

HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY

Shared Parental Leave Policy

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1 Introduction

Shared Parental Leave provides eligible parents with the opportunity to choose to share between them the care of their child during the first year following the child's birth or adoption. Its purpose is to give parents greater flexibility in considering how to best care for, and bond with their child.

This policy applies to all College employees across all job families and sets out the entitlements to Statutory and College Shared Parental Leave and benefits.

Eligible birth parents/primary adopters are entitled to share up to a maximum of 50 weeks' shared parental leave with their partner to care for their child during the first year following the child's birth or adoption. For staff that are eligible for the College's shared parental leave scheme, this leave comprises up to 16 weeks leave at full pay, 21 weeks at the statutory rate set by the Government, and 13 weeks unpaid leave.

Shared Parental Leave and Pay cannot begin before the birth, or placement for adoption, and all leave must be taken within one year of the birth or the date that the child was placed with the family (i.e. the day before the child's first birthday or the anniversary of the placement of an adopted child).

The legislation governing Shared Parental Leave is complex and members of staff are encouraged to contact the [HR Staff Hub](#) to discuss their eligibility and entitlements.

Line managers, supervisors and members of staff are required to familiarise themselves and understand this procedure.

2 Equality and Diversity

As a College, we are defined by our community of staff and students. Therefore we will only succeed in our [mission](#) to achieve enduring excellence in research and education in science, engineering, medicine and business for the benefit of society, by cultivating an environment that respects, supports and celebrates all the people who come to Imperial, enabling them to enrich the world and their own lives through work and study.

Implementation of this policy must be clear and transparent and not subject to any unfair discriminatory practices.

The College's [Values](#) are at the very centre of our work and guide our behaviour as a community, across all levels of the College. This policy aims to protect and promote our Values of Respect, Collaboration, Excellence, Integrity and Innovation.

This policy is inclusive and applies to all parents, including same sex couples, irrespective of any protected characteristic and it is important that line managers are careful not to inadvertently discriminate against members of staff because of their protected characteristics.

The College has support in place for trans staff members. Trans staff members who are wishing to take shared parental leave will not be treated any differently or less favourably and have the same rights to leave and pay if they meet the eligibility criteria listed in section 4.

Further information on support for trans staff can be found in the [Trans Staff Support Policy](#).

3 Shared Parental Leave Schemes

Two separate schemes are available to College staff (subject to meeting the eligibility requirements):

- **Statutory Shared Parental Leave Scheme**

This is where a member of staff may submit up to three separate requests for blocks of shared parental leave during the first year following the birth of their baby or the placement of their child with them for adoption.

A block of leave may have one start and end date (for example commencing on 1 July and ending on 31 October). This is known in law as a “continuous” block of leave. Alternatively, subject to line manager agreement, a block of leave may include two or more start and end dates (for example one month’s leave, followed by two months at work, followed by three months leave). This is known in law as a “discontinuous” block of leave.

- **College Shared Parental Leave Scheme**

If the additional eligibility requirements are met, members of staff may choose to opt into the College Shared Parental Leave Scheme and receive the enhanced pay arrangements. Under this route, the leave pattern (which may be “continuous” or “discontinuous”) for the full shared parental leave period must be set out at least 8 weeks before the member of staff commences their first block of Shared Parental Leave. No subsequent changes to the agreed leave pattern will then be permitted, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

All blocks of shared parental leave must be for a minimum of one week and taken in multiples of a week (i.e. it cannot be taken as single days/blocks of less than one week).

Staff eligible for Shared Parental Leave may choose to request to take blocks of leave at the same time as their co-parent, or at different times. Alternatively, the whole period of shared parental leave may be taken by one parent.

It is expected that members of staff will discuss their plans for Shared Parental Leave with their line manager/supervisor at as early a stage as possible. This will provide an opportunity to explore options and will enable the line manager/supervisor to start to consider plans for accommodating leave.

Paternity/Maternity Support Leave

Where a member of staff wishes to take a period of Paternity/Maternity Support Leave and pay following the birth of their child or following the date a child is placed with them for adoption, this must be taken before Shared Parental Leave commences. Any entitlement to Paternity/Maternity Support Leave and Pay will cease once Shared Parental Leave has commenced. Please refer to the [Paternity/Maternity Support Leave Policy](#).

4 Eligibility for Shared Parental Leave

- **Statutory Shared Parental Leave Scheme**

You are eligible for the statutory shared parental leave scheme if you are:

- A biological and/or birth parent; or
- Primary adopter; or
- The partner of the birth parent/primary adopter

and

- You will share the main responsibility for the care of the child with your partner;

- You have completed 26 weeks' continuous service with the College by either the end of the 15th week before the expected week of childbirth, or by the end of the week in which you were notified that you had been matched with your child;
- You will still be employed by the College in the week before the leave is taken;
- You are or your partner is entitled to Statutory Maternity Leave/Statutory Maternity Pay or Maternity Allowance, or to Statutory Adoption Leave/Statutory Adoption Pay and you or your partner have confirmed the intention to curtail (end) this leave/entitlement.

