



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**AUCKLAND**  
Te Whare Wānanga o Tāmaki Makaurau  
NEW ZEALAND

# Combining Parenting and a Career Toolkit



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## Introduction

The University of Auckland is committed to ensuring that the workplace accommodates the reasonable requirements of staff members' work, life, family, and carer responsibilities and supports employees to achieve a balance between these responsibilities. This commitment includes developing measures that recognise the needs of staff combining parenting and a career so they are not disadvantaged either in their work conditions or career development.

The University is also committed to supporting the colleagues and managers of those taking parental leave and combining parenting with a career.

This toolkit is designed to support a range of needs of:

- Pregnant staff
- Staff intending to take parental leave
- Parents returning to work after parental leave
- Caregivers and support people
- Partners and family members
- Colleagues
- Managers

It contains information about:

- Pregnancy
- Parental leave (paid and unpaid)
- Returning to work (including flexible work options)
- Support structures, including advisers, seminars and networking opportunities, for staff working and caring for babies and children

It also provides answers to some frequently asked questions.

September 2013

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## Statement of Principles

The University of Auckland is committed to supporting all staff in maintaining and developing their careers while carrying out their roles as parents and carers. The University is committed to providing a supportive working environment through actively promoting information, policies, and guidelines relevant to the achievement of work, life, and family balance for employees. The University is strongly committed to supporting staff who are expectant mothers through pregnancy, parental leave and of the transition back to the workplace, and staff who have committed to being the primary caregiver.

The University recognises that best practice in all these areas ensures compliance with legislation and assists the University to recruit and retain talented staff.

Strategies to support staff who combine parenting and a career align with The University of Auckland Strategic Plan 2013-2020, in which the University commits to:

### **Values:**

Providing equal opportunities to all who have the potential to succeed in a university of high international standing.

### **Objectives:**

- Objective 1:  
A work environment characterised by a commitment to clear expectations, development of potential, inclusiveness, high achievement and rewarding performance
- Objective 2:  
An outstanding staff experience where success is celebrated and high levels of engagement achieved
- Objective 11:  
Partnerships in which the University and Māori work together to achieve their shared aspirations

Initiatives to support staff during pregnancy, parental leave and the return to work are consistent with the University's [Equity Policy](#), [Flexible Work Policy](#), and [Work Life, Family and Carers Policy](#).

University of Auckland staff who are partners, family members, and friends may also be involved in a woman's pregnancy, leave and return to work, and they may also need support during these periods.

The University will assist managers to achieve best practice through information, training and professional development. All policies relating to

combining parenting and a career can be accessed at  
[www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/cpc](http://www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/cpc)

## SECTION 1: Pregnancy

Pregnancy is a natural part of a woman's life. It does, however, bring changes which may or may not impact on a woman's ability to work in her usual capacity.

### Planning pregnancy

The challenges of career advancement can sometimes make it difficult to determine the best time to have a baby or another child. It may be necessary to make long-term plans for career breaks or to research what support is available (eg, how opportunities for research and study leave for academic staff can be fit around pregnancy and child-rearing).

An employee undergoing fertility treatment may have special needs for support. For some In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) will be necessary for conception. For more information, visit [www.fertilityassociates.co.nz](http://www.fertilityassociates.co.nz). We encourage you to speak with your manager in the early stages of your IVF treatment to ensure you receive any necessary support.

Becoming pregnant with twins or multiples can be quite a different experience to that of a singleton pregnancy. For more information, visit [www.multiples.org.nz](http://www.multiples.org.nz). Informing your manager in the early stages of your pregnancy will help ensure you receive the necessary support.

Adoption may be the choice for some employees. If you are involved in the adoption process, we encourage you to let your manager know to ensure you receive any support necessary. For adoption information, visit [www.adoptionoption.org.nz](http://www.adoptionoption.org.nz).

Where pregnancy is not planned, issues around career advancement or work commitment may need additional discussion with the manager.

### Support from managers and colleagues

The University recognises the needs of pregnant staff, their partners, and their families. Where possible, the University will support staff by granting leave, arranging flexible work hours or providing duties appropriate to their pregnancy. Certain cultural protocols may also be required. Support during pregnancy will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

The University's [Flexible Work Policy](#) recognises that staff may need temporary changes to hours of work or other conditions of employment during pregnancy.

