

# Policy For Supporting Employees who are Breastfeeding



**Policy owner** UCD EDI Unit **Approval date and body** 07/05/2022 UMT

## 1. Purpose

[Provide a brief summary outlining the reasons for the policy. What area is it related to? What issues does it aim to address?]

UCD is committed to providing a supportive, family friendly environment for all our employees and has a range of family friendly policies in place. A family friendly environment includes a culture that supports and raises awareness of breastfeeding and the provision of breastfeeding/lactation facilities aligned to good practice for our employees who are currently 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

[Define any important terms and/or key concepts used in the policy.]

### 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. Information and further useful guidance around the preparation for returning to work and continuing to breastfeed from the Health Service Executive is available under 'external supports' in section six of this document.

### 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) in order to breastfeed/lactate. Under the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill (to be transposed from the EU Work Life Balance Directive into law in Ireland by August 2022), 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 in one of the breastfeeding facilities in UCD. If an employee chooses to breastfeed their child directly during these breaks, the child must be on campus only for the duration of the breastfeeding break. This break can be constructed in a manner that is agreed between the employee and manager. For example, this may comprise of

- 1 x 60 minute period
- 2 x 30 minute periods
- 3 x 20 minute periods

It should be noted that breastfeeding breaks are to be taken in addition to meal breaks and breaks cannot be accumulated. Part-time staff are entitled to breastfeeding breaks, to be calculated on a pro rata basis.

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 and students for the purposes of breastfeeding/lactation. Facilities provided should be aligned to good practice to ensure the comfort of the employee. The intention is that the individual would lactate or that the child would be on campus only for the duration of the breastfeeding break. Breast milk can be stored in refrigerators provided by the University in the breastfeeding/lactation facilities or employees can opt to store breast milk in a shared employee refrigerator within the employee's work area if that is more convenient. It is the responsibility of the employee/student to ensure that their name and details are clearly marked on all items when stored in refrigerators. Refrigerators provided by the University are shared. The University is not responsible for managing or removing milk stored in refrigerators in breastfeeding/lactation facilities.

### **3. Scope**

[Outline to whom/what the policy applies. The scope should also identify any exceptions to the policy.]

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

### **4. Principles**

[What are the guiding principles of the policy? What are the standards this policy aims to uphold? This section can include a policy statement or a list of policy principles.]

- 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 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**

[List the major responsibilities each party has in connection with this policy.]

#### **Line Managers**

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

- 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 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.
- 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](mailto: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](mailto:sirc@ucd.ie) for further details on risk assessment
- Breastfeeding/Lactation facilities: [Link](#)
- Contact UCD Estate Services for queries about facilities: [estates@ucd.ie](mailto:estates@ucd.ie)
- Advice on all aspects of the policy through the HR Helpdesk, [hrhelpdesk@ucd.ie](mailto:hrhelpdesk@ucd.ie)
- Information and support from the line manager
- Confidential 24-hour service through the Employee Assistance Service: [Link](#)
- Parent Buddy Panel that provides peer-to-peer support for parents: [Link](#)

## 6. Related documents

### External Supports

- The Health Service Executive (HSE) website provides further useful guidance around the preparation for returning to work and continuing to breastfeed: [Link](#)
- Breastfeeding Supports: [Link](#)
- HSE My Child: [Link](#)
- HSE Child Safety/Babies and Toddlers: [Link](#)

### Legislation and Policies

- Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2022 (To be transposed from the EU Work Life Balance Directive into law by August 2022)
- Maternity Protection Act 1994 and 2004, Section 9, S.I. No. 654/2004 – Maternity Protection (Protection of Mothers Who Are Breastfeeding) Regulations 2004
- 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.

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