absence and extended unpaid leave).

7. Ante-Natal Care

7.1 Once a pregnancy has been confirmed employees who have made an appointment to receive ante-natal care on the advice of a registered medical practitioner, registered midwife or registered health worker, will be entitled to take time off with pay to keep the appointment, provided they produce the documentation giving details of the appointment. This is irrespective of length of service or hours worked.

8. Commencement of Maternity Leave

8.1 Employees may choose when to start her Maternity Leave, subject to the following constraints:

- i. The Maternity Leave period cannot start before the 11th week before the EWC
- ii. The latest date Maternity Leave can start is the date of childbirth.
- iii. The Maternity Leave period will be automatically triggered if the employee is absent from work wholly or partly because of pregnancy after the beginning of the 4th week before the EWC
- iv. The Maternity Leave period will be automatically triggered if the baby is born early, in which case maternity leave will start the day after the day on which the baby is born

8.2 Employees will not be unreasonably requested to undertake work that would have taken place during the maternity leave period prior to departing on maternity leave. This will not however prevent employees from assisting in the planning of coverage of their work in advance of the maternity leave period.

9. Keeping in Touch during Maternity Leave (KIT days)

9.1 During maternity leave, the company may offer employees the option to work for up to 10 days without bringing Maternity Leave to an end or losing Statutory or Occupational Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance, to enable them to keep in touch and keep up to date with developments at work, and this may include working, attending training or meetings.

9.2 Any work during maternity leave must be by agreement, on agreed dates and neither the company nor employees can insist on it. Working for any part of a day will count as one of the 10 days available.

- 9.3 Days of work will not extend the Maternity Leave period, and employees can work during Ordinary or Additional Maternity Leave but not during the two weeks of Compulsory Maternity Leave immediately after the birth.
- 9.4 The company will pay staff at their normal basic rate of pay (inclusive of Statutory and/or Occupational Maternity Pay) for the hours worked.
- 9.5 A log of days worked must be kept using form ML/ADL4 and submitted for payment on return to work at the end of the Maternity Leave period.
- 9.6 In addition, during Maternity Leave, the company may also make reasonable contact with employees, for example, to discuss return to work arrangements or to communicate important information, such as news of changes at the workplace that might affect the employee on her return.
- 9.7 Prior to the commencement of Maternity Leave the line manager and the employee will discuss, agree and document arrangements for staying in touch with each other using the Keeping in Touch Agreement form (attached).
- 9.8 These arrangements should include agreements on the way in which contact will happen, how often, and who will initiate the contact, and should also cover the reasons for making contact and the types of things that could be discussed.
- 9.9 The company will ensure that employees are kept informed of promotion opportunities relevant to their job and any important changes in the workplace which may directly affect them on their return to work.

10. Return to Work

- 10.1 The Return-to-work Interview Checklist (attached) provides a useful tool for managers to assist employees in making a successful transition back into work, and this may be used on the employees' return or during keeping in touch days in the lead up to their return to work.
- 10.2 No-one is allowed to return to work during the first two weeks from the date of childbirth. This is classed as a period of Compulsory Maternity Leave.
- 10.3 Employees who intend to return to work at the end of full Maternity Leave (i.e. 52 weeks), will not have to give any further notification of her return to work.
- 10.4 If the maternity-leaver intends to return to work **before** the end of her Maternity Leave they must provide 8 weeks' notice in writing to the Line Manager and Human Resources of their intended date of return.
- 10.5 Employees who only take the Ordinary Maternity Leave are entitled to return to the same job they were in before they went on leave, on terms and conditions that are no less favourable than those that would have applied had they not taken Maternity Leave.
- 10.6 Employees who state their intention to return to work after Additional Maternity Leave will normally be re-employed in their previous post, but if there are exceptional reasons why this is not possible they will be employed in similar work and on terms and

conditions no less favourable than if had they not taken Maternity Leave. Employees who have been working full-time but who indicate a wish to return to work on a part-time basis following Maternity Leave will receive sympathetic consideration of their request, and this will be accommodated wherever possible. Similarly, requests for flexible working or to job-share will be carefully considered and accommodated wherever possible.

- 10.7 Employees who fail to return to work after Maternity Leave will be treated as being on unauthorised absence, and the company will be entitled to take appropriate disciplinary action, which may include dismissal. The company will, in such circumstances, reclaim any payment made in excess of SMP.
- 10.8 If an employees leaves within 12 weeks of their return to work after Maternity Leave the company has the right to recover any payment made in excess of SMP.
- 10.9 This shall not apply to Employees on fixed term contracts whose date of contract expiry means that they cannot meet the requirement to return for 12 weeks, provided that they have not (i) been notified that their contract is to be renewed or extended, or (ii) refused an offer of suitable alternative employment.

