

 **FAQs -Supporting the return to work of Staff taking Family-Related Leave**

**What are my options at the end of my family leave?**

We would like to see you return to work at the end of your maternity/adoption/shared parental leave and to support you as you adjust to working with your new family. There are a number of options available to help support you with your return, including coaching and mentoring, flexible working requests, reduced teaching workload, phased return, career break scheme, academic study leave and childcare. Further details are available [here.](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/aboutbu/policiesprocedures/people/supportingfamilywork-lifebalance/maternitypaternityadoptionandspl/returntoworkfollowingfamilyleave/)

**Coaching**

**I am about to go on or am currently on maternity/adoption/shared parental leave and would like a coach, what should I do and when?**

You should contact your line manager to discuss using a coach and provide them with the information outlined [here](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/aboutbu/policiesprocedures/people/supportingfamilywork-lifebalance/maternitypaternityadoptionandspl/returntoworkfollowingfamilyleave/). Once they have agreed to support you, you should contact OD@bournemouth.ac.uk who will be able to assist you with identifying a coach and the next steps.

**I have returned from maternity/adoption/shared parental leave and would like a coach, is it too late to request one?**

No, you can request a coach when you return to work who can support you as you adapt to the demands of looking after a child and the workplace. You should contact your line manager to discuss using a coach and provide them with the information outlined [here](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/aboutbu/policiesprocedures/people/supportingfamilywork-lifebalance/maternitypaternityadoptionandspl/returntoworkfollowingfamilyleave/). Once they have agreed to support you, you should contact OD@bournemouth.ac.uk who will be able to assist you with identifying a coach and the next steps.

**I am father going on adoption/shared parental leave, do I have access to coaching?**

Yes, coaching is also available to fathers returning to work after a longer period of family leave.

**Flexible Working**

**How can I request a change in working pattern/hours?**

If you would like to request a permanent change to your working pattern/hours you can submit a flexible working request.

Full consideration will be given to requests from members of staff who wish to change their working pattern upon return from family leave. You should submit a flexible working application as far in advance of the return date as reasonably practicable. Flexible working in the context of the “right to request” applies to a permanent change to a member of staff’s contract of employment and does not cover occasional or temporary changes. For further details please refer to the University’s [Right to Request Flexible Working scheme](http://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/flexible-working.docx).

**How can I request a temporary change to my working hours/pattern or a phased return to work?**

If you would like to make a temporary change to your working hours/pattern or to have a phased return e.g. reduced hours for a short period to allow you to collect a child from nursery while they are settling in, you should discuss this with your line manager.

If a temporary change to your working pattern is agreed, it may be processed as a [temporary change](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/formsrep/Contract%20Variation%20Form.xlsx?Web=1) to your contract, through [flexi-time](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/workingatbu/healthsafetywellbeing/hsfire/flexi-timescheme/) or through [unpaid leave.](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/aboutbu/policiesprocedures/people/supportingfamilywork-lifebalance/familydomesticemergenciesandotherleave/) These arrangements should only be short term, if a longer term change to your working pattern is required, this should be requested though the University’s [Right to Request Flexible Working scheme](http://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/flexible-working.docx).

**Can I use annual leave to support a phased return to work (e.g. fewer days a week for the first 4 weeks)?**

Your annual leave entitlement will continue to accrue at your contractual rate during your maternity leave. This is inclusive of UK recognised public/bank holidays as well as any planned University closure days at the discretion of the Vice-Chancellor, pro rata for part-time staff.

You should take any annual leave you have accrued up to your maternity leave start date before your leave starts. You can use any annual leave accrued during your maternity leave either prior to your maternity leave commencing, or immediately following your maternity leave, i.e. once your maternity leave ends.

Please be aware that once you return to work the normal rules for carrying annual leave forward will apply.

**Academic Study Leave**

**How do I request Academic Study Leave and what are the eligibility criteria?**

Paid academic study leave may be granted to academic staff and professional and support staff undertaking a Doctorate, normally for up to one semester for the purpose of developing, progressing and enhancing research performance in line with BU2025. To be eligible, you will have needed to have completed at least two years’ service with Bournemouth University.

