

DATE: October 12, 2021

UTK Faculty Family Care Policies

Family care policies for faculty members on **twelve-month appointments** are addressed by the HR policies on Family and Medical Leave, sick leave, or other types of leave. These faculty members should see the Human Resources website for details and procedures pertaining to these policies.

Faculty members who are on **nine-month appointments, including both tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty**, are also eligible for various types of accommodation, some of which are described below. Faculty are encouraged to speak with their supervisors, the vice provost for faculty affairs (vpfacultyaffairs@utk.edu), or a member of the UTK Human Resources staff (FamilyMedicalLeave@utk.edu) if they have questions about these benefits.

Support for Faculty in Cases of Childbirth or Adoption

Faculty who are welcoming new family members through childbirth or adoption receive support through:

1. A minimum assured period of paid **Parental Leave** of six work weeks;
2. Eligibility for **Parental Modified Duties Assignment** (PMDA) for the remaining period of time in the semester.

Parental Leave. Eligible UT faculty and staff are entitled to six weeks (30 days or 240 hours) of **paid** parental leave within the first twelve months following childbirth or adoption that occurs on or after July 1, 2021. This benefit is available to regular, active employees (including 9-month faculty) as defined in [HR0339](#) assigned to work at least 75 percent and on payroll for at least 12 consecutive months prior to the start of the requested leave. This covers both tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty. Employees can use this benefit three times during their careers at the university.

Faculty must use their paid parental leave within 12 months after the birth or adoption of their child. However, adoptive parents may use their paid parental leave before the placement if necessary to fulfill the legal requirements of the adoption process.

Faculty may take paid parental leave in a block (or blocks) of time, or they may take their leave intermittently in one-day increments. Faculty who wish to take leave incrementally should contact the vice provost for faculty affairs.

DATE: October 12, 2021

If both parents are eligible faculty at the University, each parent is entitled to receive six weeks of paid leave. Parents may use their paid parental leave concurrently or during separate periods.

Since the leave is comprised of 30 days or 240 hours, faculty who need to continue to work on externally funded projects and certify their time can do so. For example, if a faculty member needs to certify 5% of their effort each week this would be equated to two hours of time, so the faculty would use 38 parental leave hours each week until it runs-out and then transition to modified duties.

Parental Modified Duties Assignment (PMDA). Because 9-month faculty assignments typically occur during semester blocks, the university has designed a special type of modified duties assignment called *Parental Modified Duties Assignment (PMDA)* that can be used in conjunction with paid Parental Leave to assure that continuity in student instruction and other critical faculty duties are not disrupted.

PMDA is designed to be used in situations where the faculty member chooses six consecutive weeks of Parental Leave. It is not designed to be used independently of Parental Leave, except when faculty are welcoming new family members through foster care placement of a child, which is not covered by the HR0339 Parental Leave policy.

Examples of modified duties include, but are not limited to:

- Course(s) releases for one semester
- Assignment substitution for teaching such as designing a new course or curriculum development and/or assessment
- Engaging in an independent service project that will benefit the unit
- Complete release from on-campus scheduled meetings and obligations related to service
- Diminished research obligations and expectations
- Other desirable and negotiated accommodations.

Process

1. Faculty who want to use their family support benefits should schedule an appointment with their supervisor to discuss their needs and formulate the details of their parental leave and PMDA, which is put into a written agreement. For tenure-seeking faculty, this agreement should also include a request to suspend the probationary clock, if desired.
2. Faculty will need to complete the required [HR Parental Leave form](#) and include a copy of the signed form with their request. To learn more about this form and process, faculty can email FamilyMedicalLeave@utk.edu.
3. The supervisor will forward the PMDA agreement and their recommendation to the dean (if the supervisor is a department head) who will then forward their recommendation to the vice provost for faculty affairs for approval.

DATE: October 12, 2021

Faculty Modified Duties Assignment (FMDA) Due to Illness

If warranted by serious faculty illness or by illness of a family member for whom a faculty member has primary care-giving responsibility, modifications in the faculty member's duties, with or without modification in pay, may be requested by the faculty member. Administrative cooperation in addressing the faculty member's need for temporary time away from the classroom/service is strongly encouraged. Modified duties assignment typically covers one semester.

