

PAID PARENTAL LEAVE ADMINISTRATION

I. Purpose

The following guidelines are in furtherance of Board Policy 420.2 Paid Parental Leave (Parental Leave), which provides eligibility rules and procedures for the use of Parental Leave for employees of the campuses, divisions, and units of the University of Arkansas System.

II. Eligibility

Eligibility for up to six weeks of Parental Leave, as established in Board Policy 420.2, requires all the following:

1. Approval of Family Medical Leave (FML). Parental Leave is not available if the employee is not also approved for the same or longer period of FML.
2. Employment in a benefits-eligible position for the consecutive 24-months immediately prior to the birth, adoption, or foster placement **and** continued employment in a benefits-eligible position for the dates of leave requested.
3. The birth, adoption, or foster placement event must occur on or after July 1, 2024, the implementation date of Board Policy 420.2.

An employee – even if requesting Parental Leave beginning later than the date of the birth, adoption, or foster placement – must be eligible on the date of the birth, adoption, or foster placement **and** on the dates requested for parental leave. For example, an employee with 20 consecutive months of employment on the date of birth will not qualify for Parental Leave for that child upon completion of 24 months of employment.

In determining 24 months of consecutive employment, a break in service of 31 calendar days or less will not be counted against eligibility. An employee, for example, transferring between UA System campuses, divisions, and units with a break in service of three weeks may still qualify for Parental Leave. Likewise, any period of leave while on Family Medical Leave, whether paid or unpaid, will not constitute a break in service.

An employee is not eligible for Parental Leave for any periods during which the employee would not otherwise be on active payroll. A nine-month faculty member, for example, would not be eligible for the paid Parental Leave benefit outside the faculty member's appointment period.

III. Use of Parental Leave

Parental Leave does not extend or create an additional period of leave beyond that available to the employee under FML. Employees may qualify for FML without eligibility for Parental Leave but may use Parental Leave only concurrent with FML. An employee, for example, qualifying for FML and for Parental Leave but having only three weeks of remaining FML eligibility (used nine weeks within the previous 12 months) will qualify for not more than three weeks of Parental Leave.

Parental Leave is available during the 12-month period beginning on the date of birth, adoption, or foster placement. No portion of parental leave is available in advance of the event date or later than 12 months after the event date.

Parental Leave may be used only in a continuous block of time and may not be used intermittently. It may not be used on a part-time basis (other than proportionally for someone employed 50-99% of the time).

Parental Leave is not available in the loss of a child or the loss of a pregnancy in any form, although other forms of leave may be available.

IV. Benefit

If approved for the use of Parental Leave, the employee's base salary and benefits, including leave accrual, continue without interruption for the period of approved Parental Leave.

When both parents are employees eligible for Parental Leave, the leave availability is limited to a combined total of six weeks (240 hours). The six weeks will be shared between the employees in the manner they choose. If the employees are unable to agree on the allocation (e.g., divorce in process) the six weeks will be equally divided between the employees if both qualify for the same amount of Parental Leave.

Employees may use Parental Leave for no more than three events total regardless of the length of Parental Leave approved in each case. Each event is limited to a maximum of six weeks (240 hours). Someone using three weeks with their first child cannot use nine weeks with their second child.

For employees employed less than 100% time, the Parental Leave will be pro-rated based upon the percent time employed. An employee, for example, employed 75% time would be eligible for up to 180 hours Parental Leave, not 240 hours.

In the case of multiple births (i.e., twins), the births are treated as a single event. The birth of twins would not qualify an employee for up to 12 weeks (480 hours) of Parental Leave.

V. Employee Application Process

Employees apply for paid Parental Leave through their campus, division, or unit Human Resources Office in accordance with the campus, division, or unit process.

An employee requesting leave for a serious medical condition, for the care of a seriously ill family member, or for other purposes, should contact the campus, division, or unit Human Resource Office for additional assistance.

VI. Miscellaneous

Parental Leave may not be used concurrently with short-term disability or with annual or other paid leave. Short-term disability, when used for childbirth, is available only after completion of any available Parental Leave.

October 9, 2024