

PEOPLE FUNCTION POLICY

Paternity/Maternity Support Leave Policy

For babies born, or placed for adoption up to and including 31 July 2025

Policy Owner:	Deputy (Employee Experience and Culture)
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1 Policy statement

The Paternity/Maternity Support Leave Policy sets out the entitlements and support available to employees of Imperial College London who wish to take Paternity/Maternity Support Leave.

Imperial treats equality of opportunity seriously and has an equality framework that is applicable to staff in order to promote and ensure equality of opportunity. Implementation of this procedure must be clear and transparent and not subject to any unfair discriminatory practices.

Line managers and supervisors are required to familiarise and understand this procedure.

Members of staff are encouraged to contact the Staff Hub for their department or division to discuss their entitlement.

Imperial's [Values](#) are at the very centre of our work and guide our behaviour as a community, across all levels of the university. This policy aims to protect and promote our Values of Respect, Collaboration, Excellence, Integrity and Innovation.

2 Scope

The Paternity/Maternity Support Leave Policy applies to employees of Imperial College London who meet the eligibility requirements set out at 3 and whose baby was born or placed with them for adoption on or after 1 August 2024 and up to and including 31 July 2025.

3 Eligibility

There is no qualifying length of service to be eligible for Paternity/Maternity Support Leave and pay.

You must have, or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing and must be one of the following:

- i) The father of the child and/or;
- ii) The husband, civil partner, or partner of the mother (this includes same-sex partners) and/or;
- iii) The partner of the primary adoptive parent and/or;
- iv) The intended parent (if you're having a baby through a surrogacy arrangement)
and
- v) An Imperial College London employee on the date the child is born/placed with you for adoption.

4 Entitlement

If you meet the eligibility criteria set out at section 3 above, you are entitled to take two weeks' Paternity/Maternity Support leave at full pay.

This includes the entitlement to two weeks statutory paternity pay (SPP) for employees with more than 26 weeks service at the Notification Week (15th week before the expected week of childbirth) provided that the average weekly earnings are above the lower earnings limit for National Insurance contributions.

You can choose to take the leave as either two consecutive weeks or two separate one week blocks. It cannot be taken as odd days.

You can choose to start your leave:

- from the date of your child's birth (whether this is earlier or later than expected); or
- from a chosen number of days or weeks after the date of your child's birth (whether this is earlier or later than expected); or
- from a chosen date later than the first day of the week in which your baby is expected to be born.

Leave can start on any day of the week on or following the child's birth, but it must be completed:

- within 52 weeks of the actual date of birth of your child (or due date, if the baby is early) or
- if you are adopting, leave must be completed within 52 weeks of the date of placement of your child for adoption.

If you specify the date of birth as the day you wish to start your leave and you are at work on that day, leave will begin on the following day.

Only two weeks of leave will be available to you, irrespective of whether more than one child is born as a result of the same pregnancy or placed together as a result of the adoption.

Following your period of Paternity/Maternity Support Leave, an additional four weeks of unpaid leave may be applied for under the Parental Leave scheme. Further information on Parental Leave is available in the [Special Leave Policy](#).

Eligible staff may also wish to consider [Shared Parental Leave](#), however any Paternity/Maternity Support Leave must be taken in its entirety **before** SPL commences. Any entitlement to paternity/maternity support leave and pay will cease once SPL has commenced.

5 Time off for antenatal appointments

Members of staff, whose partners are having a baby are entitled to paid time off to accompany their pregnant partner to two antenatal appointments, made on the advice of a doctor, registered midwife or registered health visitor. Ante-natal care is not necessarily restricted to medical examinations – for example, it could include parenting classes – as long as these are advised by a registered medical practitioner, midwife or health visitor.

You should give your manager as much notice as possible of appointments and formally request your absence through the TeamSeer absence management system.

Your manager may ask you to confirm in writing the time and date of the appointment, the nature of your relationship with the pregnant person and that the purpose of the time off is to attend an ante-natal appointment.