11. Health and Safety

- 11.1 The department in which a pregnant employee works is responsible for risk assessments in relation to the work and environment.
- 11.2 Any health and safety concerns should be raised immediately within the Department. Occupational Health may be consulted for confidential advice and guidance.
- 11.3 An employees who is pregnant, has recently given birth or is breast-feeding, and is unable to continue in their post on designated health and safety grounds, will be offered alternative work or where none is available, will be suspended from work on full pay until such time as they are able to resume their duties.

12. Continuity of employment

- 12.1 Periods of Maternity Leave are counted as periods of continuous employment. Employees are entitled to the benefit of (and bound by) their normal terms and conditions of employment, except for terms relating to salary, throughout the 52 week period of Ordinary and Additional Maternity Leave. This includes benefits in kind such as those provided through salary exchange arrangements like PensionChoice.

13. Annual Leave during Maternity Leave

- 13.1 During the period of Ordinary and Additional Maternity Leave an employee will continue to accrue annual leave, including bank holidays and closure days, in the normal way.
- 13.2 Employees may take their annual leave at the beginning and/or end of Maternity Leave.

- 13.3 Annual leave accrued prior to the start of the Maternity Leave period must be taken within the current leave year.
- 13.4 Annual leave accrued during the Maternity Leave period should be taken during the current leave year wherever possible. Employees will normally only be allowed to carry over any accrued annual leave into the next leave year if it has not been possible to take it.
- 13.5 Employees transferring to part-time work on their return, must take their outstanding full-time annual leave allowance prior to returning.

14. Pension membership during Maternity Leave

- 14.1 During any period of OML on full pay, pension contributions/Pension Choice will continue as usual.
- 14.2 During any period when the employee is receiving SMP only:
- i. The company will pay all pension costs where the employee participates in PensionChoice;
 - ii. If the employee does not participate in PensionChoice, employee pension contributions are based on SMP;
 - iii. The company will make up the balance of employee contributions due on the difference between pre maternity leave salary and SMP, plus employer contributions based on the pre maternity leave salary.
 - iv. During any period of unpaid maternity leave pension contributions/PensionChoice will not be made by the employee or the company and pensionable service will not be earned for this period.
 - v. An employee may choose to make the unpaid period pensionable on their return to work; and any contributions will be based on the salary that would have been earned during this period; if the employee pays contributions for this period, the company will also pay its contributions to their pension scheme.
 - vi. If the employee pays contributions for this period, the company will also pay its contributions to her pension scheme.
- 14.3 Employees should contact the Pensions Office for further information.

15. Fixed term contracts

- 15.1 Employees on fixed-term contracts are covered by this policy and associated provisions until the contract expires.
- 15.2 Statutory Maternity Pay will continue to be paid beyond the contract expiry date via payroll if eligible.
- 15.3 Employees on fixed term contracts whose date of contract expiry means that they cannot meet the requirement to return for 12 weeks will not be required to repay their

Occupational Maternity Pay, provided that they have not (i) been notified that their contract is to be renewed/extended or (ii) refused an offer of suitable alternative employment.

15.4 Where the fixed term contract is due to end by reason of redundancy during maternity leave an employee on the Redeployment Register will be offered a suitable alternative post where such a post becomes available.

16. Effect on Probation periods

16.1 There may be occasions when the probationary period is interrupted. In such circumstances it should be made clear (and confirmed in writing) to the individual whether probation is continuing or is being suspended. If it is the latter an indication of the period it is suspended should be given.

17. Overpayments

17.1 If the company makes an overpayment of Statutory or Occupational Shared Parental Pay, the amount of any such overpayment will be deducted from the employee's salary (which may include holiday pay, sick pay, bonus, honoraria, one-off payments, market supplements and pay in lieu of notice).

18. Other Conditions

18.1 Employees are entitled to the benefit of their normal terms and conditions of employment, except for terms relating to salary, throughout the 52 week period of Ordinary and Additional Maternity Leave.

18.2 Employees are entitled to the benefit of their normal terms and conditions of employment, except for terms relating to salary, throughout the 26 week period of Ordinary Maternity Leave. This includes benefits in kind such as those provided through salary exchange arrangements – e.g. – PensionChoice.

18.3 Maternity leave is not treated as absence due to illness.

18.4 Employees may apply for an extended period of unpaid leave under the terms of the policies on Career Breaks or Parental Leave.

18.5 Periods of Maternity Leave are counted as periods of continuous employment.

18.6 There is no distinction between live and still births in the granting of Maternity benefits once the pregnancy has reached 24 weeks.

