



UNSW
SYDNEY

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University

UNSW Parenting Booklet



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Introduction



Preparing for the arrival of a baby is an exciting time but it can also be stressful with so many changes taking place. UNSW has a range of policies and programs to support staff with parenting responsibilities. This booklet has been designed to provide an overview of parental leave entitlements, procedures and policies for academic and professional staff at UNSW.

It includes information on staff entitlements, applying for leave, when to notify your supervisor, staying connected and the support offered by the University before, during and after your return from leave. Where possible, hyperlinks have been included to take you directly to sites where you can find more information.

This booklet is an initiative of UNSW Medicine's Women's Employment Strategy and has been developed for use by all areas of the University.

Before and during parental leave

Parental Leave Entitlement and Eligibility

An employee has a basic entitlement to 52 weeks of unpaid parental leave. [The UNSW \(Academic Staff\) Enterprise Agreement 2015](#) and the [UNSW \(Professional Staff\) Enterprise Agreement 2015](#) detail the parental leave entitlements for continuous, fixed term and casual employees, including eligibility conditions and timeframes of taking leave.

The following table outlines parental leave entitlements for staff at UNSW and should be read in conjunction with the relevant enterprise agreement.

Type of Employment	Paid leave entitlement and eligibility
Continuing Employment	Up to 5 years continuous service: 26 weeks (full pay) 5 years or more of continuous service: 36 weeks (full pay)
Fixed Term Employment	Entitlement ceases upon expiry of fixed term employment except in circumstances set out in Clause 39.5.3(b) of the UNSW (Professional Staff) Enterprise Agreement 2015 and Clause 33.5.3(b) of the UNSW (Academic Staff) Enterprise Agreement 2015
Casual Employment	14 weeks maternity leave on full pay provided the employee: i. has been employed by the University on a regular and systematic basis for a continuous period of at least 24 months immediately prior to the pregnancy; and ii. has not accessed paid maternity leave from any other employer for the pregnancy

The Enterprise Agreements provide for an employee who has five (5) years or more continuous service, to an entitlement of 36 weeks at full pay and to 26 weeks for an employee with less than 5 years service). It is important to note the following relevant provisions of the Enterprise Agreements:

- There is a 20 week period within which leave must commence
- The latest date on which an employee can commence parental leave is the actual birth date of the child

Primary Carer Leave

In 2017, UNSW introduced Primary Carer Leave. Eligible employees who are the parent of a child and who are not entitled to UNSW's Parental Leave entitlements (Maternity Leave) may access paid parental leave in circumstances where they are the primary carer. Learn more about [Primary Carer Leave](#).



Example: Entitlement for a Fixed-Term staff member

Mary-Anne is a Level 7 Program Officer, who holds a 2 year fixed-term contract that is scheduled to cease on 5 July. It will not be renewed. On this date Mary-Anne will be 21 weeks pregnant. Mary-Anne's supervisor has advised that a significant majority of the duties and responsibilities performed by Mary-Anne will continue to be performed once her employment ceases. Is Mary-Anne eligible to receive paid parental leave?

Answer: Yes. Mary-Anne is eligible for 26 weeks paid parental leave which will be paid to her in a lump sum payment at the cessation of her employment. She is required to contact her Faculty HR Consultant to discuss the required documentation to ensure payment approximately eight weeks prior to her cessation of employment.

UNSW's parental leave entitlements apply to birth mothers but can be shared by partners, including same gender partners, where both are employed at UNSW Australia. Otherwise partners, including same gender partners, are entitled to two weeks full pay partner leave.

For information on these leave entitlements and other types of parental leave entitlements including adoption, foster parent and grandparent leave, please check the UNSW Australia Enterprise Agreement for [Academic](#) or [Professional](#) Staff.



One of the best things about becoming a parent as a UNSW employee is the generous parental leave available to staff. As a long term employee I was eligible for 8½ months leave at full pay. This allowed me to be home with my daughter for the first 8 months of her life, without the worry of financial stress. This was a wonderful and important time for me as a new mum. The application process was easy, and supported by my School and Faculty.