6 Notification

To apply for this leave, you should let your manager know you're planning on taking leave and complete part one of the online [Paternity/Maternity Support/Adoption Pay and Leave Request form](#) on the Staff Hub Portal. You will need to complete part two of the form once the baby is born or placed with you.

You must give at least 28 days' notice, or notice within 7 days of being notified by the adoption agency that you have been matched with a child for adoption, before each period of leave. If you are unable to meet these timescales, notice must be provided as soon as is reasonably practicable. The Staff Hub will add the leave onto your TeamSeer absence management system record.

7 Annual leave during Paternity/Maternity support leave

You are entitled to receive full contractual annual leave, both holiday and mandatory leave, during your paternity/maternity support leave period.

Any mandatory leave days which fall during your paternity/maternity support leave period should be added to and taken as holiday leave. Mandatory leave days which fall before or after your paternity/maternity support leave period should be taken as normal.

8 Neonatal care leave

If your baby is born on or after 6th April 2025, you are eligible to accrue neonatal care leave if the following conditions are met:

- Your baby needs at least seven consecutive days of neonatal care within the first 28 days after birth.
- You are the child's parent, the child's intended parent (applicable to surrogacy) or the child's adopter or prospective adopter (applicable to adoptions) and have responsibility for the upbringing of the child; or
- You are the partner* of the child's mother, adopter or prospective adopter and have or expect to have main responsibility for the upbringing of the child (apart from the mother), and
- The leave must be used to care for the baby.

Neonatal care leave allows you to accrue one week of leave for every seven consecutive days your baby receives neonatal care, up to 12 weeks in total. Neonatal care leave cannot interrupt your paternity/maternity support leave, but it can be taken before or after, providing it is taken within 68 weeks of the birth of your baby.

Neonatal care leave is paid leave and is provided in addition to other family leave. Further information about this entitlement is set out in the [Neonatal Care Leave Policy](#).

9 Stillbirth and miscarriage

If your partner has a miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy or termination before 24 weeks of pregnancy, there are no entitlements to Paternity Leave. You may however request some time off under the [Special Leave Policy](#) where appropriate.

If your partner has a stillbirth from 24 weeks of pregnancy onwards, or the baby only survives for a short period of time after birth, full paternity leave and paternity pay will be retained, irrespective of the timing of the birth. In addition, you are entitled to take 4 weeks' paid bereavement leave, which can be added to the end of your paternity leave. For further details, please refer to the Special Leave Policy.

You can access support through [Confidential Care](#), Imperial's Employee Assistance Programme. You may also wish to access support from various [baby loss organisations](#).

10 Additional support

Early Years Education Centre (EYEC)

Childcare for children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years is available, by application, from the Early Years Education Centre. For details of fees and how to apply for a place, please contact the Manager, or the Supervisor, on telephone number 020 7594 5120 / 5121 or visit: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/early-years>.

Parent Buddy Scheme

Imperial operates a Buddy Scheme, available both prior to and post-maternity, adoption, and shared parental leave. The scheme provides the opportunity to be paired up with a returner from one of those categories of leave who has been back in the workplace for a few months and who can act as a sounding board to answer any questions. For further details, please email parents@imperial.ac.uk.

Flexible Working

If you are thinking about changing your work pattern when you return to work, please speak to your line manager as soon as possible. Further information can be found in the [Flexible Working Policy](#).

Confidential Care

Imperial's employee assistance provider, Confidential Care, can offer you support by way of a help sheet, which gives basic suggestions that could help your return to work. A free 24-hour confidential advice line is also available for practical and emotional support.

11 Related Policy and guidance

[Maternity Leave Policy](#)

[Adoption Leave Policy](#)

[Shared Parental Leave Policy](#)

[Special Leave Policy](#)

[Flexible Working Policy](#)

[Neonatal Care Leave Policy](#)