In addition, your partner must also satisfy work and earnings requirements (the "joint test"):

- They must have worked (as an employee¹, agency worker², or on a self-employed basis³) for at least 26 weeks of the 66 weeks before the expected week of childbirth or by the end of the week in which you are notified that you have been matched with a child for adoption; and
- In 13 weeks of that 66-week period they must have earned an average of £30 per week and have paid either class one or class two National Insurance Contributions in those weeks (or hold an exemption certificate for those weeks).

Information on eligibility for Statutory Shared Parental Leave and pay can be found on the [Government website](#).

- **College Shared Parental Leave Scheme**

To be eligible for the College shared Parental Leave Scheme, you must meet all the criteria for the statutory scheme (above). In addition, you must also:

- agree your leave pattern for the full Shared Parental Leave period before you commence any Shared Parental Leave.

The College will recognise previous continuous University or Trust service for the purposes of Shared Parental Leave and Pay for the following categories of staff: Professor, Reader, Non-Clinical and Clinical Senior Lecturer, Non-Clinical and Clinical Lecturer, and Clinical Research Fellows.

5 How much Shared Parental Leave can I take?

The amount of shared parental leave available will be determined by how much maternity leave or adoption/surrogacy leave you/your partner has already taken.

The birth parent/primary adopter must take 2 weeks compulsory maternity/adoption leave following the birth/placement of the child which leaves up to a maximum of 50 weeks shared parental leave to be shared between you. If more than 2 weeks maternity/adoption leave is taken, you will need to deduct the amount of maternity leave or adoption leave taken from the maximum (52 weeks' leave) to work out how much leave remains that could be taken as shared parental leave.

For example, if the birth parent has taken 20 weeks maternity leave (including 2 weeks compulsory maternity leave), there would be 32 weeks remaining for both parents to take as Shared Parental Leave.

¹ Individual who works under a contract of employment.

² Individual who works through an agency to find jobs. The contract is between the individual and the agency, and there is no contract of employment with an employer.

³ Individual in business on their own right, who enters into contracts to provide services for clients in return for a fee. Will be responsible for paying their own Income Tax and National Insurance Contributions.

6 When can I start Shared Parental leave?

Shared Parental Leave can commence as soon as:

- You or your partner (whoever is the birth parent/primary adopter):
 - Have taken at least two weeks' Maternity Leave (this must include the 2 weeks of Compulsory Maternity Leave immediately following the birth) following the birth of the child; or taken at least two weeks' Adoption/surrogacy Leave; and
 - Have brought to an end their entitlement to Maternity Leave and Pay or Adoption/surrogacy Leave and Pay by:
 - Providing at least eight weeks' written notice to the College/their employer of their intention to bring their entitlement to Maternity Leave and Pay or Adoption/surrogacy Leave and Pay to an end; or
 - Returning to work.

and

- You and your partner have completed the relevant sections of the 'Shared Parental Leave Request Form', and have provided a copy to your line manager and the HR Staff Hub at least eight weeks prior to the date you intend to commence your first period of Shared Parental Leave, and the HR Staff Hub has provided written confirmation of your entitlements.

7 How can Shared Parental Leave be taken?

You and your partner may choose to take shared parental leave at the same time or at different times (as long as the total leave taken does not exceed what is jointly available to you, up to a maximum of 50 weeks).

- **Example one:**

You choose to take eight weeks' Maternity Leave. This leaves 44 weeks for shared parental leave. You and your partner both take a period of 12 weeks' Shared Parental Leave, so that you can care for your child together. This uses 24 weeks leave, with 20 weeks remaining. Your partner returns to work, and you then take a further 16 weeks' Shared Parental Leave.

- **Example two:**

Your partner takes 16 weeks' Adoption/surrogacy Leave. This leaves 36 weeks for shared parental leave. Following their return to work, you take a period of 12 weeks' Shared Parental Leave, leaving 24 weeks. You then return to work, and your partner takes a final period of 16 weeks' Shared Parental Leave.

Shared parental leave may be taken by only one parent, however both parents must still meet the eligibility criteria and satisfy the "joint test" for shared parental leave.

Please refer to Appendix A for additional worked examples.

8 How do I end my Maternity Leave and Pay or Adoption Leave and Pay?

If you are the birth parent/primary adopter of the child, you will need to confirm your intention to bring your maternity leave and pay or adoption leave and pay to an end by providing written notice of your intention to your manager by email or by letter. This needs to be provided at least 8 weeks before you wish to commence shared parental leave.