Process

1. The faculty member discusses their interest in FMDA with their supervisor. In the case of a medical condition, **faculty are not required to provide the details of their medical condition to the supervisor, and the supervisor should not ask.**
2. For any FMDA related to a faculty member's health, documentation must be provided to OED by the faculty member. OED will then confirm receipt of this with the supervisor before the FMDA request can be approved. **Note that specific medical information should be excluded from the actual FMDA agreements. Medical information will be maintained by OED.**
3. The faculty member will work directly with their supervisor to negotiate mutually agreeable terms for service/workload modifications, which are put into a written agreement. The supervisor should include a copy of the notification from OED in the request.
4. The supervisor will forward the FMDA agreement and their recommendation to the dean (if the supervisor is a department head) who will then forward their recommendation to the vice provost for faculty affairs for approval.

Leave of Absence Without Pay

Faculty members who have a serious illness, or who have primary responsibility for the care of a child or an ill or disabled parent or spouse may request leave without pay pursuant to HR0338. This leave normally will be approved for no more than one year.

Process

1. The faculty member discusses their interest in taking a leave of absence without pay with their supervisor. In the case of a medical condition, **faculty are not required to provide the details of their medical condition to the supervisor, and the supervisor should not ask.**

DATE: October 12, 2021

2. Faculty members should complete the appropriate HR form for Family and Medical Leave. Medical documentation will need to be provided as part of the request.
3. HR will send the faculty member notification when the request has been approved. HR will also send a memo to the faculty member's supervisor that the request has been approved.
4. The faculty member should formally request leave without pay in a letter to their supervisor. The supervisor should include a copy of the memo from HR approving the leave of absence. **Specific medical information should be excluded from this request.**
5. The supervisor will forward the faculty member's request and a recommendation to the dean (if the supervisor is a department head).
6. The dean will forward the request and a recommendation to the vice provost for faculty affairs who will make the final decision on the request.

Eligibility for fringe benefits during the leave of absence without pay for family care reasons shall be governed by the policies applicable to other leaves of absence without pay. Faculty should contact HR to learn more about this.

Faculty Leave and APPR

All faculty who are on leave during the semester in which their APPR is normally conducted should have their APPR in the following semester. All faculty who are on modified duties during the semester in which their APPR is scheduled should still plan to complete their review as they normally would. A faculty member's performance expectations should be calibrated according to the conditions of the leave or modified duties.

Tenure-Track Faculty Leave and Suspension of Probationary Period

For Parental Leave and PMDA

Tenure-track faculty members who are granted leave due to childbirth, adoption, or foster care placement of a child are eligible for a one-year suspension of the probationary period.

Process. The faculty member should submit a written request for suspension of the probationary period to their supervisor who then will forward the request and their recommendation to the dean (if the supervisor is a department head). The dean will forward the request and their recommendation to the vice provost for faculty affairs, who will send the

DATE: October 12, 2021

final notification of suspension to the faculty. This request can be part of the request to take parental leave.

For Unpaid Leave of Absence or FMDA

Tenure-track faculty members who are granted an unpaid leave of absence or modified duties because of a serious illness or because they have primary responsibility for the care of an ill or disabled parent or spouse are eligible for a suspension of the probationary period for up to one academic year upon agreement by the department head, dean, and vice provost for faculty affairs. The faculty member's assumption of the primary care-giving responsibility should have occurred within one year prior to the date of the request, and the request must be made before the tenure review process begins. The vice provost for faculty affairs may waive these time requirements for what they deem to be good cause shown in a written statement of the faculty member.

Process. The faculty member must submit a written request for the suspension of the probationary period to the department head or other administrative officer who then will forward the request and their recommendation to the appropriate dean. The request for a clock suspension can be part of the initial leave request. The dean will forward the request and their recommendation to the vice provost for faculty affairs, who will make the final decision on the request. Note the UT Board of Trustees limits probationary period suspensions to a maximum of two years (or two one-year suspensions).

Retention Reviews and Clock Suspension

A tenure-track faculty member should not have a retention review in the year following a clock suspension since that year is not part of the probationary period. The faculty member should have an Annual Performance and Planning Review (APPR) in the year following a clock suspension.

A faculty member's progress towards tenure should not be judged during the suspended period. The faculty member can use accomplishments during the suspended period for the APPR, subsequent retention reviews, Enhanced Tenure-Track Review, and/or their promotion and tenure application. Suspension of the probationary period does not add an additional year to faculty work expectations. Instead, there is no change in what is expected to be accomplished at the end of the 5th year of the probationary period when faculty submit their application to promotion and tenure.

Early Consideration of Tenure

A faculty member who accepts a suspension of their probationary period, but chooses not to use the suspension, will be required to follow the procedures for early consideration for tenure,

DATE: October 12, 2021

as described in the UTK Faculty Handbook. However, tenure cases for faculty who have had suspensions due to childbirth or adoption do not require approval by the UT Board of Trustees.