Women who are pregnant may need more frequent breaks or rest periods. A list of available rest rooms is available at [www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/cpc](http://www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/cpc). Equipment needs, such as a stool to sit on while lecturing, can also be accommodated by the department with assistance from Property Services.

In the event that a pregnancy requires medical attention or ends in a miscarriage or still-birth, extra support from managers and colleagues may be needed both for the mother and for staff close to her. Please talk to your HR team, who can assist in this situation.

### **Leave during pregnancy**

Unpaid leave is available for mothers and their partners. This includes:

- **Special Leave**

Before starting maternity leave, women are entitled to take up to 10 days of unpaid Special Leave for reasons connected with the pregnancy, eg, antenatal classes or doctor's appointments.

- **Partner/Paternity Leave**

Partners/fathers (including those in same-sex relationships) may be eligible for Unpaid Parental Leave of either one week (for a spouse/partner with six months' eligible service), or two weeks (for a spouse/partner with 12 months' eligible service). This can be taken within 21 days either side of the expected date of delivery or adoption.

- **Sick Leave**

Sick Leave is covered in employment agreements. Although pregnancy is not regarded as an illness, women are entitled to sick leave for pregnancy-related health conditions and other illnesses.

### **Legislation**

This toolkit and the University are compliant with the following key legislation relating to pregnancy/Parental Leave:

- The Human Rights Act 1993
- The Employment Relations Act 2000
- The Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987
- The Holidays Act 2003



## **Hazards**

Under Health and Safety Guidelines assessment of known reproductive hazards to men's and women's health should be carried out as a normal part of hazard identification, irrespective of the status of staff (and students).

In certain areas of the University there will be substances which present a hazard through inhalation, and more rarely by ingestion, absorption or accidental injection (eg, high pressure equipment or contaminated sharp objects).

It is important that women working with hazardous substances advise their manager immediately upon becoming pregnant so that appropriate safeguards can be put in place.

## **Car Parking**

The University provides a limited number of parking permits for staff with family responsibilities. They can be used at some University car parks by women in the later stages of pregnancy. These car parks can be especially useful for women who would otherwise use public transport but need to drive to work in the last months. These are not allocated spaces.

For further information see [www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/cpc](http://www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/cpc)

If you have a University parking permit and intend to take Parental Leave, deductions can be put on hold until you return. You will need to hand the permit you display on your vehicle to Unisafe Control Room, B409 - 24 Symonds Street. Once they have received your permit, they will place this on-hold in the University's car parking system and advise payroll to suspend deductions from the date the permit is received.

When you are returning to work, contact Car Parking. They will reissue your permit and notify payroll to restart deductions from your first day back.

## **Car Parking Administrator**

Property Services

Building 409

24 Symonds Street

City Campus

**Ext:** 88485

**Email:** [carparking@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:carparking@auckland.ac.nz)

## SECTION 2: Parental Leave

Human Resources has developed a [Parental Leave Guide for Staff](#) which can be found on the Intranet [here](#)

It includes information such as:

### **What is Parental Leave?**

#### **Government Paid Parental Leave**

- Eligibility
- What types of parental leave are available from the Government?
- Keeping In Touch (KIT) Days

#### **University Paid Parental Leave**

- Flexibility
- How do I apply for Parental Leave?
- Continuity of Service
- Options for Parental Leave for Academic Staff
- What do I need to do before going on parental leave?

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Returning to work**

## SECTION 3: Preparation for Parental Leave

### Advice for staff

Both men and women are entitled to apply for Parental Leave. There are a number of things to do before going on Parental Leave:

### Determine the amount of Parental Leave required

The length of time taken for Parental Leave will depend on a range of professional and personal factors.

### Meet with your manager and/or Human Resources

Discuss your Parental Leave and your long-term intentions with your Manager/and or Human Resources. Before going on leave, think about whether you plan to return to work after the child is born or adopted and on what basis – full-time or part-time.

If you intend to resign, employees can still receive Government parental leave payments.

You will also need to discuss with your manager handing over your duties and responsibilities to another colleague while you are away.

### Apply for Parental Leave

Applications for Parental Leave must be made on the appropriate forms at least three months prior to the expected date of delivery/assumption of care:

### How to apply for parental leave

- Talk to your manager about the options available.
- Read the Parental Leave Guidelines to check whether you qualify for University paid parental leave and/or government paid parental leave.
- If you think you qualify for government paid parental leave, information and factsheets can be found on the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment website.
- Complete the University parental leave application form and the Inland Revenue paid parental leave application form, if applicable.
- Send the forms and a copy of the Lead Maternity Carer's certificate with estimated due dates, or the adoption paperwork, as well as any supporting documents to your manager, who will send them to HR.

