

## **MISSOURI SOUTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY POLICY**

Name of Policy:	Parental Leave
Date of Last Revision:	November 2024
Policy Owner	Human Resources
Handbook	Employee

### **Maternity/Birth Leave**

Missouri Southern recognizes the importance of providing parents with an appropriate amount of time to recover, adjust, and care for a newborn after birth. As such, the University will provide employees up to six (6) weeks (240 hours) of paid parental leave after giving birth to a child. In addition, employees whose spouse or domestic partner gives birth to a child will receive three (3) weeks (120 hours) of paid leave for the birth and care of the child.

### **Adoption/Foster Leave**

The University also supports adoption and the fostering of children and recognizes the importance of a parent spending time adjusting and caring for a newly adopted child or foster child. For this reason, the University provides employees with up to three (3) weeks (120 hours) of paid adoption/foster leave for a parent who has adopted or fostered a child. Eligible employees must meet all of the following criteria to be eligible for parental leave:

- Have been employed with the University for at least 12 months (the 12 months do not need to be consecutive).
- Have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12 consecutive months immediately preceding the date the leave would begin.
- Be a full-time employee employed in a benefits eligible position working more than 30 hours per week.
- In addition, employees must meet one of the following criteria to be eligible for parental leave:
  - Have given birth to a child.
  - Be a spouse or domestic partner of an individual who has given birth to a child.
  - Have adopted a child or been placed with a foster child (in either case, the child must be aged younger than 18). If the adoption involves a child who is incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability, the age limit of 18 may be waived.

### **Amount, Time Frame and Duration of Paid Parental Leave**

- If both parents are employees of MSSU, each parent may receive parental leave as described in this policy, which may be taken concurrently, consecutively, or at different times.
- Each week of paid parental leave is compensated at 100 percent of the employee's regular, straight-time weekly pay. Paid parental leave will be paid on a biweekly/monthly basis on regularly scheduled pay dates.
- Approved paid parental leave may be taken at any time during the 12 weeks immediately following the birth, adoption, or placement of a child with the employee. Paid parental leave may not be used or extended beyond this 12-week time frame.
- The fact that a multiple birth, adoption, or placement occurs (e.g., the birth of twins or adoption of siblings) does not increase the six-week or three-week total amount of paid parental leave granted for that event.
- An employee is only entitled to one event of paid parental leave under this policy during a calendar year, regardless of whether more than one birth, adoption, or foster care placement event occurs within a calendar year time frame. For example, a mother who receives six weeks of paid maternity leave would be ineligible for paid adoption leave in the same calendar year.
- When the adoption is in the legal process, the paid parental leave may begin from the point where the child is placed with the eligible staff employee (granted custody) for the purpose of adoption.
- Parental leave may not be donated or carried over to future years.
- Upon termination of the individual's employment at the University, they will not be paid for any unused paid parental leave for which they were eligible.

### **Coordination with Other Policies**

- Any time taken off work for parental leave must be in accordance with the University's established leave policies.
- Notwithstanding the provisions related to Maternity/Birth Leave and Adoption/Foster Leave discussed above, this policy may not be construed to provide leave in addition to the leave available under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). Please refer to the "Leave Under the FMLA" policy and the additional provisions below for further guidance on the FMLA.
- Paid parental leave taken under this policy will run concurrently with leave under the FMLA; thus, any leave taken under this policy that falls under the definition of

circumstances qualifying for leave due to the birth or placement of a child due to adoption or foster care, the leave will be counted toward the 12 weeks of available FMLA leave per a 12-month period. All other requirements and provisions under the FMLA will apply. In no case will the total amount of leave—whether paid or unpaid—granted to the employee under the FMLA exceed 12 weeks during the 12-month FMLA period.

- After the paid parental leave is exhausted, the balance of FMLA leave (if applicable) will be compensated through employees accrued sick and/or vacation time, if available. Upon exhaustion of accrued sick and/or vacation time, any remaining leave will be unpaid leave.
- All benefits will be maintained for employees during the paid parental leave period just as if they were taking any other paid leave such as paid vacation leave or paid sick leave. If an employee exhausts their leave balances, then such benefit premiums would need to be paid to the University during this time period.
- Vacation leave and sick leave will continue to accrue during the paid parental leave period. Holiday pay will not be counted against parental leave, meaning if a university holiday occurs while the employee is on paid parental leave, such day will be charged to holiday pay.
- An employee who takes paid parental leave that does not qualify for FMLA leave will be afforded the same level of job protection as if the employee was on FMLA qualifying leave.

### **Requests for Paid Parental Leave**

- An employee will make every effort to notify their department of their intention to request Paid Parental Leave at least 30 days prior to the start of leave. The employee will provide the department with the anticipated timing and duration of the leave.
- In order to receive Paid Parental Leave, the employee must complete a Parental Leave Request form along with an FMLA request form and submit the forms to Human Resources for review and approval of FMLA at least 30 days prior to the start of the leave. It is understood that under some circumstances it is not feasible to provide 30 days' notice. In these cases, the employee must provide notice as soon as practicable. Additionally, classified employees approved for and taking parental leave must reflect hours on their timesheet as "Parental Leave."
- If the employee is also eligible for FMLA leave, this will also be noted on the Leave Request & FMLA request form.
- The employee must also note whether they intend to use Paid Parental Leave continuously, intermittently, or on a reduced schedule. Any request for intermittent or reduced schedule leave requires the approval of the employee's department and Human Resources.