



Athena SWAN Fact Sheet 5: Flexible working and support for parents and carers

Flexible working

UCL policy states that core business should be completed within core hours of 10-4. All departments have noted in their applications that meetings and seminars are held in core hours wherever possible, and several departments have been holding meetings within core hours before the introduction of UCL policy. IfWH and SoP also try to avoid arranging meetings in school holidays.

In some cases, where meeting within core hours is not possible (for example due to clinical commitments), effort is made to accommodate caring commitments or flexible working arrangements. For example by arranging the event several weeks in advance, or by using doodle polls (PALS, LMCB, ICH, MPB, IEHC, C, ICS, P&A). To enable staff to plan ahead, BE and C have developed a departmental calendar that is agreed at the start of each year and circulated to staff, these departments also ran a survey asking staff about the most suitable timing of meetings.

Both CE and BE have promoted and supported the use of programmes such as Skype to further enable home working. In addition, BE have provided lightweight laptops, web-cams and microphone equipment to enable home working and communicating with colleagues from home.

IoO are exploring the possibility of recording departmental seminars and making them available on the department Intranet, allowing access to all staff who cannot attend due to caring commitments or clinical duties.

ICS are implementing a 'just say yes' policy for flexible working. Managers have been asked to approve all requests for flexible working for an initial trial period. All successful trials will be officially approved.

Support for Parents and Carers

UCL offers individuals returning from maternity, adoption or shared parental leave one term's sabbatical leave. This releases them from teaching to focus on research.

Funding

Some departments have allocated funding for women returning from maternity leave (DoM, CS, ICH, I&I):

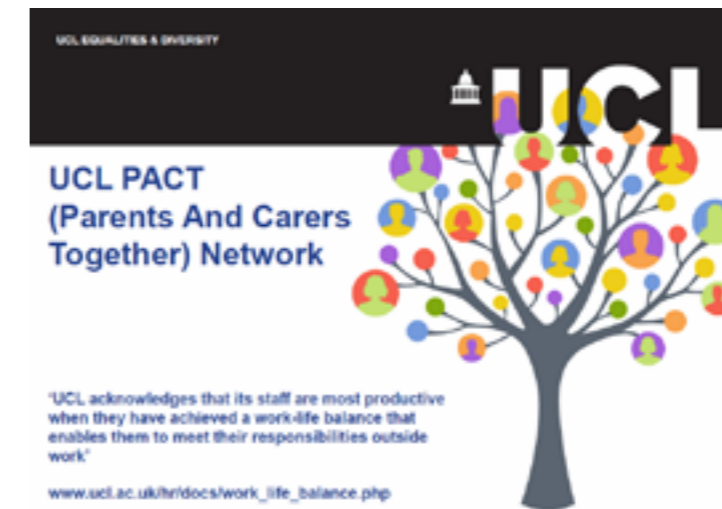
- ICH offer up to £10,000 to support an additional post, or £5,000 to support other research-related activities. This is available to staff who take 6 months leave or more, and have at least 6 months remaining on their contract.
- CS offers up to £10,000 to help get research back on track after maternity leave.
- DoM and I&I have each allocated £25K per year to provide technical support to supervisors to keep research projects running during leave, and during the initial return to work.

Networks

UCL has an active Parents and Carers Network (PACT), which has been running since 2014. PACT aims to:

- Address issues commonly faced by parents and carers
- Provide a supportive environment for discussion, networking and informal advice.
- Raise awareness of UCL policies that support parents and carers

The group meets regularly, with sessions focusing on topics such as part-time or flexible working, communicating UCL policy on parental leave, time management and coaching sessions for those returning from parental leave.



In addition to this central network:

- ICH have established a department specific Mums and Dad's group (MADs) which will be a supportive network of parents across ICH.
- IoO put parents in touch with one another via the IoO parents mailing list. Parents can contact one another to ask for advice and support, and the SAT can also use this list to disseminate information and relevant UCL policy updates.
- ICS has set up a 'preparing for maternity and returning to work group' this acts both as a support group and a focus group which feeds into the SAT. Members of this group have been paired to act as 'maternity buddies'.

Please also see Fact Sheet 1 for information on mentoring schemes that have been set up to support staff returning from maternity leave.

Childcare Facilities

IoO is based away from the main UCL campus where the UCL nursery is based, which makes accessing this provision difficult for IoO staff. To start to tackle this issue, IoO have negotiated a 10% discount at a local nursery for IoO staff, and plan to discuss a similar option with other local nurseries.

Several departments have also identified appropriate expressing and baby changing facilities in their building (IoN, CS, IoO, M, CI, IGH).

Pending planning permission, IoN hope to include a nursery within their new building to further support staff within the Institute.

Communicating UCL Family Friendly Policies

The UCL Equalities and Diversity Team have produced a document on 'Supporting Working Parents and Carers'. This outlines policies and support for staff taking career breaks or working flexibly. It includes case studies from male and female staff; both professional services and academic; including the previous and current Deans of Medical Sciences. This and other E&D documents are available at the Provost's Welcome event for new staff.



Departments have taken various steps to ensure staff are aware of their entitlements at UCL and the benefits that are available to them:

- Several departments have circulated UCL's Supporting Working Parents and Carers document, and will include this information in induction packs and on the department website and shared drive.
- Others have included information on flexible working and parental leave, with links to central UCL HR policies, on their departmental websites (IEHC, IfWH, UCLMS, CI, I&I, ICH, EI, PALS, P&A, IGH).

- Many departments have created a staff handbook which includes information on flexible working and parental leave (PALS, ICH, DoP, IEHC, DoM, EDI, EI, I&I, UCLMS, ICS, MPB, M, UCLMS, IfWH, P&A) (see Fact Sheet 3).
- IfWH plan to hold training at departmental meetings on flexible working and maternity/paternity policies and provision at UCL.
- IEHC plan to run refresher training for departmental managers on flexible working and maternity/paternity policies. An individual within the Institute has been identified as the main point of contact for difficult queries in relation to maternity / flexible working.
- UCL offers 4 weeks full pay paternity leave, departments are specifically promoting this provision and encourage take up.
- SoP inform their new students each year of childcare facilities in and around Camden.
- IGH have a noticeboard within the department that is used to promote information and events relating to flexible working or parental leave.