[Application for Parental Leave form](#) (word)

[Application for Parental Leave form](#) (pdf)

Please see the following link for further information:

<https://www.staff.auckland.ac.nz/en/human-resources/leave/types-of-leave-and-how-to-apply.html#3ba0491369d9d335fff2671f46a159cd>

Please note, once you receive the completed form back from Human Resources you need to forward it to Inland Revenue per the instructions on the form.

### **Enrol in an Early Childhood Education Centre**

Many ECE centres have waiting lists. If you think your child will be enrolled in ECE centre it is advisable to make arrangements as early as possible. For more information on ECE centres, visit [www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/cpc](http://www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/cpc)

### **Familiarise yourself with the University's Flexible Work Policy**

During your pregnancy you may wish to request temporary or long-term flexible work arrangements. Read the [Flexible Work Policy](#)

Temporary flexible work arrangements may not require a formal request. However, if necessary, you can apply for a flexible work arrangement by completing the [Flexible Work Policy Application Form](#)

The Flexible Work Policy and application form can be accessed at [www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/cpc](http://www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/cpc)

### **Make alternative arrangements for salary deductions**

Should your parental leave include a period of leave in which you are not paid by the University, you may need to make alternative arrangements for payments which are usually deducted from your salary, eg, Southern Cross Healthcare, KiwiSaver and Superannuation scheme.

### **Research fellows and parental leave**

Usually the payment for a research fellow on paid parental leave comes from the department/school/faculty NOT the research grant. The policy on [acceptable expenditure for externally funded research](#) gives more details about this.

## **Advice for Managers**

### **Discuss leave plan with employee**

Encourage pregnant staff to discuss their parental leave plans with you. Discussions should include:

- Dates for finishing and returning to work
- Managing responsibilities and duties before and during leave
- Need for flexible work arrangements
- Other support while pregnant
- Appropriate levels of contact while the employee is on leave
- Keeping in touch hours (up to 40 hours)<sup>1</sup>.

### **Work plans before leave**

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<sup>1</sup> This allows an employee to perform work from time to time, for example, to attend a team day or change announcement, without it being counted as stopping parental leave, providing it is only a total of 40 hours or less and this work is not within the 28 days after their child was born.

Before an employee goes on parental leave, they should advise managers of any work that needs to be completed before the leave period begins. It should be noted that in some circumstances the employee may need to leave earlier than initially planned due to complications relating to pregnancy.

### **Flexible Work Arrangements**

Particularly toward the end of their pregnancy, staff may require informal flexible arrangements on certain days or for longer periods. For more information please read the [Flexible Work Policy](#)

Temporary arrangements may not require a formal request. If required, flexible work arrangement application and approval forms for staff and managers can be accessed at [www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/cpc](http://www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/cpc)

### **Coverage while on leave**

Depending how much leave the employee is taking, work may either be re-allocated to a colleague or assigned to a temporary replacement. Discussions should include arrangements for handing over specific duties and responsibilities, whether to a temporary replacement or to other staff. Parental Leave can also be an opportunity to consider secondments.

It is important that an academic staff member's teaching load is not condensed into their returning period. For example if an employee spends the first semester on parental leave, it should be assumed that their teaching load for the entire year will be adjusted into the second semester.

### **Returning to work**

Welcoming a staff member back into the workplace is an important way of acknowledging their value. Evidence shows that staff members place a very high value on the support provided by managers to ease their transition back into the workplace. The University recognises that supportive managers and colleagues can have far greater impact on the return-to-work experience than official policies or legislation.

Managers should arrange a re-orientation session for returning staff, either one-on-one or collectively, depending on the number of staff returning from Parental Leave.

See **SECTION 5 – Returning to Work** for more information.

## **SECTION 4: During Parental Leave**

### **Staying in touch while on leave**

It is a good idea to discuss what kind of contact would be appropriate for a staff member while they are on Parental Leave. Options may include:

- Obtaining access to University websites and email from home
- Asking a colleague to send pertinent information and/or to telephone regularly with updates on what is happening at the University
- Visiting with their child when appropriate
- Getting in touch with other University parents also on leave

If you are on parental leave but you choose (and your employer agrees) to perform work from time to time, for example, to attend a team day or change announcement, it won't be counted as you having stopped your parental leave by being back at work as long as:

- You only do a total of 40 hours or less of paid work for your employer during your leave, and
- This work is not within the 28 days after your child was born.