**Dr Caroline Ford, Senior Lecturer
Prince of Wales Clinical School, UNSW Medicine**

The application process

Step 1: Speak to your supervisor

At least ten weeks before the due date, share your exciting news with your supervisor. Talk to them about:

- Your plans for leave – when you want to start your leave and how much you plan on taking
- Any pre-natal medical appointments that are booked or expected that you will need to attend during work hours
- What work priorities exist and how they might be managed from now until you commence your leave

Step 2: Submit your application

To give your faculty / unit sufficient time to make arrangements to cover your absence, you should submit your [Parental Leave Application](#) (Maternity / Adoption Leave) or [Primary Carer Leave Application](#) as early as possible. You are required to have all approvals finalised and your documents submitted to leave@unsw.edu.au (make sure to also copy your supervisor) no later than four weeks before the date you commence your parental leave.

You will need to include a letter from your relevant health professional stating the expected date of birth.

Any other types of leave you will be taking in conjunction with parental leave, such as annual leave, long service leave or sick leave, should be applied for online through [myUNSW](#).



Need help?

If you have any questions about your parental leave entitlements or submitting your application talk to your supervisor or contact [Human Resources](#) for assistance.



While you are still at work

Safety

If you are pregnant, consider any risk to the pregnancy that your position may hold, for example chemicals, and discuss any concerns with your supervisor or the [Health & Safety Team](#). If there are any identified risks the University will transfer you to a suitable role and / or location for the duration of your pregnancy.

Pre-natal appointments

It is expected that in most circumstances employees will arrange pre-natal classes outside of work hours. However, where this is not possible, sick leave may be used to attend pre-natal requirements. You may use up to three single days of available sick leave to attend [pre-natal appointments](#) such as ultrasounds and birthing classes.

Keeping in touch

Before you commence Parental Leave or Primary Carer Leave, you should discuss with your supervisor the extent to which you would like to maintain contact with your work unit while you are on leave. Consider if you want to remain on email lists and receive invitations to work functions. Keeping in touch while on leave may help make your transition back to work easier.



The University is an incredibly supportive place for parents. The best part is the flexibility you have as a parent to shape your interaction with the workplace. I put together a 'stay in touch plan', had regular interactions with my replacement, stayed connected via Yammer and made it along to social events. This made my transition back to work incredibly smooth.

**Felicity Barnes, Operations Manager
Australian Graduate School of Management
UNSW Business School**



Early childhood education and care

It is best to start investigating early childhood education and care options very early. Most centres have long waitlists, so if you require these services it is advisable to put your name down at suitable centres as soon as you know you're expecting a child.

UNSW Early Years owns and operates four early childhood education and care centres close to the Kensington campus:

- House at Pooh Corner;
- Kanga's House;
- Tigger's Honey Pot; and
- Owl's House

Places at UNSW Early Years centres are limited and currently there is a waiting list so it is advised to act early. Staff with children at UNSW Early Years centres may be able to salary sacrifice their childcare fees. For full details on these award winning centres visit [UNSW Early Years](#) or download the [Early Years brochure](#).

The mychild.gov.au website is an early childhood education and care portal developed by the Australian Government. On this website you will find information on different types of education and care and how to get assistance with these costs. The site also features a database where you can search for early childhood education and care centres in your local area. In many cases, vacancy and fee information is also provided. This site also has links to other useful websites on children's health, parenting and support services.



Preparing to return to work

At the end of your parental leave, you are entitled to resume work in the position you held immediately before commencing parental leave, unless the position has been made redundant. It is important to begin discussions early with your supervisor about your return to work arrangements to ensure a smooth transition back to the workplace.

Change in return to work date

Sometimes plans can change. You may wish to take more time off to spend with your baby or you may decide to come back to work earlier than the date you originally discussed and had approved with your supervisor. If your circumstances have changed you may negotiate a new return to work date with your supervisor. You should do this as soon as possible.

Request for a part-time work arrangement

You may decide that you wish to return to work on a part-time basis for a defined period. If you wish to do so, you must make an application to return to work on a part-time basis at least **eight weeks prior to the completion of your parental leave.**

Your application may be made via email to your supervisor. The application should include information regarding your proposal, including the number and days per week you wish to work and the proposed duration of the part-time arrangement.

If it is not practicable for you to resume work on a part-time basis in the position held by you prior to taking parental leave, the University may identify a suitable position to which you may be placed on a part-time basis. If you agree, you will be placed in the alternate position and be paid the appropriate proportion of the salary applicable to your former substantive position for the period of part-time employment.

