



The Department of Materials actively supports both female and male staff of all grades in developing a healthy balance between work and family commitments. Flexible working arrangements are encouraged, allowing childcare and other caring responsibilities to be planned and managed effectively. This factsheet is designed for new members of the department and those planning to start a family, to provide an overview of relevant information and to signpost sources where further details can be found.

1. Planning for a family?

If you are planning for a family, please contact the departmental HR Manager (tom.lake@materials.ox.ac.uk) as soon as possible. You will then be provided with further information on the process for taking the relevant type of family leave. For staff intending to take maternity leave, this will include a discussion of your maternity leave plan. This plan includes details of your intended leave dates and arrangements, and serves as a formal notification to the department. This needs to be completed by the Qualifying week, which is 15 weeks before the expected week of childbirth.

Exposure to certain chemicals and radiation such as X-rays can be harmful to developing babies, particularly in the very early stages of pregnancy and when mothers are breast feeding. The department will therefore arrange for a full risk assessment to be completed for expectant mothers. Further details on departmental safety can be found here: <http://www.materials.ox.ac.uk/local/safety-information.html>

Expectant mothers are eligible for paid leave to attend antenatal appointments. Please notify your line manager in advance if you wish to attend appointments.

<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/during/family/maternity/before/>

2. Family Leave

Maternity Leave

All pregnant employees are entitled to 52 weeks' statutory maternity leave, no matter how long they have worked for the University. To be eligible for the university's contractual maternity pay scheme however, at the qualifying week (15 weeks before the baby is due) the employee must:

- i. hold a current CMS contract of employment with the University; and
- ii. have at least 26 weeks' continuous service with the University, as an employee; and
- iii. provide her department with the correct notification of her intention to take leave, and
- iv. confirm her intention to return to work following the birth of her baby, for a minimum of three months.

The University Maternity Scheme entitles new mothers to up to 52 weeks of leave, provided their contract of employment covers the entire proposed maternity period. The first 26 weeks are at full pay, then the next 13 weeks at the rate of Statutory Maternity Pay (<https://www.gov.uk/statutory-maternity-pay>), followed by up to 13 weeks of unpaid leave.

<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/during/family/maternity/>



This document has been written as part of the action plan instigated by the Silver Athena Swan Award received by the Department of Materials in 2012 in recognition of our commitment to gender equality for all staff and students. (with thanks to the Zoology Department who first produced their Parents Factsheet developed by the Zoology Department (http://www.zoo.ox.ac.uk/athena_swan)).



Paternity Leave

Paternity leave is an entitlement to time off that may be taken by the biological father or the mother's partner (regardless of gender or marital status) following the birth or adoption of their child. Paternity leave is intended to support parents in the early stages of a child's life/adoption. All eligible employees may be able to take one or two weeks' Ordinary Paternity Leave (OPL), which may be available at full pay. Paternity leave must be taken in the first 56 days following the birth or adoption of a child.

To qualify, you must have been employed continuously for 26 weeks before the "qualifying week".

<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/during/family/paternity/>

Adoption Leave

Adoption leave follows the same principals, in that one parent is entitled to take the equivalent of maternity leave (if eligible), while the other can take the equivalent of paternity leave (if eligible).

<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/during/family/adoption/>

Shared Parental Leave (SPL)

SPL enables eligible parents, if they so wish, to share a period of leave and pay in the 52 weeks immediately following the birth or adoption of their child.

If both parents meet the eligibility criteria, the mother/primary adopter has the option to end their maternity or adoption leave/pay or allowance early and to convert any 'unused' part of that leave and/or pay into SPL. A mother or primary adopter must take the first two weeks following the birth or placement of the child as compulsory maternity or adoption leave. After that, maternity or adoption leave and pay may be curtailed and eligible parents may split the remainder of the 52 week leave and 39 week pay entitlement, i.e. up to 50 weeks of leave and up to 37 weeks of pay, between them. <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/during/family/spl/>

Parental (unpaid) Leave

If you have been an employee

Fixed-term Contracts

Fixed-term contracts are common within the department, in particularly for post-doctoral research assistants and independent research fellows. If you are funded on a grant or fellowship and are taking maternity or adoption leave, whether your contract can be extended accordingly will depend on the terms of the funder.

For further details on grants and fellowships, contact Joanna.roberts@materials.ox.ac.uk

For further information on any aspect of family leave, please contact the HR Manager (tom.lake@materials.ox.ac.uk) or visit the relevant section of the Personnel Services website: <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/>

Outreach

The Department of Materials has a very active outreach team who liaise with schools and offer activities and events for Teachers and students with the aim of raising public awareness of Materials Science as a scientific discipline and enthusing and inspiring the next generation of scientists. Activities include:

- Residential courses
- Masterclasses
- Workshops
- Open Days
- School Visits

As a member of the department the opportunity exists to assist with the development and delivery of these activities and presentations, benefits of which include improving scientific communication skills, meeting other members of the department and having a rewarding, enjoyable time.

There are particular benefits to anyone who would like to pursue a career in Teaching. The department offers free STEM Ambassador Training through Science Oxford for those interested which includes DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks. As a STEM ambassador a wealth of voluntary science activities are also open up to you in your local community which you can choose to get involved with.

