

Parental Leave Guide - Supervisors

Flinders University is dedicated to supporting parents throughout their journey into parenthood and seamless transition back to work.

Whether your staff member is expecting a baby, adopting, or is the birth parent, primary carer, or partner, this guide will provide practical support to help you to navigate your role and responsibilities as a supervisor.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact your College/Portfolio [People and Culture Business Partnering team](#).

PREPARATION

Prior to meeting with your staff member to discuss their proposed leave and return to work plan, it is important to first familiarise yourself with the various Parental and Caring Supports available. Taking the time to prepare will enable a more informed and productive discussion to occur.

Understand Discrimination Policy

Set aside time to review the [Equal Opportunity information for supervisors](#) page. Here you will find important Information about pregnancy and pregnancy discrimination and the ways you as a supervisor can help prevent pregnancy discrimination.

Review Parental Leave and Parental and Support Guide

Reviewing the information in the Parental and Support Guide and accessing the Flinders Enterprise Agreement (Clause 33) prior to commencing parental leave will provide information, on eligibility and entitlement for the various leave and support options available before, during and after parental leave,

- **Parental and Support Guide**
- [Flinders Parental and Caring Webpage](#)
- [Leave Entitlements](#)
- [Flexible Employment](#)

Familiarise Yourself With Application Processes.

- Service One is used to request amend or extend parental leave.
- Antenatal and Adoption Leave is booked through Workday.

Schedule a meeting

Be sure to schedule a meeting with the **staff member** within a sufficient time frame to discuss options and support available before, during and after leave.

Ensure the meeting is held in a quiet and private space and the employee feels comfortable and supported. Demonstrate empathy and understanding throughout the discussion, maintain confidentiality, and be, as far as operationally practical, flexible and accommodating to the staff member's needs.

See below for various discussion points and matters for consideration.

Discuss Leave Details

- Intended parental leave dates / length.
- Fitness for work (certificate required if working during 6 weeks prior to due date).
- Anticipated dates to support planning handover/backfill.
- Ensure understanding of eligibility, entitlements (including antenatal leave), and application process.

Keeping In touch / Maintaining Career Continuity

- Discuss how staff would like to keep in touch, acknowledging some staff will prefer no communication during their time on leave. Develop a plan by exploring:
 - Do they want to receive regular updates (if so, discuss preferred communication method, frequency, and type of information)?
 - Do they want to attend any conferences / workshops while on leave?
 - Do they want support to apply for academic promotion while on leave?
 - Do they want to access formal Keeping in Touch Days (staff can access up to 10 days to support training and connection while on unpaid parental leave – more information on the [Flinders Keeping In Touch](#) and [Fair Work websites](#))?
- Are there any other activities staff want to engage in to support career continuity?

Flexible Work Arrangements (if required)

- Staff can request flexible working arrangements during pregnancy (change to hours, work pattern, location).
- Ensure awareness of antenatal leave entitlements to provide flexibility for pregnancy related reasons (e.g., attending appointments).

Plan for Handover and Backfill of Duties.

- Ask staff member to outline key responsibilities and ongoing duties.
- Determine key deadlines and important milestones.
- Request staff member to document important processes and procedures.
- Develop a preliminary handover plan together.

Sharing News with Colleagues

- Discuss how and when the staff member would like their parental news shared to other Colleagues.

Recruitment and Backfilling

- At the conclusion of this initial meeting supervisors commence consideration for any backfill requirements.
- Recruitment - commence preliminary discussions with relevant College/Portfolio staff and local P&C Business Partnering team.
- Backfilling from existing staff – consider training and access to resources, systems and support requirements.
- Explore funding support scheme eligibility and process (including replacement fund / research support scheme)
- Introduce temporary points of contact to stakeholders/clients.

RETURNING TO WORK

At approximately 6 weeks prior to the staff member's nominated return date, Flinders Employment Services team will touch base with the staff member to discuss:

- Any changes to return date, and provide instructions to submit extension (if required).
- Any changes to submitted work pattern / flexibility (if returning at reduced FTE).

To assist in a seamless and supportive transition back to work the following areas should be given consideration for staff returning to work from parental leave:

Support Transition.

- Contact staff member prior to return to discuss any additional support required
- Allow the employee time to reacclimate to their role.
- provide time to catch up (e.g. check emails, complete required training, familiarise themselves with new processes, meet new team members).
- Ensure support is provided for feeding (e.g. avoid scheduling back to back classes, meetings etc). Supervisors should also review the ['Supporting Breastfeeding Employees: Checklist for Managers'](#).
- Provide any necessary training or updates (e.g. new systems).
- Ensure allocation of work/handover is clearly communicated.
- Where possible ensure team meetings are scheduled to support staff with caring responsibilities (i.e. avoid early or late meetings), and encourage a family friendly work environment for all staff.

Regular Check-ins

- Schedule regular check-in conversations discuss work-load and well-being.

Seek Feedback

- Ask for feedback on their experience with the leave process, transition back to work.

Celebrate the Return

- Acknowledge and celebrate their return to foster a positive work environment.