Flexible work arrangements

UNSW is committed to helping employees manage their work and personal responsibilities where possible through the provision of flexible work and leave arrangements.

There are many life stages when staff might be interested in negotiating flexible work arrangements. Often this occurs when people have young children, however, there are many other circumstances when flexible working arrangements are beneficial.

A move to a flexible work arrangement requires discussion and approval by your supervisor and must support the business needs of the work unit.

Transfer to part-time

A full-time employee on a period of parental leave may apply to return to work on a part-time basis for a defined period following the completion of the parental leave. An application to return to work on a part-time basis must be made in writing at least eight weeks prior to the completion of parental leave.

Job sharing

Job sharing is an arrangement where a full-time position is shared between two part time employees on a regular ongoing basis. Job sharing allows supervisors to implement a greater variety of options and provides employees the flexibility of preferred work patterns.

Flextime

Flextime is an arrangement which may be available to 35-hour and 38-hour professional staff, allowing for flexibility in the way paid hours are worked. Subject to the operational requirements of the work unit, flex-time can allow staff to:

- Vary start and finish times within the flex span of hours;
- Accumulate additional hours;
- Take off full or part days at a mutually agreed time;
- Make other arrangements to suit individual circumstances.

Flexibility & Leave@UNSW website

UNSW genuinely values work-life balance and sees flexibility as an important element in helping employees to achieve their best. Information on the [Flexibility & Leave@UNSW](#) website has been designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the University's policies, facilities and practices that currently exist to support parental leave, breastfeeding, staff with caring responsibilities and flexible work.

Breastfeeding at UNSW



UNSW recognises the importance and benefits of breastfeeding, and understands that many women will continue to breastfeed when they return to work. UNSW has been an accredited [Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace](#) through the Australian Breastfeeding Association since 2013.

UNSW's Kensington campus has two dedicated [parents' rooms](#) that are fully equipped to support breastfeeding employees. The rooms are located in:

- Morven Brown Building on upper campus
- Ainsworth Building on middle campus.

UNSW Canberra also has a parents' room located on the 1st Floor of the Academy Library.

The University is committed to providing employees with the flexibility to take lactation breaks during their workday. These can be negotiated between the employee and their supervisor as part of a flexible work arrangement. [UNSW's Breastfeeding Guidelines](#) have more details.

Breastfeeding is something you learn. It will be easier for some mothers and babies than others. If you require assistance and advice relating to breastfeeding, talk to your doctor or contact the Australian Breastfeeding Association National Breastfeeding Helpline on 1800 686 268.

Supporting female academics

Career Advancement Fund

The [Career Advancement Fund](#) offers up to \$10,000 to assist female academics to re-establish and advance their careers after returning from a period of parental leave. The funds are available to the employee for a period of up to 2 years from the date the application is approved.



The Career Advancement Fund is a valuable resource for women coming back from parental leave. I have used the fund for conference travel, upgrading my computing equipment and may use it to hire a research assistant.

**Dr Rachida Ouysse, Lecturer
School of Economics, UNSW Business School**

The Vice-Chancellor's Childcare Support Fund

The [Vice-Chancellor's Childcare Support Fund](#) offers up to \$2,000 to support female academic researchers with extraordinary childcare-related expenses when travelling to present their research at conferences, workshops or symposia.



Over the last two and half years I have been supported by UNSW's generous parental leave scheme, fantastic childcare facilities, and the Vice-Chancellor's Childcare Support Fund to continue advancing my career in teaching and research. Using the VC's Childcare Support Fund, which contributes toward travelling and babysitting facilities, I have been able to travel to conferences with my two kids in the last two years.

**Haiqing Yu, Associate Professor
School of Humanities and Languages, UNSW Arts & Social Sciences**

Faculty-based schemes

Some faculties across UNSW have developed local initiatives to support employees returning from parental leave. Please contact your [faculty / divisions HR team](#) for further information.

External support

UNSW recognises that early assistance with an issue may prevent it from developing into a major one. The University offers free and independent counselling services for staff and their immediate family members through its Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider, [Benestar](#). The service allows you access to professional face-to-face counselling, telephone support, live chat support, as well as a vast library of online health and wellbeing resources. They can assist on a broad range of work and life issues including relationships and family matters.