Further information can be requested from Jayne Shaw Jayne.shaw@materials.ox.ac.uk

continuously for at least a year and have a child under 5 years of age (or 18 years if your child is disabled), you have a statutory right to up to 13 weeks a year unpaid leave. <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/during/family/parental/>

3. Returning to Work

Returning to work after a career break can be daunting as it is common to feel 'out of touch' after even relatively short periods of absence.

Keeping in Touch (KIT) days are a way of enabling women on maternity leave to spend up to 10 days at work, with pay. Most people prefer to drop in on an informal basis. This is particularly important for research staff whose jobs can't be "covered" in the same way by someone else while they are on leave.

The Daphne Jackson Trust is a charity dedicated to scientists returning to work after a career break

<http://www.daphnejackson.org>



The Royal Society Dorothy Hodgkin Research Fellowships support excellent scientists at an early stage of their career and are specifically aimed at researchers who require flexible working due to circumstances such as

parenting or caring responsibilities or health issues. Female candidates are particularly encouraged to apply. <https://royalsociety.org/grants-schemes-awards/grants/dorothy-hodgkin-fellowship/>

Academic and research staff can apply to the Returning Carers Fund to support the development of their research career

following a break in their career or a period of leave for caring responsibilities. This can include maternity, adoption and shared parental leave, or leave to care for an ill, disabled or elderly family member.

Applications can be submitted termly by Friday of 5th week. Please contact the HR Manager (tom.lake@materials.ox.ac.uk) for further information.

Flexible working

Flexible working is encouraged wherever operationally possible at all levels within the Materials Department. To apply for flexible working, you will need to complete a flexible working application form. For further details please contact the HR Manager (tom.lake@materials.ox.ac.uk)

- Everyone has the right to request flexible working, provided they have worked for their employer for at least 26 weeks continuously and have not made another application during the past 12 months.
- Flexible working can include part-time working, non-standard working hours, working from home and unpaid leave during school holiday.
- Requests for flexible working should be discussed with your line manager in the first instance.
- Employers are not obliged to concede to requests for flexible working, but they are obliged to present an argument to support their decision.

<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/during/flexible/>

4. Childcare

Nurseries

The University has four nurseries in Oxford and has subsidised places at five nurseries in and around Oxford. The waiting list for the

New to Oxford?



Daily Info

<http://www.dailyinfo.co.uk/whatson>

Living in Oxford

http://www.ox.ac.uk/new_to_the_university/

Network

<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/gender/own>

New Parent Network

<http://new-parent-network.info>

University nurseries is very long, therefore it is advisable to put your name down on the list in early pregnancy. Applications are made directly to the University Childcare Service Team and are kept confidential. The Materials department sponsors a priority place at the University nursery in Jack Straws Lane, and is open to sponsoring more places if the need arises. Securing a sponsored place does not guarantee a place will be available at the nursery, but it promotes your position on the waiting list.

Full information about University nurseries can be found at: <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare/nurseryinformation/>

College nurseries are available at Somerville, St Anne's, Wolfson, Balliol and Christchurch.

ADVICE: Owing to the very long waiting lists it is important that parents look into alternative childcare and do not rely solely on getting a place at the university nurseries.

College members have priority places and again, lengthy waiting lists are a feature.

Information on other childcare options can be obtained from Oxfordshire County Council (<http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/information-parents>).

Paying for childcare

Childcare can be expensive; the University offers two schemes which help parents save tax and national insurance on their childcare costs.

The Nursery Fee Salary Sacrifice Scheme involves the employee agreeing to reduce his/her salary by the amount of his/her nursery fee and in return they benefit from lower tax and national insurance deductions on the reduced salary. The salary deduction is paid direct by the University to the nursery provider. Under current legislation, the scheme only applies to nurseries where the employer takes part in "financing and

managing the provision of the care".

<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare/salariesacrificescheme/>

The **Childcare Voucher Scheme** is more flexible, and can be used to pay for nursery fees, holiday play schemes, child minders, nannies etc. Up to £243 per month can be deducted from your salary and paid directly to your childcarer. You will save money by not paying tax or national insurance on this amount. If both parents work for the University, both of you can claim.

<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare/voucherscheme/>

School holidays

The school holidays are long and it is not possible to cover them with annual leave. In some circumstances it may be possible to benefit from a flexible working arrangement to address this difficulty. Alternatively there are a number of kids holiday clubs in the area that operate in school holidays and half terms, and the University work in partnership with several of them (<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare/playscheme/>).

These currently include:

- Ultimate Activity Camps. 15% discount for university staff and students.
- Schools of Sport. Elite sports coaching. 15% discount for university staff and students
- Create Holiday Club, which is based at a Montessori farm school environment in Elsfield, just outside Oxford.
- Mini-Media is a holiday playscheme with exciting art adventure days workshops.

There are a number of other playschemes in the area such as <http://campenergy.com> and <http://www.supercamps.co.uk/>.

Some local primary schools also offer their own holiday playschemes.

Please treat this as a rough guide that we believe gives accurate information as of December 2016. If you discover errors, weblinks that no longer work or have suggestions for improvements, please contact Tom Lake