

## Parental Leave Questions and Answers

The purpose of the Parental Leave Policy is to provide paid leave to benefit eligible University faculty and staff who are new parents, affording additional flexibility and time to bond with a new child, adjust to their family situation, and provide increased balance between their employment and family obligations.

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### **1. When is the Parental Leave Policy effective?**

The Parental Leave Policy became effective May 1, 2012. Birth or adoption events on May 1 or after would be eligible for benefits under the policy. Please refer to [University policy 2.2.26](#) for details.

### **2. Who is eligible for benefits under the policy?**

To be eligible for parental leave, a faculty or staff member must have been employed by the University in a benefit-eligible status during the entire 12-month period immediately prior to the birth or adoption of a child. In the case where both parents are Creighton employees, both are eligible for this leave.

### **3. How does this policy work?**

Eligible faculty and staff will have four weeks of paid leave for birth or adoption. This time must be used during the first 12 weeks following the birth or adoption of a child. For adoptive parents, the leave may begin at the time the employee travels to a destination to obtain the adoptive child.

### **4. I am a faculty member. How will my classes be covered while I'm on leave?**

Supervisors, deans, or department chairs are required to work with eligible faculty and staff to redistribute duties, including teaching responsibilities, during the 12-week entitlement period.

### **5. How do I use parental leave?**

Parental leave hours will be coordinated and paid through Lenora Salts in Human Resources. Biweekly paid employees should report parental leave hours as excused time on their time sheets, with "Parental Leave" as the explanation. Monthly paid employees should report parental leave to Lenora Salts in Human Resources via email at [LenoraSalts@creighton.edu](mailto:LenoraSalts@creighton.edu).

### **6. Does parental leave coordinate with Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)?**

Yes. While FMLA allows a parent to take up to 12 weeks off work during the first year, parental leave offers four weeks of paid time, but, it must be used during the first 12 weeks after the birth or adoption. If an employee is eligible for FMLA, paid parental leave will run concurrently (please refer to [University policy 2.2.14](#) regarding FMLA).

See example below:

Birth mother with no short-term disability:

- Sick hours can be used concurrently with FMLA time until the employee's doctor releases them to return to work (usually six or eight weeks post birth). Your entire sick balance does not need to be depleted if you wish to reserve some hours for later use.

- After use of sick hours, four weeks of paid parental leave can be used until 12 weeks post birth.
- Vacation and unpaid time would then be used during the remaining FMLA time.

Fathers and adoptive parents

- Up to four weeks of paid parental leave can be used.
- Weeks 5-12: Vacation or unpaid time until the employee returns to work.

**7. Can short-term disability be used with Parental Leave?**

Yes, parental leave coordinates with short-term disability and FMLA. Short term disability only applies when an employee is unable to work due to injury, illness or maternity. See the example below:

Birth Mother with Short-term Disability:

- Weeks 1 & 2: If available, sick hours should be used during the 14-day elimination period for short term disability benefits. Otherwise, parental leave or vacation hours can be used.
- Weeks 3-6/8: Short-term disability will provide a tax- free benefit of 67 percent of your pay weekly. To continue payment of benefit premiums through payroll, you will be encouraged to use some sick or vacation hours.
- Weeks 6/8: Once released to return to work (usually after six or eight weeks), short-term disability benefits will end and sick hours can no longer be used. An employee can use the remaining hours of parental leave.
- Once all paid time (sick, parental leave, and vacation) has been used, time away will go unpaid until mother returns to work. Employees may return to work at any time prior to the 12 -week mark.

While coordination of these various leaves, benefits, and hours can be complex, Human Resources is here to help. Contact Lenora Salts to discuss your personal situation and develop a plan three months prior to your due date, or as soon as possible in the case of an adoption.

**8. How does Parental Leave apply to nine-month faculty members?**

Nine-month faculty work over the fall and spring school year, and are paid nine months of their earnings over 12 months. Some may sign contracts to teach courses during the summer session, for which they are contracted separately and receive summer session pay. During the summer, nine-month faculty remain full time employees of the University and would be entitled to the same four weeks of paid parental leave. However, if not returning in the fall (i.e. you did not renew your contract for the fall semester), all benefits end May 31.

The following chart provides examples for nine-month faculty who would have a baby or adopt during the school year:

Birth mother with short-term disability	Birth with no disability	Fathers and adoptive parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two weeks of sick time or parental leave would be used during 14-day short term disability elimination period</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option to use sick leave until doctor releases employee to return to work at six or eight weeks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option to use three days of sick time</li> <li>• Four weeks parental leave would then be used</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four-six weeks of 67 per cent short term disability, with the option of using sick or parental leave to pay benefit premiums</li> <li>• At six or eight weeks, when doctor releases employee to return to work, disability benefits end and sick time can no longer be used</li> <li>• Remainder of FMLA (up to 12 weeks) is paid using parental leave or unpaid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four weeks parental leave would then be used</li> <li>• Remainder of FMLA (up to 12 weeks) is paid using parental leave or unpaid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remainder of FMLA (up to 12 weeks) is paid using parental leave or is unpaid</li> </ul>
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During the summer, when nine-month faculty are not working, leave and benefits would apply a bit differently. The chart below provides examples for nine-month faculty who would have a baby or adopt during the summer months:

Birth mother with short-term disability	Birth with no disability	Fathers and adoptive parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FMLA is not used for faculty when they are on summer break</li> <li>• Wouldn't file for short term disability or use parental leave (summer wages continue to be paid, and no work is missed)</li> <li>• If not released by a doctor to return to work before the school year starts, FMLA would begin as of the fall semester</li> <li>• Pay would be suspended, a short term disability claim could be filed, and sick hours could be used during the elimination period or until released to return to work</li> <li>• Parental leave could then be used if still in the 12 week post birth window</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FMLA is not used for faculty when they are on summer break</li> <li>• Wouldn't use parental leave (summer wages continue to be paid, and no work is missed)</li> <li>• If not released by a doctor to return to work before the school year starts, FMLA would begin as of the fall semester</li> <li>• Pay would be suspended and sick hours could be used until released to return to work</li> <li>• Parental leave could then be used if still in the 12 week post birth window</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FMLA is not used for faculty when they are on summer break</li> <li>• If 12 week post birth/adoption window runs into the fall semester, parents could then use 4 weeks of parental leave and time would apply against FMLA</li> <li>• After parental leave is used, remainder of FMLA time would be unpaid</li> </ul>

**9. Are grant funded positions eligible for Parental Leave benefits?**

Yes, unless otherwise stated in the grant. NIH states that such costs may be charged to NIH research grants, but only if parental leave is available to all employees with comparable appointments at an institution and the charges are appropriately allocated to the project.

**10. I have additional questions, who should I call?**

Questions regarding this policy, family medical leave, or short term disability, should be directed to Lenora Salts in Human Resources at 402-280-2913 or [LenoraSalts@creighton.edu](mailto:LenoraSalts@creighton.edu).