### **Entitlement to benefits while on leave**

#### **Southern Cross Healthcare**

Contributions through the University's group scheme can be maintained on the discounted premium received while on leave. Staff need to contact Southern Cross on 0800 800 181 and arrange to be invoiced for premiums.

#### **Superannuation schemes**

Staff participating in one of the University's superannuation schemes need to contact payroll to discuss what to do while on leave. The GSF (Government Superannuation Fund) requires contributions while on leave. Contributions while on leave are optional in the NZUSS (New Zealand University Superannuation Scheme).

#### **KiwiSaver**

KiwiSaver does not require contributions from staff on leave but you must contact the scheme provider to discuss a contributions holiday with them.

### **Continuity of Service**

While an employee is on Parental Leave their service is deemed continuous.

### **Annual Leave**

You will still accrue annual leave as per your current entitlement while on parental leave. The value of annual leave is calculated on the rolling average of gross earnings during the previous 52 weeks. Therefore, if you take annual

leave within 12 months of returning to work, the dollar value of your annual leave may be somewhat reduced based on how much of this period was unpaid leave from the University. This is in line with the Holidays Act 2003. The impact of this provision will lessen the longer you are back at work.

Any annual holidays you became entitled to on the anniversary of your employment before taking parental leave are not affected. Please discuss with your HR team if you have any queries around your annual leave situation.

## **SECTION 5: Returning to work**

When returning to work after Parental Leave, there are a number of things to consider:

- Giving one month's written notice in advance of your intended return to work date (required)
- Your right to return to same or similar position
- Flexible work options that may be available
- Re-orientation to your department/work area
- Arrangements for breastfeeding your child/expressing/storing milk
- Childcare arrangements

### **Notice of returning to work**

Staff must provide the University with at least one month's written notice that they are returning to work either on the expected date of return as specified in the original application for Parental Leave, or at an earlier/ later date as agreed with their manager. To enable the University to plan appropriate staffing levels it is helpful to provide as much notice as possible.

### **Right to return to same or similar position**

Staff returning to work after less than four weeks' Parental Leave are entitled to resume work in the same or similar position unless the position has been made redundant.

Staff returning to work after more than four weeks Parental Leave are entitled to resume work in the same or similar position unless it is a key position which cannot be filled by a temporary replacement or has been made redundant.

"Similar" is defined as having an equivalent salary and grading and involves responsibilities broadly comparable with those exercised in the previous position.

Note: if a role is a key position and cannot be filled by a temporary replacement, you will be informed of this decision within 21 days of applying for Parental Leave. You have the right to challenge the decision (see section 36 and Part 7 of the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987).

## **The University of Auckland Merit Relative to Opportunity Policy**

The University of Auckland Merit Relative to Opportunity Policy and Guidelines are intended to support fair and equitable procedures for assessing staff performance relative to their opportunities. The policy is particularly relevant to staff with:

- Carer responsibilities for children, elderly parents, or family members
- Ill-health, impairment or medical conditions, whether temporary, episodic or permanent
- Part-time or flexible working arrangements
- Career interruptions and delays such as Parental Leave

[Merit Relative to Opportunity Policy](#)

[Merit Relative to Opportunity Guidelines](#)

## **Flexible Work Options – Statutory Provisions**

Staff have the statutory right to request flexible working options such as hours, start/finish times, days of work or place of work. These options may include working during term time, job sharing and working from home. It could involve more varied activities such as taking a salary reduction and gaining an extra two or three weeks leave to spend with children during school holiday time.

The University's Flexible Work Policy encompasses requests related to carer responsibilities within the Employment Relations Act 2000 Part 6AA, and broader requests for flexibility. Staff should use the application form below. Managers should use the approval form.

[Flexible Work Policy](#)

[Flexible Work Arrangements Application Form](#)

[Flexible Work Approval Form](#)

Staff are also welcome to make their request under the Employment Relations Act 2000 (Flexible Working Arrangements).

Forms are available at [www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/cpc](http://www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/cpc)

Staff must write to the University and include the following information:

- Your name and today's date
- That the request is made under the Employment Relations Amendment Act 2007 Part 6AA, Flexible Working Arrangements
- The nature of the change you are requesting, and whether it is permanent or temporary. If temporary when it should end.
- How the change will help you provide care



- Any changes you think the employer would need to make to the workplace arrangements if your request is approved

The University is required to consider your request. If your request cannot be granted in full, a compromise may be found.