19. How to apply

19.1 Employees should consult at the earliest opportunity with their Line Manager regarding the pregnancy and expected Maternity Leave, to take account of any risks to themselves and the unborn child in the workplace, and to enable planning for the absence to begin as soon as possible. Employees may also find it helpful to consult HR Services in seeking advice and guidance.

- 19.2 Form 'Notification of intention to take Maternity Leave' must be completed and sent to HR Services as soon as possible, but no later than the end of the Qualifying Week (i.e. the 15th week before the EWC).
- 19.3 An employee must also forward their original MAT B1 form to HR Services, as soon as it is provided by their GP.
- 19.4 A member of the Human Resources team will then confirm in writing, within 10 working days, the terms of the Maternity Leave and the date on which the employee is expected to return to work.

1. Notice of Intention to take Maternity Leave Form

Please refer to the **Maternity Leave Policy** before completing this form

Your Details	
Surname:	
First name(s):	
Post Title:	
Organisational Unit:	
Contact Telephone Number (at work)	
Employee Number (on payslip)	

Dates for Pay and Leave	
Expected Date of Childbirth:	
Do you intend to return to work after Maternity Leave?	Yes No Undecided
Date intend to start Maternity Leave	
Date intend to return to work	
Dates of Annual Leave (to be taken before or after Maternity Leave, but within the leave year)	

Declaration	
Additional Documentation Required: Form MATB1 (provided by GP) attached	Yes No
I have read the Maternity Leave Policy and Procedures and accept the terms contained within them. In particular I agree that if I do not return to work for at least 12 weeks after my maternity leave, I will repay to UMC Ltd any maternity pay that I have received (other than statutory maternity pay). I agree that UMC Ltd may deduct any unpaid amount from any outstanding payments (including salary and holiday pay) due from the company to me.	
Signed	Date

If you have any difficulty completing this form please contact HR Services for assistance.

Completed form to be retained by employee /copies to line manager and HR Services

2. Keeping in Touch Agreement Form

During Maternity Leave it is beneficial to maintain contact with the University as this eases your return to work.

Please discuss, agree and record below the extent and nature of contact preferred (refer to Policy for guidance)

Your Personal Details	
Employee Name:	
Employee number: (on payslip)	
Post Title:	
Organisational Unit:	
Managers Name:	
Post Title:	
Organisational Unit:	

Arrangements	
Purpose for contact, e.g. - department news, training events	
Form of Contact, e.g. telephone, email	
Frequency of Contact	
Who will initiate contact	
Keeping In Touch days – list dates and purpose	

Declaration	
Signed (Employee)	Signed (Manager)
Date	Date

Manager and Employee to keep one copy each.

After an employee has returned to work a scanned file copy is to be forwarded to HR Services.

3. Return to Work Interview Checklist for Maternity and Additional Paternity Leave

Following a period of maternity or additional paternity leave it is important to ensure that the employee is supported back into work.

They may feel they have lost touch with work and may find it difficult to adjust. 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. Agree and note down any further steps which should be taken.

- i. How long have you been away from work?
- ii. Did you undertake any keeping in touch days?
- iii. How beneficial were they?
- iv. Do you have any childcare issues causing you concern? Are you aware of the support available through the University? (childcare vouchers/ nursery fees salary sacrifice/ on site nurseries)
- v. Have you had any health problems whilst away? Is there any condition which is still causing concern?
- vi. Do you need to be referred to Occupational Health, Counselling or Disability Support Office?
- vii. Are any adjustments in the workplace required? (e.g. for breast feeding)
- viii. Are you aware of the Peer Support Group organised through STDU?
- ix. Discuss and clarify work pattern if returning to different hours
- x. Update on any changes which have occurred in the workplace during their absence (for example – introduce them to any new staff; explain any changes in structure, procedures, etc.)
- xi. Update on their role, any work that has been undertaken in their absence and what current work is required.
- xii. Is any training required to bring you up to speed?

Employee name: _____ signature: _____

Employee number (on payslip): _____

Manager name: _____ signature: _____

Date completed: _____

Please send a scanned copy of the completed form to HR Services, for employee records.

Document control box	
Policy / Procedure title:	Maternity Leave Policy and Procedure
Date approved:	
Approving body:	UMC Ltd Board of Directors
Version:	4
Supersedes:	Maternity Leave Policy and Procedure , July 2017
Previous review dates:	September 2010, September 2014
Next review date:	
Equality impact outcome:	
Related Statutes, Ordinances, General Regulations:	
Related policies:	
Related procedures:	
Related guidance and or codes of practice:	
Related information:	
Policy owner:	UMC-designated HR Partner
Lead contact:	Andrew Stephens, Human Resources Partner