If your partner is the birth parent/primary adopter and does not work for the College, they will need to provide notice of their intention to bring their maternity/adoption leave and pay to an end to their own employer.

Alternatively, any entitlement to Maternity Leave and Pay or Adoption/surrogacy Leave and Pay will be brought to an end automatically, should you or your partner return to work.

9 Once I have submitted notice of my intention to end my Maternity Leave or Adoption/surrogacy Leave, can I change my mind?

The written notice is binding and, once submitted, cannot usually be withdrawn. The written notice can only be withdrawn if maternity or adoption/surrogacy leave has not yet ended, and one of the following applies:

- If you realise that neither you nor the other parent are in fact eligible for Shared Parental Leave or Statutory Shared Parental Pay, in which case you can revoke the written notice in writing up to eight weeks after it was given;
- If you gave the written notice before giving birth or placement of child, you can revoke it in writing up to eight weeks after it was given, or up to six weeks after birth/placement, whichever is later; or
- If the other parent has died.

Unless you revoke a written notice in any of these circumstances, you will not be able to opt back into either the College or Statutory Shared Parental Leave Scheme at a later date.

Please note, the above only applies where you have submitted a written notice to end your Maternity Leave and Pay or Adoption/surrogacy Leave and Pay and have not yet returned to work. Once you have returned to work, you cannot resume Maternity Leave or Adoption/surrogacy Leave.

10 College Shared Parental Leave Scheme

How do I request shared parental leave through the College Scheme?

If you meet the eligibility requirements outlined at section 4, you will need to email the Staff Hub to inform them you would like to opt into the College Shared Parental Leave Scheme. From there, the Staff Hub staff will guide you through the process and forms.

Your completed [Shared Parental Leave Request Form](#) must be submitted to your line manager and HR Staff Hub at least eight weeks before your requested pattern of leave is due to commence. All blocks of shared parental leave must be for a minimum of one week and taken in multiples of a week (i.e. it cannot be taken as single days/blocks of less than one week).

Where a requested pattern of leave includes up to three start dates and three end dates, no approval is required, although your manager will need to see and sign your Shared Parental Leave Request Form. For example, the following leave patterns would not require approval:

- A requested leave pattern that would involve: eight weeks' Shared Parental Leave, then four weeks back at work, followed by a further ten weeks' Shared Parental Leave, followed by eight weeks at work, and then a further four weeks Shared Parental Leave.

- A requested leave pattern that would involve: 20 weeks' Shared Parental Leave, followed by eight weeks back at work, then a further ten weeks' Shared Parental Leave.

Where such a leave pattern is requested, your manager will sign the Shared Parental Leave Request Form and send the completed form to the HR Staff Hub. The HR Staff Hub will provide written confirmation of the leave arrangements.

Where a requested pattern of leave includes more than three start dates and three end dates, this will be subject to line manager agreement. For example, discretionary approval would be required for:

- A requested leave pattern that would involve taking Shared Parental Leave for alternate months over a ten-month period.
- A requested leave pattern that would involve four weeks' Shared Parental Leave, then three weeks back at work, followed by a further six weeks' Shared Parental Leave, then two weeks back at work, followed by four weeks' Shared Parental Leave, then four weeks back at work, and a further ten weeks' Shared Parental Leave.

All such requests will be carefully considered and must be decided on within a period of 14 calendar days from receipt of your Shared Parental Leave Request Form.

If the pattern requested, which includes more than three start dates and three end dates, is not possible, then your manager will arrange to meet with you to discuss possible alternative leave patterns.

Where a pattern of shared parental leave with more than three start dates and three end dates is agreed, your manager will inform the HR Staff Hub, who will provide written confirmation of the leave arrangements.

How much will I be paid under the College scheme?

If you are eligible for the College Shared Parental Leave scheme and comply with the notification procedures set out in section 5, starting from the first day of your Shared Parental Leave you will be entitled to:

- Up to a maximum of 16 weeks' paid leave during which you will receive your normal rate of pay ("College Shared Parental Pay);
- Up to a maximum of 21 weeks' leave during which you will receive 21 weeks' Statutory Shared Parental Pay at the standard rate (if entitled); and
- 13 weeks' unpaid leave (The number of weeks of unpaid leave will depend on the amount of maternity/adoption/surrogacy/shared parental leave your partner has already taken.

The pay entitlements set out above refer to a total of up to 37 weeks' paid leave (up to a maximum of 16 weeks of which will be at full pay and up to a maximum of 21 weeks paid at the statutory rate).

