



GENOVATE

Transforming Organisational Culture for
Gender Equality in Research and Innovation

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR MANAGING AND ORGANISING MATERNITY¹ LEAVE

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE CORK

Managing maternity - and family leave - more fairly is in all our interests — existing maternity leave culture and practice may be limiting (i) the career progression of individual women and (ii) the creative potential of the University more broadly. International research suggests that institutional structures within academia have (i) not effectively addressed leave and (ii) that family formation impacts disproportionately on the careers of female academics and researchers. Research also shows that women tend to have less linear career paths and more career breaks than men; therefore, research assessment processes that prioritise sustained high-level outputs over a career and that do not take career breaks into account in a meaningful way, disadvantage women.

The principles guiding University College Cork's (UCC) management and organisation of maternity and family leave anticipates how UCC may approach the organization and management of maternity and family leave consistently, effectively and equitably within relevant institutional processes in University College Cork and are intended to guide practice in the organisation and management of family and maternity leave

The Guiding Principles for organising and managing maternity leave in University College Cork (UCC) connects research with practice. Specific actions, based on research within the institution and a review of international literature and best practice, are combined with core principles to promote equality between women and men in academic and research careers in UCC.

The Guiding Principles on Management and Organisation of Maternity Leave may be considered in conjunction with GENOVATE@UCC's proposed *Guiding Principles on Gender Equality and*

¹ These Guiding Principles may also be applied to all forms of statutory family leave.

*Research Excellence*² and the GENOVATE Consortium's 'Guiding Principles on Gender Equality and Diversity Competence in Research Excellence Standards'.³

How to Use the Guiding Principles

The Guiding Principles aim to support staff, management and policy makers in their role(s) in facilitating a standardised, comprehensive and equitable approach to the organisation and management of maternity and family leave within UCC and its research institutes.

To support implementation of the Guiding Principles, a Cross-University Working Group⁴ on Good Management of Maternity and Family Leave was established in UCC in March 2016. The remit of the group is to meet regularly and report, on an annual basis to University Management Team (UMT), with improvements in good practice on maternity and family leave policy.

Implementation of the Guiding Principles however relies on the full commitment of the university, managers and staff. There should be clear lines of accountability and responsibility (bodies) for the implementation of gender competent management of maternity and family leave in UCC, including the processes relevant to their application. The Index below identifies some of the processes relevant to incorporating career breaks and bodies responsible for aspects of implementation and enables the user to access the Principles and related actions directly relevant to their role.

There are four overarching Guiding Principles; each principle governs specific proposed actions intended to illustrate the principle and proactively provide guidance for the organisation, management and application of family and maternity leave and ensuing career breaks. Managers, staff and policy-makers can consult the appropriate Guiding Principle(s) to explore and guide their approach to applying and managing family and maternity leave.

² <https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/research/iss21/Tool7.GuidingPrinciples.May2016..pdf>

³ <http://www.genovate.eu/media/genovate/docs/deliverables/b-DeliverableD5-1-Guiding-Principles.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/research/iss21/BriefingNote.ProposedActionNo.5.Final.ecopy..pdf>

GUIDING PRINCIPLES INDEX

Relevant Process	Responsible Body	Guiding Principle(s)
<p><i>Strategy & Policy</i></p> <p>Maternity & Family Leave Strategy and Policy</p> <p>Provision and organisation of Policies for Statutory Leave</p> <p>Criteria for Promotion and Progression</p>	<p>University Management Team (UMTS/O)</p> <p>Department of Human Resources</p> <p>Cross University Working Group</p>	<p>1; 2; 3; 4</p>
<p><i>Staffing Processes including:</i></p> <p>Preparation for, arrangements during and return from statutory leave;</p>	<p>Line management – including Heads of Department/Discipline/School/College/Research Centre; College and School Managers and by Principal Investigators</p>	<p>1.8</p> <p>2.1 – 2.3</p> <p>4.1 – 4.2</p>
<p><i>Staffing processes including evaluations of career achievement</i></p> <p>Performance Review</p> <p>Progression, promotion and retention processes.</p>	<p>Line management – including Heads of Department/Discipline/School/College/Research Centre; College and School Managers and by Principal Investigators</p> <p>Lecturer Promotion & Establishment Board (LPEB)</p> <p>Promotion to Professor (Scale 2) Board</p>	<p>3.1 – 3.4</p> <p>4.1 – 4.2</p>
<p>Sabbatical or other research leave schemes</p>	<p>Sabbatical leave committees</p>	<p>3.1 – 3.4</p> <p>4.1 – 4.2</p>
<p><i>Research quality and support processes</i></p> <p>Internal research funding, research award and prize schemes; e.g., UCC Strategic Research Fund and UCC Research Awards Scheme</p> <p>College, School or Institute-level internal research funding schemes</p>	<p>Office of Vice-President for Research and Innovation (OVPRI) and</p> <p>Strategic Research Fund (SRF) Evaluation Committees</p> <p>Heads of College, School or Research Institute, Vice-Deans for Research, College or School-level Research Committees</p>	<p>3.1 – 3.4</p> <p>4.1 – 4.2</p>
<p>Research quality review</p>	<p>Quality Promotion Unit (QPU) and Academic Council Research and Innovation Committee (ACRIC)</p>	<p>3.1 – 3.4</p> <p>4.1 – 4.2</p>

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 1

Gender equality and diversity should inform strategy and policy with regards to career breaks, with the aim of creating a workplace culture of dignity and respect.