### **Sick and domestic leave**

Parents or carers are often required to take leave to care for sick children. In most instances this can be taken as part of the parent or caregiver's sick leave entitlement. Please refer to your employment agreement for your leave entitlements or contact HR.

### **Re-orientation to the workplace**

Managers should provide induction for staff who have been away for three months or longer. This should include introductions to new staff who have been employed since the staff member has been on leave, information about new IT systems which may have been introduced, timetabling changes, and any new policies and procedures. Depending on the length of leave, it may be appropriate to attend training at POD or CLearR to refresh skills.

The staff member and their manager should discuss their returning hours and locations and ensure these will fit with any breastfeeding or expressing needs.

### **Parental leave and research**

Funding bodies may allow for a variation of contract/extension to take into account staff on parental leave. Please ensure the funding body are notified in advance, and arrangements confirmed prior to going on Parental leave.

## **SECTION 6: Breastfeeding**

### **Breastfeeding, expressing, and storing milk**

The University of Auckland recognises the importance and benefits of breastfeeding, and it understands that many women will return to work while they continue to breastfeed. Support of breastfeeding at work can assist women's transition back into the workforce and aid retention of skilled staff. Other benefits can include reduced absenteeism because of improved babies' health.

### **Supportive environment**

One of the challenges for women returning to work and continuing to breastfeed and/or express milk is the workplace environment. Despite significant evidence showing the importance of breastfeeding to the baby, the mother and the wider society, there are still examples of discomfort around and sometimes discrimination against women breastfeeding in public spaces.

It is against New Zealand's Human Rights Act 1993 to discriminate against breastfeeding mothers, and the Employment Relations Act 2000 provides for breaks and appropriate facilities for breastfeeding in the workplace.

Managers and those in authority have a particular responsibility to ensure a supportive and safe environment for staff who are breastfeeding or expressing milk.

### **Breastfeeding breaks**

The University is committed to providing staff with flexibility and support to take breastfeeding breaks during their working day. Breastfeeding breaks may coincide with lunch and tea breaks. The duration and frequency for these breaks can be negotiated between the staff member and their manager or HoD as part of flexible working hours. Flexible work arrangements should be consistent with the University's operational requirements and be mutually convenient for the employee and their department. They may also include provision for working part-time or from home. Common sense and flexibility by both parties should result in suitable solutions.

Flexible work arrangements include:

- Time off for an employee to breastfeed or express milk
- Travel time to a location to breastfeed or express milk

Whenever possible such breaks shall be treated as working time and remunerated accordingly. Arrangements may be subject to review as the baby's feeding requirements change.

### **Best Practice Implementation Strategies**

- Before the employee goes on parental leave, managers should discuss flexible work options available on their return; part-time, job-share, reduced daily working hours, flexible start, break and finish times, working some hours from home, etc. Please note, that there is no requirement for the employee to advise if they will or are breastfeeding.
- A 'return to work' meeting about a month before the employee plans to return is a useful strategy where the manager and employee can discuss any flexible arrangements which may be required.
- Discussions should be continued with the employee on their return and what support is required. Their needs, i.e. the pattern of breastfeeding, will change over time.

### **Practical Considerations at Work – Reasonable Accommodations**

- **Allowance of time**, 2-3 times per day, to feed or express (infant feeding needs will change quickly in the first 12 months)
- **Access to a private area.** The ideal space is provision of a dedicated breastfeeding room (minimum of 1.5 x 1.5, fitted out to ensure privacy and comfort; blinds, lock, chair, clock, mirror, hand basin, change table, fridge). However, other options include:
  - Employees own office
  - Use of an existing rest area, resource room etc. A lockable door, blinds and roster will assist in ease of use
  - An unused office, meeting room or one which is able to be easily vacated two or three times a day
  - A quiet curtained or screened off area of the workplace
- Please note that it is absolutely unacceptable for a child to be fed in the toilets and this should never be a consideration.
- **Flexible work scheduling.** Note that this is temporary and will reduce as the child grows older
  - Most breastfeeding employees will not require more than 30 minutes twice a day and this time will lessen as the child grows.
  - The manager and employee can explore the employees personal work schedule to help devise appropriate feeding or expressing times.
  - Any extra time can be added on to regular breaks.