The number of weeks of paid shared parental leave available to you will depend on the number of weeks of paid leave already taken by the birth parent/primary adopter as maternity/adoption/surrogacy/shared parental leave. This is because the number of weeks of paid leave cannot exceed 37 weeks' pay in total between both parents. Depending on the number of weeks of paid leave your partner has already taken, this will reduce the number of weeks paid leave you are entitled to.

For example, if the birth parent has taken 30 weeks paid maternity leave (including the first two compulsory weeks after the birth of the baby), this will leave 22 weeks available for shared parental leave, of which 9 weeks can be paid leave.

Where both parents are employed by the College and are eligible for the College Shared Parental Leave Scheme, we have taken the positive decision to provide up to 16 weeks leave at normal pay for both parents, and for the sharing of up to 5 weeks at the statutory rate set by the Government and 13 weeks unpaid leave. The total number of weeks of paid shared parental leave cannot exceed 37 weeks in total and the number of weeks available to you at normal pay and at statutory shared parental pay will be dependent on how much maternity/adoption leave and pay has been taken before shared parental leave commences.

In the College scheme, you must use up your entitlement to full pay before you can use any remaining entitlement to Statutory Shared Parental pay. i.e., you will receive full pay, followed by Statutory Shared Parental Pay, followed by unpaid leave in that order. The total period of paid shared parental leave cannot exceed 37 weeks between you and your partner.

As the College Shared Parental Pay Scheme pays at the rate of your normal full pay for up to the first 16 weeks of Shared Parental Leave, any Statutory Shared Parental Pay which you are entitled to is an inclusive part of that payment. No combination of payments during this period will exceed the normal full pay. Payment of Statutory Shared Parental Pay begins at the same time as the College Shared Parental Pay.

Please note that when a member of staff is in receipt of College Maternity Pay/Statutory Maternity Pay, or College Adoption Pay/Statutory Adoption Pay, and then goes on to receive College Shared Parental Pay and/or Statutory Shared Parental Pay, **no combination of payments will exceed a total of 18 weeks at full pay plus 21 weeks at the statutory rate.**

In you opt into the College scheme, you must return to work for a minimum period of three months following the end of your last block of Shared Parental Leave in order to be entitled to keep the enhanced element of the College Shared Parental Pay. The College retains the right to reclaim the enhanced element of the College Shared Parental Pay if you fail to return to work for at least three months.

What happens if my requested pattern of leave is not approved?

If you have requested a pattern of leave that involves more than three start and end dates and this has been refused, the following options will be available:

- You have the option of taking the weeks of leave originally requested in your Shared Parental Leave Request in up to three blocks, commencing on the start date specified in your original request. Written confirmation of the revised blocks of leave must be provided to your manager and the HR Staff Hub no later than 19 calendar days after you submitted your original request; or
- You may choose to take the weeks of leave originally requested in your Shared Parental Leave Request in up to three blocks, commencing on a different date to that specified in your original request, although not less than eight weeks from the date you first submitted your request. Written confirmation of the new start date, together with confirmation of the revised blocks of leave, must be provided to your manager and the HR Staff Hub no later than 19 calendar days after you submitted your original request; or
- You may choose to “opt out” of the College Shared Parental Leave Scheme and submit requests for Shared Parental Leave via the Statutory Shared Parental Leave Scheme. If this is your preferred option, written confirmation of your wish to withdraw your request must be provided to your manager and the HR Staff Hub no later than 15 days

after you submitted your original request. Please note, in that event, you may not have your preferred leave pattern agreed, as the College does not need to agree a pattern of Shared Parental Leave including any more than three start dates and three end dates. In addition, should you opt into the Statutory Scheme, you would receive the statutory pay entitlement for the duration of your Shared Parental Leave, and would not be eligible to receive the enhanced pay entitlement.

If you do not provide confirmation of your revised blocks of leave, together with an alternative start date if applicable, and do not indicate that you wish to “opt out” of the College Shared Parental Leave Scheme, the College will recognise the first three start and end dates of your requested leave pattern only. Leave and pay arrangements will be confirmed on that basis.

What happens to my approved leave if my baby arrives earlier/later than expected, or the placement for adoption commences earlier/later than expected?

In circumstances where a baby arrives early or late, or a placement for adoption commences earlier or later than expected, you may choose to vary the arrangements agreed for Shared Parental Leave either backwards or forwards in line with the difference in actual date from the planned date.

Where you wish to make such a variation, you must notify your manager and HR Staff Hub of the new start date as soon as reasonably practicable. The HR Staff Hub will provide written confirmation of your new leave arrangements.

Such a variation would not affect your entitlements under the College Scheme.

Can I change or cancel my leave pattern once it's been agreed under the College scheme?

