



UCD Breastfeeding Policy

Policy owner Equality, Diversity & Inclusion, UCD HR **Approval date and body** UMT, 11 April 2023

1. Purpose

Breastfeeding is known to provide considerable health benefits for both parent and baby. The Department of Health and World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends exclusive breastfeeding of infants for the first 6 months, after which mothers are recommended to continue breastfeeding in combination with suitably nutritious and safe complementary foods, until their children are two years of age or older. Recognising the importance of breastfeeding for both mothers and their infants, UCD is committed to providing a supportive, family friendly environment and that includes a culture that supports and raises awareness of breastfeeding and the provision of breastfeeding/lactation facilities aligned to good practice for those who wish to use these facilities when breastfeeding.

UCD is entirely breastfeeding friendly and there are no restrictions on bottle or breastfeeding at the University. Any individual is entitled to breastfeed in public places and they do not need to seek permission. (A statement on UCD's support for breastfeeding is available on the UCD EDI website – <https://www.ucd.ie/equality/support/breastfeeding/>).

It is important to UCD that employees who are breastfeeding can return to work and are supported during this period. Enabling employees to balance their work and family commitments supports the University Rising to the Future Strategy, specifically to attract, retain and develop an excellent and diverse cohort of students, faculty and staff.

2. Definitions

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding means breastfeeding a child or expressing milk and storing it for the purpose of feeding it to the child at a later time. Expressing milk enables a mother to continue to breastfeed upon their return to work. The HSE website (listed on the [EDI website](#)) provides useful guidance around the preparation for returning to work and continuing to breastfeed.

Breastfeeding Breaks

The Maternity Protection (Amendment) Act 2004 provides an entitlement to paid breastfeeding/lactation breaks - one hour each day away from their work (with pay) or a reduction in work hours in order to breastfeed/lactate. Under the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023, employees will be entitled to take paid breastfeeding/lactating breaks for two

years (104 weeks) after the period of confinement, which is an increase from the current 6-month entitlement. This supports employees who are breastfeeding while returning to the workplace.

The normal practice for breastfeeding on the return to work is to use the break to express milk and there are many breastfeeding facilities across the campus to support this in UCD but an employee may also choose to breastfeed their child directly during these breaks. If an employee chooses to breastfeed their child directly during these breaks, it is expected that the child would normally be in the care of someone else before and after the breastfeeding break. This may comprise of

- 1x 60 minute period
- 2 x 30 minute periods
- 3x20 minute periods

It should be noted that breastfeeding breaks are to be taken in addition to meal breaks and breaks cannot be accumulated. The breaks may be taken at the start, end or during the day. Part-time staff are entitled to breastfeeding breaks, to be calculated on a pro rata basis.

This break should be constructed in a manner that is agreed between the employee and manager.

Employees should Inform their manager in writing of their request for reduced hours for breastfeeding four weeks before their return from maternity leave

Breastfeeding Facilities

Facilities are provided by UCD for use by employees for the purposes of breastfeeding/lactation. Facilities provided should be aligned to good practice to ensure the comfort of the employee. Breast milk can be stored within a cooler bag with ice packs or in a shared staff refrigerator within the employee's work area if that is more convenient. It is the responsibility of the employee to ensure that their name and details are clearly marked on all items.

These facilities are also available to students.

These facilities are in place should someone wish to avail of them but there is no requirement by those breastfeeding to use these facilities. Individuals are entitled to breastfeed in public places and do not have to ask anyone for permission. Protection for breastfeeding in public is covered by the Equal Status Act (2000) on gender grounds.

3. Scope

This policy applies to current UCD employees who are breastfeeding/lactating.

4. Principles

- To promote the value of breastfeeding in terms of health benefits for both the employee and child
- To support employees who choose to breastfeed transition back into the workplace.
- To put supports in place that facilitates employees to continue to breastfeed/lactate
- To ensure that UCD is a breastfeeding friendly and welcoming environment for all who wish to breastfeed without any restrictions and to raise awareness around this across UCD.