You should discuss the possibility of taking Academic Study leave with your line manager prior to completing an application form. The application must be supported by your line manager and for academic members of staff, also the Deputy Dean. Details of eligibility, how to apply and an application form are available [here.](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/academic-study-leave-policy.docx)

**Will taking family leave effect the decision on my application?**

There are a limited number of applications granted each academic year and they are therefore prioritised as outlined in the [Academic Study Leave policy.](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/academic-study-leave-policy.docx)  Staff returning from family leave are one of the prioritisation groups when applications are considered.

**Reduced Teaching workload**

**I am an academic member of staff and understand my teaching workload should be reduced to 80%, who should I speak to about this?**

You should speak to your Head of Department so this can be implemented as part of your workload.

**Career Break**

**Can I request a career break following family leave?**

Yes, you can request a career break for a period of between 3 calendar month sand 2 years. A career break can be used to help with domestic commitments, e.g. to continue caring for your child.

The [Career Break Scheme](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/career-break-scheme.doc) outlines eligibility and how to apply. If you are considering taking a career break you should discuss this with your line manager/relevant budget holder and they will make a decision on whether this is possible, by considering the impact on other staff, financial implications and availability of cover. Further details are available in the [Career Break Scheme.](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/career-break-scheme.doc)

**Line Manager FAQs**

**How can I support my team member to return to work after maternity leave?**

During the period of family leave you should maintain contact with the member of staff (as agreed prior to the leave commencing).

**Prior to returning** to work you should discuss and plan for working arrangements for the first few months with your member of staff, considering the following:

* Updates on changes in the department or team, including changes in staffing and systems
* Arrangements for the handover of work from other colleagues;
* Updates on key projects/activities;
* Practical arrangements e.g. IT equipment, office location etc.
* [Flexible working applications;](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/flexible-working.docx)
* [Career Break Scheme](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/career-break-scheme.doc) (if applicable)
* [Academic Study Leave](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/academic-study-leave-policy.docx) (if applicable)
* [Reduced teaching load to 80%](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/documentsrep/WLP%20April%202019%20Final.docx) (for academic members of staff)
* [Breastfeeding arrangements](https://intranetsp.bournemouth.ac.uk/policy/Breast%20Feeding%20Guidance%20for%20Mothers%20Returning%20to%20work.docx) and risk assessments (if applicable);
* Communications regarding the staff member’s return;
* Training requirements, including the renewal of relevant Health and Safety Training e.g. DSE, etc.

Uponreturn we would recommend that a re-induction plan should be in place, and may include:

* A personal welcome back from you as their line manager (or new line manager if it has changed)
* Time to rebuild social contacts
* Time to refresh skills
* Time to get up to speed on process changes and project status
* Opportunity for informal feedback to rebuild confidence
* Informal reviews at regular intervals
* Time for coaching (if applicable)

[BU’s Guide to Induction and Probation](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/workingatbu/newtobu/linemanagersinductionarea/) provides useful information to consider when planning an induction (including for returners) to help members of staff settle into their roles as quickly and effectively as possible.

Other sources of support and resources, including information on coaching, flexible working, career breaks, academic study leave and reduced teaching workload are available [here.](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/aboutbu/policiesprocedures/people/supportingfamilywork-lifebalance/maternitypaternityadoptionandspl/returntoworkfollowingfamilyleave/)

**What should I do if my member of staff contacts me to discuss the opportunity for a coach?**

We would encourage you to support this request as returning to work following a period of family leave can be a daunting experience. In addition, the University is committed to supporting, retaining and promoting members of staff and coaching can help with feeling supported through being more equipped and prepared to return to work and therefore optimise performance upon return.

Coaching for this purpose is comprised of up to six confidential sessions that can be held before, during and after leave. Further details are available here [coaching and mentoring](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/workingatbu/staffdevelopmentandengagement/rolecareerdevelopment/coachingandmentoring/roleandcareerconversations/) or alternatively contact OD@bournemouth.ac.uk.