With the exception of a situation where a baby is born or is placed for adoption earlier or later than expected, once a pattern of leave has been confirmed under the college scheme, no changes to the pattern will normally be permitted. In order to minimise the need for leave patterns to be varied or cancelled, it is expected that your partner would have agreed their leave with their employer prior to you submitting your Shared Parental Leave Request.

In exceptional circumstances, for example in the event of serious illness, consideration will be given to varying the arrangements.

If you wish to vary your approved pattern of Shared Parental Leave without an exceptional reason, your entitlements under the College Shared Parental Leave Scheme may come to an end. Instead, any variation will be considered in line with the Statutory Scheme and any future paid periods of Shared Parental Leave would be paid in line with the Statutory Scheme.

11 Statutory Shared Parental Leave Scheme

How can Shared Parental Leave be taken under the Statutory Scheme?

If you choose to opt into the **Shared Parental Leave Statutory Scheme**, you can submit up to three requests for blocks of shared parental leave at any time up to 9 weeks before the child's first birthday, or the anniversary of the placement of the child with you for adoption, using the [Shared Parental Leave Request Form](#).

You must submit each [Shared Parental Leave Request Form](#) at least eight weeks in advance of each block of leave requested. All blocks of shared parental leave must be for a minimum of one week and taken in multiples of a week (i.e. it cannot be taken as single days/blocks of

less than one week). In some circumstances, requests will be subject to agreement with your line manager.

How much will I be paid under the Statutory Shared Parental Leave scheme?

You will be eligible to receive Statutory Shared Parental Pay for up to a maximum of 37 weeks, provided that you meet the following requirements:

- You and your partner satisfy the eligibility requirements for statutory shared parental leave, and
- Your average earnings in the eight weeks up to and including the qualifying week have been at least equal to the Lower Earnings Limit for NI contributions (please seek advice from the HR Staff Hub if you are at all unsure about this).

Statutory Shared Parental Pay is paid for up to 37 weeks, at the lesser of:

- £184.03 per week in the tax year 2024/25; or
- 90% of average weekly earnings (if this is less than the standard rate of £184.03).

Statutory Shared Parental Pay is paid up to a maximum of 37 weeks. The number of weeks' pay available will depend on the number of weeks of paid leave your partner has already taken as maternity/adoption/surrogacy/shared parental leave.

For example, if your partner (who is the birth parent) has taken 2 weeks paid maternity leave followed by 20 weeks paid shared parental leave (totalling 22 weeks), you will be entitled to a maximum of 17 weeks' paid leave at the rate mentioned above.

How do I request a block of Shared Parental Leave in the statutory scheme?

To request a block of Shared Parental Leave you will need to provide written notice of the intended leave, using the Shared Parental Leave Request that is available on the HR webpages. The request must be provided to your line manager and HR Staff Hub contact at least eight weeks before the block of leave requested is due to start.

Where the request is submitted before your baby is born or the child has been placed with you for adoption, you can outline in your request that you want the leave to start on a specified number of days after the birth/child's placement with you, and finish on a specified number of days after the birth/placement.

Where the request is submitted after your child has been born, or after the child has been placed with you for adoption, you should specify in your request the start and end dates of your intended leave.

Please note that, while a request for a block of Shared Parental Leave can be submitted before the birth of your child, or before the placement of your child with you for adoption, the leave itself cannot commence until two weeks after the child's birth, or two weeks after the child has been placed with you.

What happens to my approved leave if baby arrives earlier/later than expected, or the placement for adoption commences earlier/later than expected?

In circumstances where a baby arrives early or late, or a placement for adoption commences earlier or later than expected, then you may choose to vary the arrangements agreed for Shared Parental Leave either backwards or forwards in line with the difference in actual date from the planned date.

Where you wish to make such a variation, you must notify your manager and HR Staff Hub contact of the new start date as soon as reasonably practicable. The HR Staff Hub contact will provide written confirmation of your new leave arrangements and will update your TeamSeer absence management record accordingly.

What is the latest point at which I can submit a request for Shared Parental Leave in the Statutory Shared Parental Leave Scheme?

The latest point at which you can submit a request is nine weeks before the child's first birthday, or the anniversary of the placement for adoption.

Can I choose to take Shared Parental Leave all in one go in the Statutory scheme?

Yes – you can submit a [Shared Parental Leave Request](#) outlining a request for a block of leave that has one start date and one end date, for example a single block of three months' leave with no break.

Where a request is made for a continuous block of leave, no approval will be required. Your manager will sign the Shared Parental Leave Request form and send the completed form to the HR Staff Hub. The HR Staff Hub will provide written confirmation of the leave arrangements and update your TeamSeer absence management system record accordingly.

Can I submit a request to take every other week off as Shared Parental Leave in the statutory scheme?

