



Managers Guide to Managing Maternity Leave

This document is a guide which provides important information for Managers about maternity leave and what to do when an employee notifies you that they are pregnant. It does not alter/amend the University's Maternity Leave policy and in a case of doubt the Maternity Leave policy is the definite document.

What to do when you are aware of an employee's absence?

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007, Part 6, Chapter 2, Protection of Pregnant, Post Natal and Breastfeeding Employees (The Pregnancy at Work Regulations) apply when an employee informs her employer that she is pregnant, has recently given birth or is breastfeeding and provides an appropriate medical certificate. A Health and Safety Assessment must take place in the pregnant employee's workplace under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 2005. This must be done by the Manager/Unit Safety Co-ordinator as soon as the employee advises her Manager in writing that she is pregnant. As the earliest stages of pregnancy are the most critical ones for the developing child it is in the employee's best interest to let her manager know she is pregnant as soon as possible.

Further details and a template form are available on the [Health and Safety website](#).

On notification of pregnancy the line manager should provide the staff member with a copy of the maternity leave policy. This document states the University's policy on maternity leave and pay available to all eligible employees and provides additional guidance on issues surrounding maternity leave.

Where a staff member commences sick leave prior to maternity leave, the provisions of the sick leave scheme applies. Please refer to [Sick Leave Scheme](#) and Managers Guide on Sick Leave for further details.

What is my role in managing the Maternity leave?

1. Prior to the Maternity leave commencing the Manager should be familiar with the entitlement to leave and dates of notification etc as per the maternity policy and operating procedures.

As annual leave accrues normally during maternity leave the employee may wish to plan leave around start and finish dates of the maternity period. Annual leave cannot normally be carried over from one holiday year to the next; therefore she may wish to take any outstanding entitlement for the current year before commencing her maternity leave.

On returning to work the employee may have accrued a number of days leave particularly if returning in the next calendar year and she may wish to extend her time away from work by using the days accrued .

Annual **cannot** be taken between paid and unpaid maternity leave pay periods and can only be used prior to commencing maternity leave or following the end of the maternity leave period, immediately prior to a return to work.

2. Staff are asked to indicate their return date in their formal notification of pregnancy. If their return to work date does not change since they originally notified the University of their intention to take maternity leave, employees **do not** need to confirm their intention to return to work. If an employee wishes to change their return date whilst on maternity leave, they must provide 6 weeks' notice of the amended date.
3. If the employee lets you know she will be breastfeeding you must talk to her about any arrangements you will need to make, involve the Health and Safety Office for a risk assessment and remove any risk found. Facilities must be provided for an employee to rest and store expressed milk. The risk assessment identifies any health and safety risks to the employee as a breastfeeding mother or to her child.

Can I contact the employee during maternity leave?

A Manager can make contact with a member of staff on maternity leave to discuss a range of issues - e.g. to discuss plans for returning to work, or to keep her informed of important developments at work. The frequency and nature of the contact will depend on the nature of the work and any agreement reached between both parties before maternity leave commenced. Contact can be by telephone, email, letter, a visit to the workplace, or in other ways. It is useful to discuss and agree such arrangements before maternity leave commences for staying in touch with each other. You should let her know of any changes happening at work, including job vacancies, opportunities to attend training or other events.

How do I arrange a temporary replacement?

Managers should refer to the [Management Guidelines on Temporary Replacement Cover](#).

Where can I direct an employee for additional information?

The HR website at www.nuigalway.ie/hr