- To provide breastfeeding/lactation facilities for people to use should they wish to do so
- To encourage and facilitate a balance between family and work at UCD.
- To create an inclusive culture where people feel valued after maternity leave and that UCD retains good talent.
- To ensure individuals experience a level playing field for achieving opportunities and that those breastfeeding are not disadvantaged as a result of family commitments.
- To adhere to the principles of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy and support the achievement of the UCD Strategy and EDI Strategy
- To comply with legal responsibilities

5. Roles and responsibilities

University Management Team

- To promote the importance of breastfeeding for parents and children
- To ensure that UCD is a breastfeeding friendly and welcoming environment for all who wish to breastfeed without any restrictions.
- To support the provision of breastfeeding/lactation facilities for those who wish to use them

Line Managers

Line Managers/Head of School/Unit have a responsibility to:

- To be familiar with the UCD Breastfeeding statement on the UCD EDI website
- Be supportive and flexible in supporting breastfeeding employees and meeting employees' needs to express milk.
- Meet with the individual to discuss their needs and provide supports following their return from maternity leave
- Review work schedules and agree the manner in which breastfeeding breaks will be taken in consultation with the employee.
- Communicate with the employee in relation to arrangements put in place and review after one month and thereafter as required, recognising that the needs in relation to breastfeeding breaks may change.
- Maintain a record of requests made by employees and arrangements put in place and any comments in relation to the policy.
- Ensure employees are aware of the policy and the breastfeeding employees break and support its implementation.
- Inform the individual of the supports available internally and externally

UCD SIRC Office (Safety, Insurance, Operational Risk)

SIRC has a responsibility to employees to:

- Carry out a Pregnant/ Breastfeeding Employee Risk Assessment when the pregnant and/or breastfeeding employee reports their pregnancy to their manager or the University SIRC Office.

Employees

Employees have the responsibility to:

- Inform their manager in writing of their request for reduced hours for breastfeeding four weeks before their return from maternity leave.
- Agree with their line manager at the local level on breastfeeding breaks.
- Communicate with the line manager in relation to arrangements put in place and speak to the line manager if adjustments to the arrangement is required, recognising that needs in relation to breastfeeding/ breaks may change.
- If an individual is returning later than six months after the birth of the child and is continuing to breastfeed, they must discuss local level arrangements with their line manager.
- Respect the privacy of breastfeeding/lactation facilities and others availing of the facilities.
- Take responsibility for the maintenance of their own equipment.
- Take responsibility for storage and labelling of their own breast milk.
- Ensure that facilities are left in a hygienic condition before leaving.
- Arrange a Pregnant Employee / Breastfeeding Risk Assessment with the University SIRC Office as early as possible in their pregnancy or in advance / following their return from maternity leave.

Please note:

All pregnant and breastfeeding employees are strongly advised to schedule a Pregnant Employee / Breastfeeding Risk Assessment with the University SIRC Office as early as possible in their pregnancy or in advance / following their return from maternity leave.

The purpose of such a risk assessment is to ensure that neither the individual's duties or their working environment poses a risk to their unborn child or breastfeeding infant. Pregnant and breastfeeding employees should not work with hazardous agents (biological, chemical or radioactive) until a risk assessment has been carried out and it has been deemed safe to do so.

To arrange a risk assessment or to discuss further, the employee can confidentially contact the SIRC Office on Ext 8770 or by email on sirc@ucd.ie for further details.

Supports for Employees

Our University provides a wide range of supports and information for employees and students.

- Contact UCD SIRC at sirc@ucd.ie for further details on risk assessment
- Breast-feeding facilities: <https://www.ucd.ie/equality/support/breastfeedingfacilities/>
- Contact UCD Estate Services for queries about facilities: estates@ucd.ie
- Advice on all aspects of the policy through the HR Helpdesk, hrhelpdesk@ucd.ie
- Information and support from the line manager
- Confidential 24-hour service through the Employee Assistance Service <https://www.ucd.ie/engage/employeerelations/employeeassistanceservice/>
- Parent Buddy Panel that provides peer-to-peer support for parents

6. Related documents

Legislation and Policies

Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023

Maternity Protection Act 1994 and 2004, Section 9, S.I. No. 654/2004 – Maternity Protection (Protection of Mothers Who Are Breastfeeding) Regulations 2004

Equal Status Act 2000

S.I. No. 299/2007 -Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007

UCD Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy

Support for those taking Family Related Leave Policy and Guidelines

All policies and policy related documents and forms are subject to amendment.

Please refer to the UCD Governance Document Library website for the official, most recent version.

Online Resources

A list of external websites and resources can be found on the [EDI website](#).

7. Version history

	Date	Description	Author
1.0	7 May 2022	Policy Created	UCD HR, EDI unit
2.0	11 April 2023	Policy updated. New links added	UCD HR, EDI unit