Yes – you can submit a [Shared Parental Leave Request](#) outlining a request for a block of leave that has two or more start and end dates, for example a request that would involve taking every other week as shared parental leave over the block of two months.

However, requests of this type for discontinuous blocks of shared parental leave are subject to line manager agreement. All such requests will be carefully considered and must be decided on within a period of 14 calendar days from first receipt.

If the shared parental leave requested is not possible, then your manager will arrange to meet with you to discuss possible alternative leave patterns.

Where a discontinuous block of shared parental leave is agreed, your manager will inform the HR Staff Hub, who will provide written confirmation of the leave arrangements and update your TeamSeer absence management system record accordingly.

What happens if my request for discontinuous leave is not approved in the statutory scheme?

If a request for a discontinuous block of shared parental leave is refused, and no alternative pattern is agreed, the following options will be available:

- You may choose to take the number of weeks of leave requested in your original Shared Parental Leave Request in a single continuous block, commencing on the original start date. Written confirmation that this is your preferred option must be provided to your manager and HR Staff Hub no later than 19 calendar days after you submitted your request;
- You may choose to take the number of weeks of leave requested in your original Shared Parental Leave Request in a single continuous block, commencing on a different date to that specified originally, although not less than eight weeks from the date you first submitted the original request. Written confirmation of the new start date

must be provided to your manager and HR Staff Hub no later than 19 calendar days after you submitted your original request; or

- You may choose to withdraw your request outlining in your original Shared Parental Leave Request. Where a request is withdrawn on or before the 15th calendar day after it was originally submitted, it will not be counted as one of your three requests for shared parental leave.

If you do not provide an alternative start date, and do not withdraw the request, the number of weeks of leave requested in your original Shared Parental Leave Request must be taken as a single continuous block, commencing on the start date specified in your original Request.

Can I change or cancel a block of Shared Parental Leave that has already been approved in the statutory scheme?

You may cancel or vary a block of shared parental leave that has already been approved, for example you may wish to change the start date of a block of leave, return to work earlier than originally envisaged, or extend a block of leave by changing the end date.

To vary or cancel an approved block of leave, you must raise a ticket with the HR Staff Hub detailing the request and confirm that your manager has approved the change at least eight weeks before the original leave was due to start and/or end, and (where a variation is being requested) eight weeks before the varied start and/or end date.

Any notification to vary or cancel an approved block of leave, including notice to return to work earlier, will usually count as one of your three requests for shared parental leave, and will be considered as outlined above.

What happens if I give less than eight weeks' notice to vary or cancel my leave arrangements in the statutory scheme?

If you give less than eight weeks' notice of any change, you may be required to take some or all of the leave that was originally requested if it is not reasonably practicable to accommodate your requested change.

12 During the Shared Parental Leave Period

How can I “keep in touch” during my Shared Parental Leave?

Your manager may make reasonable contact with you during blocks of Shared Parental Leave, for example to update you on what is happening at work, promotion opportunities or to discuss your return to work. This contact is separate to a “Shared Parental Leave In Touch” day. Prior to the commencement of your Shared Parental Leave, your manager will normally discuss the arrangements for staying in touch, the reasons for this contact and the types of things that might be discussed, for example, work related matters or information on training courses.

In addition, where it is **agreed** between you and your manager, you may carry out work or attend training for up to 20 “Shared Parental Leave In Touch” days during the block(s) of your Shared Parental Leave. Further details are available on the [Keeping In Touch Days and Shared Parental Leave In Touch Days form](#).

Please note, any entitlement to “Keeping in Touch Days” as part of Maternity Leave or Adoption Leave will cease upon the commencement of Shared Parental Leave.

How will Shared Parental Leave affect my terms and conditions of service?

- Continuous service is unbroken during a block of Shared Parental Leave. All blocks of Shared Parental Leave (both paid and unpaid) count towards the calculation of those benefits which accrue with length of service, i.e. sickness benefits and redundancy pay.
- Where applicable, the normal annual increment or contribution payment will be awarded at the usual time, as will any Cost of Living Award which is implemented by the College.
- Pension rights and contributions will be dealt with in accordance with the College schemes. Contributions and entitlements will continue as normal whilst you are on full pay. If you are planning on taking a period of unpaid leave, you should make an appointment to discuss your individual position with the Pensions Team.
- If you do not qualify for, or choose not to opt into the College Shared Parental Leave Scheme, and solely have an entitlement to Statutory Shared Parental Pay, and make your pension payments as a salary sacrifice, known as PensionSMART, you will have your adjusted average salary topped-up by the College to the pre-adjusted salary so that you receive the same level of Statutory Shared Parental Pay you would have received if you had not sacrificed part of your salary for pension purposes only.

