Updates Made to Parental Leave, Transfer of Leave Policies

University Communications
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Two University policies addressing leave benefits for employees have been updated.

An update to the UA's Paid Parental Leave policy reduces the number of days an employee must return to work after taking the leave without having to reimburse the University for the pay and benefits. Updates to the Compassionate Transfer of Leave policy were made to streamline the request and administrative procedures.

The updates, made by the Division of Human Resources [1], took effect in October, and are meant to make the policies more employee-centric as well as bring them more in line with the same ones at Arizona's other state universities.

**Paid Parental Leave Policy** [2]

Under the Paid Parental Leave Policy, employees eligible for full benefits can take up to six weeks of paid parental leave within 12 weeks of the birth or adoption of a child.

Before the update, an employee who returned to work after parental leave but then left the University within 90 days was required to pay back the salary and benefits the leave provided. The revised policy requires employees to work at least 30 days following parental leave to avoid the reimbursement requirement.

The change was made in response to multiple requests from units across campus, said Helena Rodrigues, associate vice president for human resources.

"While the vast majority of parents are able to navigate work and new parental responsibilities, on occasion parents find it is in the best interest of their family to discontinue employment. We want to support parents in making the right choice and help departments in returning to full capacity as soon as possible."

To be eligible for parental leave, employees must have been working continuously for a year, and parental leave can be taken only once per 12-month period.

**Compassionate Transfer of Leave Policy** [3]

The Compassionate Transfer of Leave Policy allows vacation-eligible employees, who have exhausted their available paid time off, to receive donated vacation hours in the event of a catastrophic or life-threatening illness.
Under the previous version of the policy, employees needed to make a direct donation request from their colleagues. Under the new policy, donations will be made from a pool of unused vacation hours.

This change, too, came at the request of units across campus, said Allison Vaillancourt, vice president for business affairs and human resources.

"We heard from our community that the process to solicit and submit these hours was unnecessarily confusing, and that having to ask for hours from one's colleagues added to, rather than alleviated, an employee's stress during an already difficult time."

Additional changes to the policy include a cap of 480 hours within a rolling 12-month period.

Employees with short-term disability insurance typically have two-thirds of their salary covered while they are on leave. In those cases, they would be eligible to receive donated hours equaling one-third of their time away, as their salary for the remaining hours would be provided under their short-term disability policy.

The process for requesting a transfer of leave involves submitting a request form, along with a health provider’s statement, to an employee’s departmental human resources representative or business manager. The request must be initiated as soon as an employee anticipates being unable to work for 45 days and knows he or she will not have enough leave time to cover the absence.

Updates to both policies were made in accordance with the University policy on policy-making, which includes offering the University community the opportunity to provide feedback on policy provisions.

"Those of us who work at the University recognize that we have remarkable colleagues," Vaillancourt said. "These policies are one way for us to signal how much we value them and want them to be successful."

Source URL: https://uaatwork.arizona.edu/lqp/updates-made-parental-leave-transfer-leave-policies

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