

UF Paid Parental Leave Pilot Program For In-Unit Faculty Members

In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding on Paid Parental Leave, in conjunction with the BOT-UFF Collective Bargaining Agreement Memorandum of Understanding, effective July 1, 2008, eligible faculty members may apply for up to 19.5 contiguous weeks, or one semester, of paid parental leave under Section 24.8 of the BOT-UFF Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Faculty members must be included in the faculty bargaining unit to be eligible for the paid parental pilot program.

The request for the leave should be made not less than 120 days prior to the beginning of the proposed leave for nine-month faculty, and for twelve-month faculty, six (6) months prior to the date the leave is requested, if practicable.

Prior to the start of the leave, the faculty member and the supervisor must come to an agreement about the dates and terms of the leave. Once agreement has been reached and leave has begun, the terms of the leave cannot be changed unless a change to the agreement is approved in advance of the effective date of the change.

The request for an extension of a leave of one semester or more should be made by written request not less than sixty (60) days before the end of the leave, if practicable, except that the total parental leave period, including time spent on an approved reduced work schedule, cannot exceed six (6) calendar months.

Leave cannot be taken during periods when the faculty member would not otherwise be assigned duties or not be pay status.

The faculty member's parental leave is also subject to the provisions of the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and will count against the faculty member's FMLA leave entitlement of twelve workweeks during the UF fiscal year.

In addition to the paid parental leave pilot of up to 19.5 weeks, the faculty member may take up to an additional 4.5 - 6 weeks of unpaid parental leave or use personal accrued leave to remain in pay status, so long as the total parental leave period, inclusive of benefits under the paid pilot program, UF regulation, and the FMLA, does not exceed a total of (6) six calendar months.

Under FMLA and UF leave policy, all parental leave must be completed by the child's first birthday.

Faculty members taking paid parental leave under this pilot program must return to University employment for at least one academic year following the parental leave. Agreements to the contrary must be put in writing prior to taking the leave.

When the faculty member resigns, retires, or otherwise permanently terminates employment with the university, the hours used for paid parental leave, excluding any hours that were taken as accrued personal leave, shall be deducted from the total balance of accrued sick and/or vacation leave that the faculty member will have remaining when he or she separates from the University. This deduction shall be performed immediately prior to calculating any payment to be made to the faculty member for unused sick and/or vacation leave.

Procedures

Because the paid parental leave program is a pilot, no changes will be made to the current system to accommodate processing of pilot program leaves of absence.

Faculty member

The faculty member and his/her supervisor should review and sign the "*Request for Paid Parental Leave for Faculty Member Pilot Program*" letter, and provide a copy of the letter to the department payroll processor. This letter is not posted publicly; it must be requested directly from Leave Administration.

Department payroll processor

The department payroll processor must complete the *Extended Leave of Absence (LoA)* form to cover the entire period the faculty member will be on parental leave—the paid pilot program semester as well as any additional time for parental leave under UF policy. The LoA form should be signed by the faculty member's immediate supervisor, DDD, and the provost or senior vice president of the employee's budgetary unit, and submitted to Leave Administration. The LoA form can be found on the HRS Forms List.

An ePAF must be submitted placing the faculty member's record on parental leave. The start date on the ePAF should reflect the actual start date of the leave. The only difference for this ePAF is that there should be a comment stating the dates the faculty member will be paid under the pilot program, and also which dates he or she will be using personal accrued leave.

The faculty member's regular time-worked TRC must be used to pay him or her for the 19.5-week paid portion of the leave, although the employee's default schedule may still apply, so apart from watching paylists to make sure no incorrect dates get paid, no time actually may have to be entered. The problem with this is that we can't track FMLA use in the system because there's no such thing as an FMLA time-worked code. The time still should count against the employee's FMLA entitlement, so the dept should keep track of the hours paid on the pilot program, as those hours are also FMLA-qualifying, and should count against the faculty member's current annual FMLA entitlement. If the faculty member does take the full 6 months allowed under UF policy, the personal accrued leave used during that 4-5 to 6 weeks must be entered as FMLA-qualifying so that FMLA time can be tracked in the system.

When the employee has completed parental leave, an ePAF and an LoA form must be submitted to return the record to active status.

Frequently asked questions

Will the faculty member have to pay back the leave if they don't have the leave balances to cover should they terminate employment? The answer is no.

Does the department have the choice of whether to participate in the pilot program if they have an eligible faculty member? No, the department must allow the employee the paid parental leave. The faculty member can decide not to participate.

Can 9-month faculty use their own accrued leave and the 4-5 to 6 weeks of parental leave eligibility they have under UF policy to bring them to the beginning of a semester—during which they use the full paid semester benefit? Yes, they can.

Can faculty members take pilot program leave intermittently?

No, they must take the pilot program leave contiguously per the agreement made by the Union.