Benestar counsellors are all qualified, experienced professionals with extensive training in counselling and workplace consulting. The service is free to full-time and part-time (continuing and fixed term) staff at UNSW and their immediate family. The contact number for an EAP counselling appointment is 1300 360 364

Parental leave checklist

Before you start leave

- Share your news with your supervisor at least 10 weeks prior to the date you intend to start leave. [Submit a Parental Leave Application](#) or [Primary Carer Leave Application](#) (with relevant paperwork) as soon as possible, and no later than four weeks prior to the date you intend to start leave.

- Check the Parental Leave entitlements for [Professional](#) or [Academic](#) staff. If you are applying for Primary Carer Leave (introduced in 2017), check the [Primary Carer Leave website](#).

- Familiarise yourself with [Flexibility & Leave @UNSW website](#). These pages provide information about flexible work, early childhood education and care, breastfeeding at UNSW, caring responsibilities, Parental Leave (including Primary Carer Leave), as well as Study and Cultural Leave.

- Give your supervisor advanced notice of any appointments relating to Parental Leave which you will need to attend during work hours.

- Make sure your contact details are up-to-date via [myUNSW](#) > Sign On > My Staff Profile > My Profile > Personal Information.

- Discuss with your supervisor how your role will be managed while you are on leave and ensure you have a [myCareer](#) discussion before you commence your leave.

- Talk with your supervisor about staying in touch while on leave. Determine if you want:
 - A monthly phone call
 - Quarterly work updates
 - Invitations to social events
 - Invitations to team meetings
 - Notifications about development / employment opportunities

- Most early childhood education and care centres have long waitlists, so it is best to start investigating options early. UNSW Early Years owns and operates four early childhood education and care centres close to the Kensington campus: House at Pooh Corner, Kanga's House, Tigger's Honey Pot and Owl's House. [Visit UNSW Early Years](#) for more information. Additional information on childcare is available on the following websites:
 - [MyChild.gov.au](#)
 - [CareforKids](#)

While on leave

- Keep in touch with your supervisor / workplace as agreed.

- Notify your supervisor of any changes to your parental leave if they arise.

- Confirm your return to work date with your supervisor at least 8 weeks prior to your return to work. If you are seeking to return on a fractional basis or [flexible work arrangement](#), you will need to discuss this with your supervisor and get their approval.

Returning to work

- Talk to your supervisor about any changes that might have occurred in your team/unit while you were away.

- You may wish to ask your supervisor if there are any staff members who have taken parental leave who you could talk to. Talking to a colleague who has gone through the process and returned from parental leave may help you settle back more quickly.

- UNSW is an Australian Breastfeeding Association accredited workplace. The Kensington Campus has fully equipped parent's rooms in the Morven Brown and Ainsworth Buildings. UNSW Canberra also has a parent's room.
Learn more about [breastfeeding at work](#).

- The [Vice-Chancellor's Childcare Support Fund](#) was established to assist female academics with childcare responsibilities to attend conferences and symposia relating to their field of work. Eligible applicants can apply for up to \$2,000 in funding.

- The [Career Advancement Fund](#) provides up to \$10,000 in funding and is available to female academics returning from maternity leave to assist them in re-establishing their career. Applications need to be made within 3 months of returning from leave.

- UNSW has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) available to all staff at the University. The EAP service is free and operated by an independent company, Benestar. They provide professional, confidential counselling services for employees and their immediate family. Learn more about [UNSW's EAP](#).

Useful websites and contacts

Department of Human Services

The Australian Government [Department of Human Services website](#) is a single entry point for information regarding health, social and welfare payments and services.

Families NSW

[Families NSW](#) is a NSW Government website with a wide range of education, guides and resources for parents.

Raising Children Network

[Raising Children Network](#) is a complete parenting resource for all stages from pregnancy to newborns to teens. The site offers research-based content on hundreds of topics for children and adults.

Care for Kids

CareforKids has a wealth of information about early childhood education and care and help parents search for care quickly and easily. The site also features a [Child Care Vacancy Alert](#) to connect Australian families to early childhood education and care.

UNSW Workplace Diversity

If you have an equity / diversity related question you can contact a member of the [Workplace Diversity Team](#) or email: workplace.diversity@unsw.edu.au