## **Rest Spaces for Breastfeeding or Expressing**

Designated rest spaces for breastfeeding or expressing are available throughout University campuses. Please see [Breastfeeding Facilities](#) for details of locations and how to access them. Ideally, use of the rooms should be arranged in advance.

## **Mini-fridges**

Portable mini-fridges for storing expressed breastmilk can be borrowed by staff and installed in an office or any appropriate space where there is a power point. They are available from the Equity Office, Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences and Tamaki Innovation Campus. Contact the Faculty of Medical Health Sciences or the Tamaki Innovation campuses directly, as above. Contact the Equity Office at:

## **Equity Office**

Cathie Walsh, Staff Equity Manager

East Wing Clock Tower, 119-110

Ext: 87844

Email: [cathie.walsh@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:cathie.walsh@auckland.ac.nz)

Download [Application for Fridge](#) to request one.

The most important part of a successful breastfeeding friendly workplace is the willingness to look for solutions. All it takes is some flexible work practices, good communication, a supportive culture and where possible, a little bit of space.

## **Other information sources**

**The La Leche League** is an international organisation committed to helping mothers to breastfeed through mother-to-mother support, education, information, and encouragement and to promote a better understanding of breastfeeding as an important element in the healthy development of the baby and mother. Visit [www.la lecheleague.org.nz](http://www.la lecheleague.org.nz)

## **Women's Health Action Trust (Auckland)**

For advice from a breastfeeding advocate plus guidelines and tips for breastfeeding in the workplace visit [www.womens-health.org.nz](http://www.womens-health.org.nz)

## **The Right to Breastfeed**

Human Rights Commission

[www.hrc.co.nz](http://www.hrc.co.nz)

## SECTION 7: Working and caring for babies and children

### The University of Auckland Early Childhood Education centres

There are seven early childhood education (ECE) centres at the University:

- Three on the City Campus
- One at the Grafton Campus
- Two at the Epsom Campus
- One at the Tāmaki Campus

The City Campus has a Te Kohanga Reo, and a bilingual centre is located at the Epsom Campus.

All centres are staffed by qualified, experienced and caring people who provide a safe, nurturing environment while meeting the high standards of early childhood education.

As a parent or caregiver, you are welcome to visit and ask questions about any of these facilities. We suggest that you phone the supervisor to arrange a suitable time for you both, as there are certain times of the day that are particularly busy. These facilities often have waiting lists. It is advisable to contact the centres as early as possible. For further information, including contact details, visit [www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/cpc](http://www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/cpc)

### Salary Sacrifice and ECE fees

The University of Auckland has a voluntary Salary Sacrifice Arrangement (SSA) for staff who have children in any of the University-based Early Childhood Education (ECE) Centres, including Kōhanga reo and Kōhungahunga. This was a key recommendation in the report on the [Strategic Review of ECE Centres](#).

### What is a Salary Sacrifice Arrangement (SSA)?

A SSA is an arrangement between the University and a staff member whereby the staff member agrees to reduce his/her base salary for future pay periods by a specified annual amount agreed in advance, and a University-based ECE Centre provides the staff member childcare services equivalent in value to the amount of the reduction in the staff member's pay. In other words, ECE fees are deducted from employee's salary before tax.

### Who is eligible?

Any permanent staff member or staff member who has a fixed-term agreement (part-time or full-time) of at least 12 months who has a child attending one of the University's ECE centres is eligible to apply for a SAA.

For further information and a copy of the application form, visit [www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/cpc](http://www.equity.auckland.ac.nz/cpc)

### Government childcare assistance subsidies

The government's Working for Families website provides information on additional subsidies that may be available to staff.

Visit [www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz](http://www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz)

### **Alternative childcare options**

These include private Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres or home-based care. The Ministry of Education provides a website for parents that includes information about how ECE works, types of ECE services (including home-based care) and how to choose an Early Childhood Education Service. Visit

[www.minedu.govt.nz/Parents/AllAges/ECListing.aspx](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/Parents/AllAges/ECListing.aspx)

### **Out of School Care and Recreation (OSCAR)**

The term "Out of School Care and Recreation" (OSCAR) refers to before-school, after-school and school-holiday programmes for school-aged children (aged five to 13 years), where the care of a child has been formally handed over from a parent or caregiver to an OSCAR provider.

