



Administrative Circular AC/HR/42

Published on 1 October 2014
In English, French version to follow

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE OF UNESCO STAFF MEMBERS (LEAVE) - CHANGES TO STAFF RULES - Additional leave for breastfeeding purposes

1. The purpose of the present Administrative Circular is to inform staff members of changes in the maternity leave provisions and related amendments to the Staff Rules, as approved by the Director-General.
2. At present, staff members are entitled to 16 weeks' maternity leave with full pay upon presentation of a medical certificate stating the probable date of confinement.
3. In addition, staff members are entitled to additional 4 weeks paid leave for the purpose of breastfeeding, subject to approval by the Chief Medical Officer. This provision was introduced in 2002 as part of UNESCO's family friendly measures. However, this is not UN Common system practice and UNESCO is the only organization which applies this 4 weeks additional leave. Therefore, in order to harmonize UNESCO's policies with the United Nations Common System policies this exceptional provision will no longer apply.
4. Staff Rule 106.2 is therefore amended as follows:

Rule 106.2 Maternity leave

- (a) *A staff member shall be entitled to sixteen weeks' maternity leave with full pay upon presentation of a medical certificate stating the probable date of her confinement.*
 - (b) *The maternity leave may commence, at the choice of the expectant mother, between the sixth and the third week preceding the probable date of her confinement; at her request, the leave may commence two weeks only before the probable date of her confinement, provided that the Medical Officer of the Organization certifies that her state of health allows her to discharge her duties properly.*
 - (c) *Maternity leave shall in no case terminate less than eight weeks after the actual date of confinement.*
 - (d) *In exceptional circumstances, such as multiple births, disability, serious injury or illness of the child (or children), staff members shall be entitled to four weeks additional paid leave. Such extended leave shall be subject to approval by the Chief Medical Officer of the Organization.*
 - (e) ~~*Staff members shall be entitled to four weeks additional paid leave for the purpose of breastfeeding their newborn child, subject to approval by the Chief Medical Officer.*~~
 - (f) *A staff member who returns to duty following maternity leave, may take two hours per day to breastfeed her newborn child until the child reaches the age of nine months.*
 - (g) *Staff members returning from maternity leave may request flexible working hours or part-time working schedule to take care of their newborn child. Such request shall be considered favourably, subject to the requirements of the work unit.*
 - (h) *Except in cases covered by Staff Regulations 9.1.2 and 10.2, a staff member shall not be separated from service during her maternity leave.*
5. The relevant provisions of the HR Manual Item 6.4 will be amended accordingly.

Effective date

6. This Administrative Circular enters into force on 1 January 2015. Staff members who start their maternity leave before that date are not affected by these new provisions.

For the Director-General:

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