

# REPLACEMENT COSTS FOR MATERNITY/ADOPTION/SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE AND SUPPORTING RETURNING STAFF

## 1. Introduction

The University is committed to supporting the leave and successful return to work of individuals following periods of Maternity, Adoption or Shared Parental Leave. As such, the University Executive Board (UEB) in October 2015, decided:

- i) to ensure that Schools and Functions (Functions from the later date of 1/8/18) should be fully reimbursed for the salary costs of staff taking maternity, adoption and shared parental leave;
- ii) to require that part of this reimbursement be used to support the staff member on their return to work.

In relation to ii), the requirement from 1 August 2018 is that, in the case of academic staff, 25% of this reimbursement should be used to support the staff member on their return to work. For all other staff, recognising that support needs will vary significantly across the many different roles that staff carry out, the requirement is that *up to* 25% of this reimbursement should be used to support the staff member on their return to work.

The first of these changes provides assurance that when someone goes on parental leave the funds will be available to the School or Function to provide replacement staffing. The University wants to ensure that there are no possible motivations for any form of discrimination against staff taking such periods of leave, but also that Schools/Functions are able to determine for themselves what replacement is most appropriate for their needs at that time.

The rationale behind the second change is to provide a scheme, with a degree of uniformity across all Schools and Functions, to ensure that staff returning from maternity, adoption or shared parental leave are appropriately supported in the transition to returning to work and to full productivity, and in regaining momentum in career development.

These provisions do, in part, deliver an action for our [University 2016-19 Athena SWAN action plan](#).

## **2. How this works in Practice**

### **Central Funding for Staff on Maternity/Adoption/Shared Parental Leave.**

HR Partners/Advisers are notified when staff are taking maternity/adoption or shared parental leave and write directly to individuals to confirm their leave and pay entitlements. HR then arrange for the salary and on costs associated with this staff member for the period of the leave to be adjusted to a central budget rather than to the School/Function.

The relevant Finance Business Partner can then ensure that the Head of School/Function is aware of the expected central funding. In the case of academic staff, 25% of this funding must be used to support the returner and the Finance Business Partner will ensure that the relevant project codes are further updated to provide the budget and project code for this support. For staff who are not academic staff, the Head of Function/School or Line Manager will need to determine in due course, possibly towards the end of the period of leave, what proportion of the funding will be used to support the returner.

Each School/Function will have a separate project code to record spends on returners from parental leave. The part of the budget agreed to support the returner will be allocated to this code, and spends on supporting the returner should all be charged to this code. Not least this will be helpful in monitoring how this scheme is working.

The budget for employing the person on parental leave remains within the School/Function and can be spent as required on replacement staffing, except for the part of the budget used for supporting the returner. In some rare cases where the funding source is external there may be rules around the external funding which prevent part of the budget being spent on supporting the returner. In such an instance the School/Function can make a case to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Academic Planning and Resources that up to 25% of the replacement costs should be provided through central funding to support the returner.

### **Using Part of the Replacement Costs to Support the Returner.**

It is of course normal good practice to support staff returning from any substantial period of absence, so as to support their transition back to the workplace by providing an opportunity to update skills and knowledge, understand any changes that may have occurred in their role, department or field in order to assist a return to full productivity as soon as possible and at the same time enabling personal development in their role. This may mean providing additional training or personal development or it may be relief from teaching for a period or funds for attendance at conferences, including perhaps additional childcare costs.

To supplement this usual good practice, UEB requires, for an academic staff member, that an amount equal to 25% of the central funding provided for their maternity/adoption/shared parental leave is to be ring-fenced to aid return to work for the individual in a manner to be determined via discussion with returner.

Recognising that the support required may be very different for other roles, the recommendation in the case of staff who are not academic staff is that an amount *up to* 25% of the central funding provided is ring-fenced to aid return to work for the individual in a manner to be determined via discussion with returner.

It is recommended that line managers and staff start discussing how best to support the transition back to the workplace *before* the period of leave starts. Consideration will be given to, for example, requests for attendance at relevant training courses or conferences, relief from teaching for a period or any other support that may be identified by the member of staff or their Line Manager as potentially relevant.

Having this discussion before the period of leave starts is particularly important where the measures of support agreed require longer term planning, such as relief from teaching. The same meeting might be used to discuss maintaining contact through the leave period and the use of KIT/SPLIT days (see [Maternity/Adoption/Shared Parental Leave policies](#) for more detail).

However we recognise that staff may not know what support they may need or planning may not be required to the same level and therefore follow-up conversations are encouraged, for example on a KIT/SPLIT day, or immediately on return.

Line Managers/Head of School/Function will need to approve the support provided in the usual way. In the case of non-academic staff, decisions on the budget agreed for supporting the returner should be conveyed to the Finance Business Partner. As indicated above, all spends on supporting returners from Maternity/Adoption/Shared Parental Leave are coded to the School/Function project codes that Finance Business Partners have created for this purpose.

The funding will remain available for 12 months following the date of return to the workplace.

Finance and HR Business Partners are happy to provide more guidance as required.

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