OSCAR offers children a range of activities and experiences in a safe and supportive environment. For parents, the provision of OSCAR in their community can remove barriers to participation in paid work and training. For more information visit [www.oscn.org.nz](http://www.oscn.org.nz)

### **Children on campus**

For information, including safety issues, read our [Guidelines for Children on Campus](#).

### **Combining Parenting and a Career - seminars and networking opportunities**

The Equity Office, TEU and HR organise CPC seminars and networking opportunities throughout the year. These events are opportunities for staff to hear from leading researchers about topics that may be relevant to those combining parenting and a career, and to meet other colleagues who are also working parents.

See the video interviews with presenters of these previous topics:

- [Gifted and Talented Students in Schools](#)
- [Good Mental Health and Wellbeing](#)
- [Parenthood, Employment and the "Child Penalty"](#)
- [Parental Leave and the return to employment: findings from Growing Up in NZ](#)
- [Understanding NCEA](#)
- [What can parents do to help their children succeed at school?](#)
- [What Does Quality Infant-Toddler Care and Education Look Like?](#)
- [Parenting Primary Children](#)
- [Having it all - Combining babies and a career](#)
- [Maternal nutrition a healthy start to life](#)
- [Food allergies and intolerances](#)

To join the mailing list for information on future seminars, email:  
[equity@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:equity@auckland.ac.nz)

For further information on Combining Parenting and a Career, contact one of the members of the CPC Consultative Group (see the end of this document).

## SECTION 8: Frequently asked questions

### **I am on a fixed-term agreement with the University. Am I eligible for Parental Leave?**

Please discuss your entitlement to Parental Leave with your Faculty HR as a number of factors need to be considered, such as your length of service and the start and end dates of your current employment

### **I am a casual staff member with the University. Am I eligible for Parental Leave?**

Casual staff may be eligible for government parental leave payments. The test for this is if an employee has been employed as an employee for at least an average of 10 hours a week for any 26 of the 52 weeks just before the due date of the baby or the date they or their partner becomes the primary carer of the child under 6 permanently. The employment for this test can be with more than one employer and doesn't have to be continuous employment.

### **As a male, am I entitled to University Special Paid Parental Leave and how much?**

Eligible male staff are entitled to University Special Paid Parental Leave, the same as female staff. If you have been with the University for a continuous period of one year you are entitled to take up to nine weeks' paid Parental Leave. This leave can be taken in blocks of one week or more over the first 52-week period following the birth/assumption of care.

If you do not use this leave within the 12 months following the birth or adoption you will forfeit it. If your partner also works at the University one partner can have nine weeks paid leave or the nine weeks can be shared between two people.

### **What happens if the birth is premature and I am still working?**

The commencement date of the Parental Leave is the first working day following your last day of work. The date when you are due to return to work is also moved forward a corresponding number of days. If you have less than 12 months' service because the birth was premature, you will still be entitled to Parental Leave. Additional parental leave payments of up to 13 weeks are available if a baby is born prematurely before 37 weeks. Please inform your Manager/ HR at the earliest convenience, to make arrangements for this.

### **What happens if I decide to return to work before my University Special Paid Leave has finished?**

Please contact your HR to update your University Special Paid Parental leave dates. As with Male Staff, this leave can be taken in blocks of one week or more over the first 52-week period following the birth/assumption of care. This means you may return to work and utilise any unexpended University Special Paid Parental Leave, at a later date within the first 52-week period.



**What happens if I return to work before my Government Paid Leave has finished?**

If you return to work your payments will stop and you will forfeit any outstanding money scheduled to be paid to you by the Government.

**Can I take annual leave prior to going on Parental Leave?**

It may be advisable to utilise annual leave balance prior to going on Parental leave. This is because holiday pay will be calculated on the rolling average gross earnings of the previous 52 weeks. Therefore any period of unpaid leave will affect the dollar value of your holiday pay. Please talk to your HR team for further information.

**Can the length of my Parental Leave be extended or reduced?**

You can apply to have your Parental Leave extended or reduced, but not the amount of Paid Parental Leave you are entitled to. If you wish to return to work earlier than planned, please discuss with your Manager and apply in writing to the University one month before the date you wish to resume work. If you wish to return to work later than planned you must discuss this with your Manager and apply in writing to the University one month before the original date you intended to resume work. The maximum length of time you can extend up to is 52 weeks post birth/assumption of care. Discuss with your local HR team should you have any queries.