- 1.1 Policies on maternity leave should be part of a comprehensive suite of policies which address:
- Work/life balance issues;
 - Incorporate arrangements for flexible working and additional leave arrangements such as parental leave, paternity leave, adoptive leave, all forms of caring leave and;
 - Highlight facilities relevant to women in pre-natal and post-natal stages.
- 1.2 There should be a designated point of information for managers and staff and a focal point of contact for women and managers to:
- Facilitate coherence between institutional and local approaches to approaching maternity leave. This should map the rights, duties, responsibilities and expectations of staff, managers and all relevant stakeholders.⁵
- 1.3 Information provided should be tailored to reflect work areas of staff e.g. academic, researcher, administrative.
- 1.4 Consideration should be given to the following:
- **Pre-natal facilities:** Consideration should be given to the provision of facilities to support pregnant women at work. This could take the form of designated parking spaces for pregnant women and advising women of facilities for breast-feeding post return to work.
 - **Planning for maternity leave cover:** planning for maternity leave covers all arrangements prior to, during and post maternity leave.
 - **Post-natal facilities:** Facilities for breast-feeding and to facilitate breast-feeding should be clearly indicated throughout the campus. Facilities should be separate from bathroom facilities and maintained to the highest standards of hygiene with all necessary resources to support breast-feeding mothers, their children and partners.
 - **Childcare:** Should consider access to childcare services either provided on-campus or locally.
- 1.5 Resourcing Maternity Leave: The University should:
- Ensure that full backfill cover is provided for academic staff on maternity leave, to cover at a minimum all teaching and administration duties, i.e. at a rate of 0.6 FTE (on the basis that academic contracts provide for a 40% teaching load and a 20% administration load);

⁵ See: University of Sheffield's Toolkit <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/hr/guidance/family/toolkits/maternity>

- Consider possibilities for providing backfill cover for contract research staff on maternity leave in cases where this is not provided by the funding body;

1.6 Research Recovery: The University should consider initiatives to address gaps in research productivity arising from periods of statutory leave. These may include:

- A grant programme to offset the effects of breaks such as maternity leave on research activity and productivity and ultimately career development;
- A grace period to recover time dedicated to research: this may include relief from some teaching and administrative duties for a period at least equalling the period of leave.

1.7 Evaluation criteria for promotion processes (for example to Senior Lecturer and Professor) should be periodically reviewed (e.g. annually) to:

- Provide assessors with direction about how maternity, family and caring leave is taken and can be taken into account in promotion processes and
- Furnish applicants with direction on how to account for gaps due to all forms of caring leave.

1.8 Training and Awareness-Raising for Line Managers in the context of maternity/family leave:

- Line Managers should receive training on the organisation and planning of maternity and caring/family leave in UCC and on the role of line managers in that process to ensure a standardised experience of maternity leave across the institution. This should include training on best practice standards in communicating with pregnant female staff and with all staff availing of caring leave provisions.
- Ensure communication to all staff on best practice and etiquette⁶ in communicating respectfully about and making arrangements with staff going on maternity leave and all caring leave.⁷

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 2

Line managers play a key role in ensuring maternity and family leave is applied consistently at institutional and local levels. This applies to planning for and return from maternity and family leave; issues of status and opportunity for staff taking leave and their replacement(s) and promotion, progression and retention processes.

⁶ See: <http://theglasshammer.com/2012/10/30/what-not-to-say-to-a-pregnant-co-worker/>

⁷ See: The UC Faculty Family Friendly Edge - <http://ucfamilyedge.berkeley.edu/toolkit.html>

2.1 Planning for Maternity/Family Leave: A formal plan, agreed between the line manager and staff member, should include all necessary provisions to ensure gaps in staffing to cover leave (e.g. once maternity leave has been confirmed) and should address explicitly who is responsible for actions, designate timelines, expected outcomes and any assistance required to complete handover for, and on return from, maternity/family leave. This should include:

- **Prior to Leave:** Confirmation of all arrangements to provide cover during the period of maternity/family leave including how work will be handed over and to whom. This will include, but is not limited to, cover arrangements for work duties, including teaching and administration, and information regarding use of designated office space and equipment;
- **During Leave:** Contact arrangements should only be used in cases where the staff member concerned wishes to avail of them. Contact arrangements may concern notification of opportunities and/or significant changes that arise during leave periods (see 2.2 and 2.3);
- **Return from leave:** This should include confirmation of arrangements to meet with staff on return from statutory leave to facilitate transition back to work; to advise staff of available supports and update staff on planning arrangements relevant to their leave.

