

Bereavement Policy

Bereavement Leave
Parental Bereavement
Miscarriage
Returning to Work
Culture and Diversity

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Introduction

UECS acknowledges the personal nature of bereavement and grief and is committed to supporting employees in practical and reasonable ways.

UECS recognises that bereavement impacts all individuals differently. This policy is intended to provide information to staff about statutory and occupational entitlements and eligibility in different circumstances.

UECS acknowledges that not all employees will need to take the full allowance, and some employees will need additional time, depending on their relationship with the person who has died and the circumstances of the death. Additional time off can include annual leave or unpaid leave.

You can find out about other types of leave by referring to the UECS [Family Leave](#) and [Special Leave](#) Policies.

Section 1: Bereavement Leave

1.1 About bereavement leave

Bereavement leave is usually intended to cover bereavement of a close relative, dependant or friend. A dependant could be:

- a spouse, partner or civil partner (including same sex partners)
Partner includes someone you are cohabiting with but is not your spouse or civil partner.
- a child
Child includes children for whom you are the adoptive parent, legal guardian or carer.
If the child dies under the age of 18 or is stillborn you may be entitled to additional leave. Please refer to Section 2 for further information.
- a parent
- a step-parent
- a sibling
- someone who lives with you and is part of your family, for example a grandparent who lives in your household.
This does not include tenants or boarders living in your family home, or someone who lives in your household as an employee, for example, a live-in housekeeper
- a person who relies on you for help in the event of an accident, illness or injury, such as an elderly neighbour
- a person who relies you to make care arrangements

Where you have suffered the loss of someone close to you, your manager will consider how best they can offer support, taking into account the relationship between you and the deceased, your involvement in funeral preparations, the distance that may have to be travelled from the local area and any other relevant factors.

Payment

The usual amount of paid leave would be up to 3 days, based on a full time equivalent of 38 hours per week. There will be a pro-rata payment for those who work a differing number of hours per week.

Managers may use discretion to increase paid leave where reasonable and in line with the business needs of UECS.

Additional time off

You will be able to take annual leave at short notice to supplement your bereavement leave. Requests should be directed to your manager.

If you experience a bereavement while on annual leave you can convert your annual leave into bereavement leave and take annual leave at a future date.

Additional time off can include annual leave or unpaid leave. You can find out about other types of leave by referring to the UECS [Family Leave](#) and [Special Leave](#) Policies.

Notification

You should notify your manager as soon as possible on the first day of absence. Your next of kin or a family member can notify your manager on your behalf.

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Section 2: Parental Bereavement

2.1 Statutory parental bereavement leave

You are entitled to 2 weeks statutory parental bereavement leave if your child:

- dies before they reach the age of 18 or
- is stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy or
- the pregnancy is terminated after 24 weeks
in very limited circumstances a termination can take place after 24 weeks if the mother's life is at risk or the child would be born with a severe disability

You can take this leave if you are:

- the birth parent
- the natural parent (you gave birth to the child who has since been adopted, but have a court order to allow you to continue having access to the child)
- the adoptive parent if the child was living with you
- the person who lived with the child and had responsibility for them, for at least 4 weeks before they died
- the partner of the child's parent, if you live with the child and the child's parent in an enduring family relationship

You can take parental bereavement leave as consecutive weeks or separate weeks. If you only want to take one week, you can do so. You should tell your manager:

- when you want your parental bereavement leave to start
- whether you want to take consecutive or separate weeks' leave
- the date of your child's death

To take parental bereavement leave, you should give your manager notice.

If it's within 8 weeks (56 days) of your child dying, you can start your leave as soon as you give notice. You must tell your employer before you start your leave. This can be on the first day of leave as long it's before you're due to start work.

For example, if you've started work and give notice to start your leave straight away, statutory parental bereavement leave must start the following day.

You can also cancel the leave, as long as you tell your employer before your leave starts. This can be on the day your leave is due to start, as long it's before

you're usually due to start work. Any cancelled leave can be taken later by giving notice again.

If leave will be taken more than 8 weeks (56 days) since your child died, you must give your employer 1 weeks' notice to take the leave, and 1 weeks' notice if you want to cancel the leave. Any cancelled leave can be taken later by giving notice again

2.2 Parental bereavement pay

If you have been employed by UECS for at least 26 weeks, you will be entitled to statutory parental bereavement pay if all of the following apply:

- your child dies under the age of 18 or is stillborn after 24 weeks of pregnancy
- you are employed by UECS when your child died
- you earn at least the average weekly amount set by the government.