**Will my job be kept open for me?**

If you are returning to work after taking less than four weeks' Parental Leave, you are entitled to resume work in the same or similar position unless the position is made redundant. If you return to work after taking more than four weeks' Parental Leave, you are entitled to resume work in the same or similar position unless it is a key position which cannot be filled by a temporary replacement or it is made redundant.

**What happens if I decide not to return from Parental Leave?**

You may resign by providing the University with written notice per the period stated in your employment agreement. Employment will be deemed to have ended when your Parental Leave period began. Please advise the University as soon as possible of your intentions so the necessary planning can be undertaken.

If you have received the University Paid Parental Leave and decide not to return to work following parental leave, you will be expected to refund the total payment made by the University.

### **What if I resign then decide I want to return to work after a few years?**

Under the University's collective agreements, a staff member who resigns to care for a pre-school child can apply for preferential re-employment within four years of resignation, providing the following conditions are met:

- The absence does not exceed four years from the date of resignation or five years from the date of cessation of duties to take up Parental Leave
- The applicant must produce a birth certificate for the under-school-age child
- The applicant must sign a statutory declaration to the effect that the absence has been due to the care of an under-school-age child, and paid employment has not been entered into for more than 15 hours per week or that other income has been received during that absence.

### **Can I take more than one period of Paid Parental Leave?**

There is no restriction on the number of Paid Parental Leave periods you can take from The University of Auckland. There is also no restriction on the number of pregnancies you can receive payment for on the Government Paid Parental Leave scheme. However, legislation specifies that you need to be at work for six months between the date you returned to work and the expected date of birth of the subsequent child.

### **As a primary care-giver can I take up to 27 weeks paid parental leave?**

Providing you meet the eligibility criteria for both the University Special Paid Parental leave (9 weeks) and the Government Paid Parental Leave (18 weeks), you can, giving you a total of 27 weeks of continuous paid leave.

### **I have arranged to stop working and take my University Paid Parental Leave and Government Paid Parental Leave at 38 weeks. However, I'm only 36 weeks and due to complications associated with my pregnancy my doctor/midwife/obstetrician has told me to stop working now. Does my paid leave begin now or when I am at 38 weeks?**

Pregnant female staff are entitled to take up to a total of up to 10 days' Special Leave without pay for reasons connected with pregnancy. If you haven't taken any Special Leave, your paid leave will begin when you are 38 weeks, but you will not receive any pay or paid leave between weeks 36 and 38. You may wish to use some annual leave to bridge this gap. Please talk to HR to discuss further.

## SECTION 9: Checklists

### Checklist for staff taking Parental Leave

	Date	Activity	Tick
1		Notify manager as early as is appropriate and decide on the length of leave.	
2		Consider needs for flexible work arrangements and discuss with manager (application on HR Forms page).	
3	Early as possible	Make booking in ECE Centre.	
4	3 months before leave	Apply for Parental Leave (University and/or Government) - Forms on HR website. Complete application send to HR.	
5	3 months before proposed leave begins	Consider if you need a special parking permit for staff with family responsibilities.	
6		If an academic on a grant, check with HoD if a variation of contract may be required to extend end-date.	
7		Discuss arrangements for hand-over and desired contact during leave (including IT arrangements and availability for part-time work if appropriate).	
8	Final month	Make arrangements regarding salary deductions (eg, health insurance, superannuation).	
9	Final month	Advise manager of possibility of need for arrangements for breastfeeding or expressing on return.	
10	Final day	Hand in parking permit.	

### Checklist for managers of staff taking Parental Leave

	Date	Activity	Tick
1		Discuss leave plans with staff member and determine an appropriate way of communicating those plans to colleagues.	
2		Consider what support may be provided (eg, flexible work arrangements).	
3	3 months before leave	Sign off Parental Leave Application form(s).	
4		Make arrangements for handover of work and for coverage during leave (eg, there may be opportunities for a secondment).	
5		If an academic on a grant, check if a variation of contract may be required to extend end-date.	
6		Discuss hours and locations of work considering any needs for breastfeeding or expressing.	
7		Farewell for staff member.	
8		If agreed by staff member, ensure contact is maintained during leave.	
9		Prepare induction for return to work which may include updates on staffing, IT systems, new policies, and procedures. Depending on the length of leave, it may be appropriate to attend training at POD or CLearR to refresh skills.	
10		Notify department of the staff member's return date and arrange a welcome upon their return.	

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