What happens to my annual leave during Shared Parental Leave?

You will continue to accrue full contractual annual leave, (including UK bank holidays and mandatory leave in the form of College closure days), during all blocks of your Shared Parental Leave.

Subject to manager agreement, you may choose to take a period of holiday leave before and/or after your block(s) of shared parental leave.

Any mandatory College closure leave days which fall during a block of Shared Parental Leave should be added to your annual leave entitlement and taken as holiday leave in line with normal annual leave provisions. Mandatory leave days which fall before or after a block of Shared Parental Leave must be taken as normal.

If your Shared Parental Leave entitlement period is likely to cross two annual leave years, you may carry over annual leave accrued in the first leave year but must use these days within three months following the end of your shared parental leave entitlement (for example, if your Shared Parental Leave entitlement period runs from 1 March to 31 December, any accrued leave would need to be taken by 31 March the following year). Any annual leave accrued in the second leave year may be taken as normal.

The HR Staff Hub will be able to provide specific advice on annual leave entitlements during Shared Parental Leave.

Where will my salary be charged to during Shared Parental Leave?

In most cases, Shared Parental leave payments made to any member of staff, including those employed on Research Grants, will be charged to a central fund for the duration of any paid Shared Parental Leave. Where a research funder provides support towards Shared Parental Payments, depending on the level of financial support provided; either: (a) the costs will be charged directly to the research award (rather than the central fund); or (b) arrangements will be made to recover these costs from the funder, and these will be credited to the central fund at the end of the period of leave.

Payment for “Shared Parental Leave In Touch” days will be charged to the member of staff’s departmental/divisional/faculty code.

13 End of Shared Parental Leave Period

Do I have a right to return to the same job following Shared Parental Leave?

Where the total leave you have taken (including any combination of maternity leave, adoption leave, paternity leave and shared parental leave) amounts to **26 weeks or less**, you will be entitled to return to your same job, on the same terms and conditions, as if you had not been absent. The exception to this is where a redundancy situation has arisen, and the original job no longer exists, in which case the College will follow its usual procedures.

Where the total leave you have taken (including any combination of maternity leave, adoption leave, paternity leave and shared parental leave) amounts to **26 weeks or more**, you will usually be entitled to return to the same job, on the same terms and conditions, unless a redundancy situation has arisen. However, if there is a reason other than redundancy (such as operational demands or a need for a change in working practices) which makes it not reasonably practicable for you to return to the same job, you are entitled to return to a job suitable to you and appropriate in the circumstances, with terms and conditions which are not less favourable than your original job.

Am I able to return to work on a part-time basis after my Shared Parental Leave?

You have a right to request to return to work on a part-time basis following Shared Parental Leave. The College will consider such requests positively and will seek to accommodate these where possible. If you wish to change your working hours following the end of your Shared Parental Leave, you should discuss this with your manager at the earliest opportunity. This request should then be submitted in writing as early as possible (please refer to <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/human-resources/procedures/flexible-working/> for further information).

What happens if I decide not to return to work?

If you decide that you do not wish to return to work after the end of your shared parental leave, you must give the period of notice as set out in your terms and conditions of service or reach an agreement with your manager. The College retains the right to reclaim the enhanced element of your shared parental pay (together with any enhanced maternity or adoption pay you may have received prior to your shared parental leave) if you fail to return to work and continue in employment for at least three months.

14 Support for Staff after Shared Parental Leave

Elsie Widdowson Fellowships – Academic Staff returning from Maternity, Adoption/Surrogacy or Shared Parental Leave

The purpose of the Fellowship is to allow a returning member of academic staff, irrespective of gender identity, sexual orientation, gender expression, biological sex or those who may be transitioning, to concentrate on consolidating their research activity. The Fellowships provide this opportunity through part funding i.e. 50% (met centrally) of the salary costs for up to 12 months immediately following the member of staff's return from maternity, adoption/surrogacy or shared parental leave (or a combination of maternity, adoption/surrogacy and/or shared parental leave). This means that the department/division can relieve the member of staff of teaching and administrative duties during the agreed period of the research programme. The remaining half of the salary costs will be met by the department/division.

Applications for Elsie Widdowson Fellowship Awards are not restricted to one Award, and therefore, academic staff who have previously received the award, may make additional applications when taking maternity, adoption/surrogacy or shared parental leave again.

The rules of the procedure and details of how to apply can be found on the [HR website](#), or from the HR Staff Hub.

Early Years Education Centre

Childcare for children between the ages of six months and five years is available, by application, from the College Early Years Education Centre. For details of fees and how to apply for a place please contact the Manager or the Supervisor, on telephone number 020 7594 5120/5121 or visit: <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/early-years/>.