Details are provided on the Direct.Gov website here; [Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay and Leave: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/statutory-parental-bereavement-pay-and-leave)

If you are eligible you will receive one of the following, whichever is lower:

- a specified weekly amount set by the government. Details are provided on the Direct.Gov website here; [Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay and Leave: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/statutory-parental-bereavement-pay-and-leave)
- 90% of your average weekly earnings

To enable us to pay you for this time off, you must ask in writing (give 'notice') for statutory parental bereavement pay within 28 days of taking statutory parental bereavement leave, starting from the first day of the week that you are claiming the payment for.

Your notice should state that you are entitled to statutory parental bereavement pay and include:

- your name
- the start and end dates of the leave they want to claim the pay for
- the date of your child's death
- your relationship with the child

Additional time off

Additional time off can include annual leave or unpaid leave. You can find out about other types of leave by referring to the UECS [Family Leave](#) and [Special](#)

[Leave](#) Policies.

2.3 Bereavement leave and maternity, paternity or shared parental leave

If your child dies or is stillborn, you can still take any statutory and occupational maternity, paternity or shared parental leave you are entitled to for that child, as well as any parental bereavement leave. You can take parental bereavement leave within 56 weeks.

2.4 Bereavement leave and adoption leave

If you are on adoption leave and your newly adopted child dies, your statutory and occupational adoption leave will end 8 weeks after the end of the week in which the child dies. You can take 2 weeks of parental bereavement leave.

Section 3: Miscarriage

3.1 Absence due to miscarriage

If you or your partner has a miscarriage in the first 24 weeks of pregnancy, UECS recognises this is a bereavement.

Up to 2 weeks sickness absence related to a miscarriage will be recorded as 'pregnancy related sickness'. This absence will be kept separate to other types of sickness and will not count towards any review or trigger points as set out in the UECS sickness absence policy.

You can self-certify for up to seven days as usual, noting that the absence is pregnancy related. After that you will need to get a Statement of Fitness for Work from your GP or other medical practitioner. You may want to ask your GP to backdate the Statement of Fitness for Work to confirm that the leave is related to miscarriage.

Additional time off

Additional time off can include annual leave or unpaid leave. You can find out about other types of leave by referring to the UECS [Family Leave](#) and [Special Leave](#) Policies.

Miscarriage that happens at work

We understand it can be a very distressing time if your miscarriage happens at work.

If you need assistance, for example help contacting a partner or family member, or you need immediate medical help such as a first aider, speak to your manager, a trusted colleague or call Security and Campus Safety on (01206 87)2222. All Security and Campus Safety staff are first aid trained.

If you need to leave the premises, you should report a sickness absence to your manager. You do not have to report the exact reasons for your sickness absence if you do not feel comfortable to do so.

Section 4: Returning to Work

4.1 Return to work arrangements

Going back to work can be a welcome return to routine for some, and a worrying prospect for others. It is up to you to make the decision when you are ready within the limits of this policy, and the UECS [Family Leave](#) and [Special Leave](#) Policies.

To make things easier, your manager will offer a return to work meeting to check that you feel fully ready to resume work, and to find out if you need any adjustments to the role. This may include a phased return on reduced hours or a change to your duties for a period.

You may like to have an informal meeting for coffee to help reduce anxiety around seeing everyone for the first time on your day back at work.

Some people find these options help them get back into work, while others prefer to go back to normal immediately. Some people find flexibility or adjustments to their job can help them return to work more quickly.

Your manager can make some allowances for performance over the first few weeks and months back at work. Your manager may ask [Occupational Health](#) to contact you before you return to work. You may also wish to contact the [University Employee Assistance Programme](#) for additional support (including counselling).

Section 5: Culture and Diversity

5.1 Recognising cultural differences

UECS recognises that different cultures respond to death in significantly different ways.

Your manager will check whether your religion, belief or culture requires you to observe any particular practices or make special arrangements which would require you being off work at a particular time.

You should not assume that your manager is aware of any such requirements, and you should draw this to your manager's attention as soon as possible.

Managers who are unsure of how to respond to a bereaved employee from a different culture should ask the bereaved employee or someone else from their cultural group about what is appropriate.

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