

UCD Fertility Treatment Policy



Policy owner EDI Unit **Approval date and body** 18/06//2024 UMT

1. Purpose

UCD is committed to providing a supportive workplace for all our employees including for individuals who are undergoing fertility treatment. A supportive environment includes a culture that facilitates employees undergoing fertility treatment, employees whose partners are undergoing fertility treatment, and the provision of supports aligned to good practice. It is important to UCD that employees who are planning to have children, feel fully supported to do so and are facilitated to balance career and their fertility journey.

Couples who do not conceive a child naturally, for same-sex couples, and individuals seeking to have a child, may undergo fertility treatment. UCD recognises the emotional, physical, and financial strain fertility treatment can have on employees while trying to navigate their careers. Fertility journeys vary in length, number of treatments, side effects and can be very individualised.

This policy reflects the high value the University places on our employees and seeks to provide support and clarity to employees and managers on how to best support employees flexibly and compassionately during this period.

This policy supports the UCD Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy vision for the University to be a leader and role model in equality, diversity and inclusion in the higher education sector nationally and internationally and meets the University's objective to specifically attract, retain and develop an excellent and diverse cohort of faculty, and staff.

2. Definitions

Fertility Tests¹

A test that an individual may be recommended to take by their specialist to identify the type of fertility treatment required.

¹ HSE Fertility Tests: <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/fertility/tests/>

- Relevant blood tests
- Semen analysis
- Fertility ultrasound
- Specialised scans and x-rays
- Follicular tracking
- Medical management of fertility challenges including ovulation induction with follicle tracking.

Fertility Treatments²

Any treatment or medical procedure intended to increase the likelihood of a person successfully conceiving a child. Examples include:

- **Medical Treatment**, medication prescribed to increase the likelihood of becoming pregnant, such as ovulation induction agents.
- **Surgical Procedure**, a procedure to improve fertility such as, keyhole surgery to treat endometriosis, polycystic ovary syndrome, varicocele.
- **Assisted Conception**, treatments which can assist an individual in conception:
 - IUI (intrauterine insemination)
 - IVF (in vitro fertilisation)
 - ICSI (intracytoplasmic sperm injection)
 - using a donor/ or surrogacy

Disclosure

When a person communicates that they are undergoing fertility treatment or their partner is undergoing fertility treatment to another person.

Disclosing information about fertility treatment is voluntary. It is a deeply personal and sensitive matter and it is up to the individual if they wish to divulge specific personal information.

UCD encourages a culture where employees feel confident to share their fertility journey in the workplace if they choose to do so. Fertility is a very personal and sensitive area for individuals and it should be recognised that some employees may be seeking flexibility while choosing not to disclose their fertility journey.

Flexible Working and Fertility Treatment

Flexibility may also include:

- Allowing time to rest and make the time up later
- Adjusting start and finish times
- Flexibility around the taking of breaks
- Flexibility around attending relevant medical appointments.

Medical Appointments and Procedures

² HSE Types of Fertility Treatments: www2.hse.ie/conditions/fertility/treatment/#types-of-fertility-treatment

Managers are encouraged to be flexible when approached by individuals who need to attend medical appointments and procedures related to their fertility.

Medical appointments are covered under sick leave policy, however local arrangements, approved by the Head of School/Unit, are also accepted.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all UCD employees. This includes permanent and fixed term employees.

4. Principles

- To ensure employees, and employees whose partners are undergoing fertility treatment, are supported in the workplace
- To create an inclusive culture whereby employees feel valued, and comfortable to disclose without concerns of it impacting their career trajectory, if they choose to
- To encourage open and constructive communication between managers and employees
- To ensure flexible working arrangements include those undergoing fertility treatment
- Ensure employees undergoing fertility treatment are supported to reach their full potential
- To ensure individuals experience a level playing field in terms of opportunities and that those undergoing fertility treatment are not disadvantaged in any way
- To recognise the contribution of all employees, including those undergoing fertility treatment
- To foster an inclusive workplace as part of the University's inclusive culture where all employees can reach their full potential
- To adhere to the principles of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy and support the achievement of the UCD Strategy and EDI Strategy

5. Roles and responsibilities

The following are the roles and responsibilities of key groups in UCD.

People Managers

- Recognise that disclosure is particularly difficult for employees, be flexible and compassionate.
- Establish a culture of trust where employees feel comfortable to disclose if they choose to.
- Respect confidentiality of employees who disclose.
- Provide flexible working arrangements where requested as appropriate.
- Medical appointments are covered under sick leave, however local arrangements, approved by the Head of School/Unit, are also accepted.
- Ensure individuals experience a level playing field in terms of opportunities and that those undergoing fertility treatment are not disadvantaged in any way.

- Support employees to plan career development and progression in a manageable and sustainable manner.
- Treat employees returning to work after a period of absence due to fertility treatment or bereavement in a sensitive and compassionate manner.
- Communicate UCD mental health and well-being and sign-post supports as required

Employees

- Make managers aware that they are undergoing fertility treatment or that their partner is undergoing fertility treatment if they feel comfortable in doing so
- Engage with managers to identify workplace supports while undergoing fertility treatment.
- Proactively raise any concerns about career development and progression and work with managers to develop a plan.
- Engage with UCD supports and external supports
- Be aware of family-friendly policies

UCD Human Resources

- Support employees and provide information and advice if an individual discloses that they are undergoing fertility treatment.
- Offer advice and support for managers in supporting employees undergoing fertility treatment and how to promote an inclusive work environment within their area of responsibility.
- Liaise with managers on flexible working arrangements.
- Mainstream policy across existing programmes where appropriate to raise awareness with managers to ensure they have a level of understanding of how to support employees undergoing fertility and family related leave.
- Advising on changes in relevant legislation and policy that may be of benefit to those undergoing fertility treatment.
- Be cognisant that some managers may have undergone treatment themselves or their partners and may require support.

6. Related documents

UCD Policies and Resources

- Sick Leave Policy
- Support for Employees Taking Family Related Leave Policy and Guidelines
- Bereavement Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy in UCD
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Colleagues in UCD
- Employee Assistance Service: Confidential 24-hour service through the Employee Assistance Service (EAS): www.ucd.ie/engage/employeerelations/employeeassistanceservice/

External

- HSE Fertility Treatment
- National Infertility Support and Information Group
- CFireland
- Irish Cancer Society
- HSE Miscarriage
- HSE Pregnancy Loss
- Irish Hospice Foundation

7. Version history

Version 4: 02/07/2024