2.2 Status and Opportunity:

- Ensure that women who return from maternity leave are returning to the roles, responsibilities and opportunities they had before going on leave;
- Ensure that recognition for particular responsibilities in relation to teaching, research and administration is not removed during the period of leave;
- Consider more formal recognition for staff who take on positions of responsibility of staff who are on maternity/family leave, through for example designation in the role in an 'acting' capacity;
- Ensure that academic staff and contract research staff who are on maternity/family leave are not excluded from being named on research funding proposals that they might reasonably expect to be named on, or involved in, if they were not on maternity/family leave;

2.3 Promotion and Progression and Retention:

- Women taking maternity leave, and all staff taking family leave, should be advised of promotion/progression rounds that may arise during their period of maternity/family leave and be facilitated to apply for promotion/progression where criteria are met. This could include facilitation to apply for promotion/progression on return in circumstances where closing dates fall during maternity/family leave.
- Ensure that staff who are on fixed-term contracts, including contract research staff, are advised of relevant employment opportunities that may arise during their period of maternity/family leave and are facilitated to apply for same either while on leave or on their return.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 3

Documented procedures for addressing disadvantages arising from periods of statutory leave should be incorporated into processes involving assessments of research excellence: documented procedures should include guidelines for both assessors and applicants.

3.1 Research Careers Assessments: Assessments of research career records (for example, in recruitment, promotion, progression and retention processes, research awards schemes and research quality reviews) should incorporate documented procedures for taking account of non-traditional career paths, and should address any disadvantages arising from these, specifically to take account of:

- a) Periods of statutory leave
- b) Part-time working
- c) Workload and time available for research

3.2 Transparent Guidelines: There should be transparent guidelines, available to assessors and applicants, to be followed in competitive and benchmarking processes.

- In competitive processes, there should be guidelines on how to compare the records of candidates who have varying (standard and non-standard) career paths on the basis of a, b or c, to facilitate equal comparisons.
- In benchmarking processes, there should be guidelines on how to assess the records of candidates with non-standard career paths on the basis of a, b and c above.

3.3 Clear and documented procedures: There should be clear and documented procedures, available to assessors and applicants, to be followed in putting these principles into practice. Procedures could include, for example, one or more of the following:

- Periods of statutory leave are accounted for by assuming that if the candidate had not been on leave, research performance would have been the same as during the 6-12 months (or as appropriate) prior to taking leave.
- The six-month period after returning from statutory leave is treated in the same way as the period of leave, to allow for a period of transition.
- Candidates who have been working part-time are assessed on a pro-rata basis.
- Performance of all candidates could be compared on the basis of assessments of research records relative to time available for research (taking account of a, b and c above).

3.4 Consistency and Transparency: The approach to be taken should be consistent and transparent. The possibility of considering disadvantages that may accrue as a result of other personal individual circumstances in processes involving assessments of research excellence

should be considered. For example, procedures could be developed to allow for circumstances relating to family, health or other factors. (See Research Quality Review for an example).

Where a designated time-period for assessment is specified:

- This time-period should be limited and should not over-emphasise unbroken career-long achievement in research.
- It should be adjusted for individual candidates to take account of 3.1 above. (As outlined in GENOVATE's *Guiding Principles on Research Excellence and Gender Equality*)
- Evaluation criteria for promotion, progression, retention processes should be periodically reviewed (e.g. annually) to (i) provide assessors with direction about how maternity, family and caring leave is taken and can be taken into account in promotion processes and (ii) furnish applicants with direction on how to account for gaps due to all forms of caring leave.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE 4

Human rights protections should be an integral element of the organisation and management of family and maternity leave and maternity and family leave should be subject to periodic review and cohere with strategic gender equality objectives.

4.1 In all processes and/or assessments which involve maternity or family leave:

- The privacy of the staff member is protected;
- Safe disclosure of personal circumstances, as a result of statutory leave, is ensured.

4.2 Policies and provisions regarding maternity, family and caring leave should be reviewed regularly, for example annually to ensure:

- their compliance with strategic equality objectives;
- ensure they are fit for purpose and meet gender equality objectives;
- meet obligations to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect, fulfil and respect human rights e.g. as per Section 42 *Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014*;⁸

CONTACT Professor G. Boylan, Lead Technical Expert, for more information, or see [The GENOVATE HUB](#). Created by N. Maxwell, L. Connolly, C. Ní Laoire and S.M. Field in conjunction with the broader GENOVATE team.

⁸ There are a number of other legislative acts which are relevant to this principle. These include *The Universities Act 1997*, *The Maternity Protection Acts 1998–2004*, *Adoptive Leave Act 1996 – 2005*, *Parental Leave Acts 1998 – 2006*, *Equal Status Act 2000 – 2008*, *Employment Equality Acts 1998 – 2011*, *Children and Family Relationships Act 2015*.