Parent Buddy Scheme

The College operates a Buddy Scheme, available both prior to and post-maternity, adoption, surrogacy and shared parental leave. The scheme provides the opportunity to be paired up with a returner from one of those categories of leave who has been back in the workplace for a few months and who can act as a sounding board to answer any questions.

For further details, contact the HR Staff Hub.

Flexible Working

If you are thinking about changing your work pattern, please speak to your line manager as soon as possible in order to explore what opportunities are available to you. Further information can be found in the Flexible Working Policy.

Further information is available via our [Shared Parental Leave FAQs](#). If you require any additional guidance, please consult the HR Staff Hub.

Appendix A – Worked Examples

Scenario One: Both parents working at the College and using 52 weeks' leave

Both employees work at the College and therefore will share the shared parental leave entitlements between them. They both meet the “joint test” and have the required service to be eligible for the College shared parental leave provisions.

The birth parent will take 6 weeks' maternity leave (inclusive of the first 2 weeks compulsory maternity leave) before returning to work. After this, they have decided to share the remainder of their leave with their partner. The partner will then take 8 weeks shared parental leave and return to work, after which the birth parent will take the remainder of the shared parental leave.

The leave provisions will take place in the following order:

Leave	Pay
The birth partner will take 6 weeks' maternity leave (inclusive of the first 2 weeks compulsory maternity leave)	6 weeks' full pay
<i>The birth parent will return to work</i>	
The partner will then take 8 weeks of shared parental leave	8 weeks' full pay
<i>The partner will return to work</i>	
The birth parent will take the remaining 38 weeks of shared parental leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first 12 weeks of this will be at full pay (the College scheme offers up to 16 week in addition to 2 weeks compulsory maternity leave). • The next 11 weeks will be at statutory pay • The remaining 13 weeks will be unpaid.

Scenario Two: Parents work at different organisations and want to use 47 weeks' leave

The birth parent works for Imperial and the partner works for another organisation.

They both meet the “joint test” and the birth parent has the required service to be eligible for the College shared parental leave provisions.

They have decided to take the following leave provisions:

Leave	Pay
The birth partner will take 18 weeks' maternity leave (inclusive of the first 2 weeks compulsory maternity leave)	18 weeks' full pay
<i>The birth parent returns to work. There are now 34 weeks of leave remaining, 21 of which can be paid (39 minus 18).</i>	
The partner's company offer 15 weeks at full pay and they decide to take this full entitlement	15 weeks' full pay
<i>There are now 19 weeks of leave remaining, 6 of which can be paid.</i>	

Both parents decide to take 7 weeks each, taken at the same time so that they can both be at home together.	Both parents have exhausted the full pay entitlements from their respective employers. They have decided that the birth parent will take: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 weeks at statutory pay • 1 week of unpaid leave The partner will take: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 weeks of unpaid leave
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Scenario Three: Both parents working at separate organisations and adopting

In this scenario the parents are adopting and work for separate employers. The partner works for Imperial and the primary adopter works elsewhere.

They both meet the “joint test” and the partner has the required service to be eligible for the College shared parental leave provisions.

They have decided to take the following leave provisions:

Leave	Pay
The primary adopter has decided to take 26 weeks’ leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26 weeks’ paid leave in line with their organisation’s shared parental leave policy provisions.
<i>This leaves 26 weeks of leave left, 13 of which can be paid (39 minus 26)</i>	
At the same time, the partner also decides to take 6 weeks of shared parental leave whilst the primary adopter is on leave.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 weeks’ full pay (in line with the College’s provision)
<i>Both parents return to work after their leave periods. There are 20 weeks of leave left, 7 of which can be paid.</i>	
The College employee then decides to take 10 weeks of shared parental leave.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first 7 weeks will be at full pay • The remaining 3 weeks will be unpaid
<i>The Imperial employee returns to work. The primary adopter then goes on leave.</i>	
The primary adopter takes the remaining 10 weeks of leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 weeks unpaid leave

Scenario Four: Where one parent is self-employed

In this scenario, the birth parent is self-employed and the partner works for Imperial. They both meet the “joint test” and the birth parent is entitled to receive maternity allowance but will not be able to take any shared parental leave or pay. The partner has the required service to be eligible for the College shared parental leave provisions. (For further information: <https://www.gov.uk/maternity-allowance>)

They have decided to take the following leave provisions:

Leave	Pay
The birth parent ends their maternity allowance after 12 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rate of pay set out on Government webpage
<i>There are now 40 weeks of leave left, 27 of which can be paid (39 minus 12)</i>	
The partner decides to take the full 40 weeks of leave left	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 weeks at full pay (in line with the College’s provisions) • 11 weeks paid at the statutory rate • 13 weeks unpaid leave