**Guidance for Line Managers: Long term leave**

This guidance document is for line managers of staff who are leaving for, or returning from long term leave, whether that is **planned** (e.g. maternity/ parental leave, career break) or **unplanned** (e.g. long-term illness of 4 weeks or more). For all forms of leave, you are advised to read the relevant [HR policies](https://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/hr/leave-absence/) and contact HR if you have any queries (contacts are on the [School intranet pages](https://internal.lboro.ac.uk/info/aacme/hr-and-induction/)).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Pre-leave**  | **Planned leave** |
| **3-6 months prior** | * Staff member tells you they will be going on leave – if it is for maternity leave congratulate them!
 |
| * Meet the staff member to discuss arrangements and check they are familiar with the relevant HR policy. Make a note of their responsibilities that will need to be covered during break:
	+ Daily tasks, admin roles.
	+ Membership of committees/groups.
	+ Supervision or line management responsibilities.
	+ Role specific activities (e.g., lab based, teaching, project supervision).
 |
| * For maternity leave, assume that a cover post will be required – discuss with HR and your own line manager. If not, who will cover the responsibilities of the staff member going on leave? Prior to re-allocation of duties, consider training requirements for any cover staff.
 |
| * Check in with them regularly before they go on a break. How are they feeling? Are they able to manage their current workload?
 |
| **1 month prior** | * Meet with the staff member to discuss expectations – during leave and after returning. Bear in mind that these expectations may change and ensure that the agreed plan fits the operational requirements of the department, as well as supporting the staff member.
	+ How often will you be in contact when they are away?
	+ Discuss keeping in touch days which are at the discretion of the line manager and the member of staff (up to a maximum of 10). Establish how the member of staff would like to use these.
	+ Discuss expectations for when they return - including a phased return to their role, adjustment to workload, PDR, career progression and if they wish to return part-time. You could consider the following aspects below and advise the staff member that you will meet in the first week of their return to discuss these.
		- Adjustments to work allocation (e.g., for RTE staff this may be a reduction in teaching load if it can be re-allocated)
		- An opportunity to restart / ramp-up research
		- Any changes to major admin / leadership / service roles
		- Admin/Technical – adjustment of workload and responsibilities if necessary

*Note: Remember it isn’t about picking up where they left off or solely meeting the expectations of the member of staff.*  |
| **During leave**  | **Unplanned leave** |
| * Where an employee is absent for a prolonged period (more than 4 weeks), or recurrent periods of time with a serious health problem, work responsibilities should be considered and regular contact between the manager and employee should be maintained (dependent on circumstances).
* If they are well enough to have a discussion, contact the staff member to discuss their responsibilities that will need to be covered during the break:
	+ Daily tasks, admin roles.
	+ Membership of committees/groups.
	+ Any supervision or line management responsibilities.
	+ Role specific activities (e.g., lab based, teaching, project supervision).
 |
| * Decide who will cover these responsibilities and arrange for training of cover staff, if necessary.
 |
| * If possible, agree a set of contact points with the member of staff, or other methods to update the line manager on their health and wellbeing
 |
| * When appropriate, discuss arrangements for their return to work and how this should be phased.
 |
| **During leave****8 weeks prior to return**  | **Planned leave** |
| * Check in with them as agreed. It is ok if they change their mind about contact arrangements.
 |
| * Keeping in touch days (max. 10) – discuss and update if and how they will be used. The keeping in touch form and information about the process can be found through the HR webpages - [Family leave | Human Resources | Loughborough University (lboro.ac.uk)](https://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/hr/leave-absence/family-leave/)
* For maternity and shared parental leave, the returner will be required to give notice of their return to work 8 weeks before they intend to do so.
* If a maternity cover post has been recruited to cover responsibilities of the staff member on planned leave, consider how workload responsibilities will be distributed if the staff member returns to work on a reduced load.
 |
| **Return to work** | **Planned and unplanned leave** |
|  | * Revisit the relevant [HR policies](https://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/hr/leave-absence/) before the staff member returns.
 |
| **1 week** | * *Unplanned leave:* For long term sickness leave refer to Section 10 (Phased return to work) of the Sickness and Absence policy – which can be found [here](https://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/hr/leave-absence/sickness-absence/).
* *Maternity leave:* Ensure the staff member is aware of the Wellbeing Room which can be used for expressing milk (Room 2.015 S Building, situated within the Student Support Office)
* First meeting after return (within 1 week).
	+ Update them on any departmental changes (new staff, new roles).
	+ Planned leave: discuss any change in expectations prior to leave. How have these changed and why?
	+ Identify any training requirements upon their return.
	+ Discuss how frequently they want to meet in the 6 months after returning.
	+ Complete the action plan form (see appendix) to accommodate an adjusted workload. For example, for RTE staff, a reduced teaching load if it can be re-allocated, an opportunity to restart/ramp up research, avoidance of major admin/leadership/service roles.
 |
| **1-6 months after return** | * In the next team or department staff meeting welcome them back.
 |
| * Facilitate mentorship if appropriate.
 |
| * Meet them again soon after returning – how are they feeling? Are they feeling able to manage their current workload?
 |
| * Refer to [staff support networks](https://www.lboro.ac.uk/schools/aacme/edi/resources/) at the University and the [Carers Grant Support](https://internal.lboro.ac.uk/info/media/intranet/content/schools-and-departments/aacme/communications/AACME%20carer%20grant%20application.docx)
 |

If you have any questions relating to the HR policies, get in touch with one of the [AACME HR contacts](https://internal.lboro.ac.uk/info/aacme/hr-and-induction/). This guidance is intended to supplement, not replace, any existing HR guidance.

APPENDIX.

Return to Work Action Plan (template)

*Use this template if it is helpful to guide and record your conversations between line managers and staff who have just returned from long term leave.*

During your first returner’s meeting with your Line Manager, complete columns A-E. Your Line Manager will complete column F at the same time. Once this is done, please submit the proposed action plan to the Head of Department for approval.

Please fill in as many actions as are relevant for you (add rows as necessary) and be as specific as possible with your proposed actions. The proposed actions will usually include training or other developmental activities, and if possible, reduction of teaching, admin or management duties.

Name Staff Member…………………………………………………………………

Return to work date…………………………………………………………

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **A Action** | **B Reason**  | **C** **Time scale**  | **D Measure of Success** | **E** **Decision on fellowship** | **F HoD on operational viability** |
| *e.g.* reduction of *teaching duties including modules x and y* | *e.g. Finish the research for journal article, write it and submit it, and submit funding bid* | *e.g. Semester 2* | *e.g. Submission of article and funding bid* | *e.g. Yes will apply next round for School fellowship of one semester* | *e.g. Confirmed we have capacity within the division to cover teaching on module x and y.* |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

Head of Department approval………………………………………………………………..

*FAO Leavers/Returners: If you would like any support or to discuss your action plan before approval, please reach our to one of* [*EDI Committee*](https://www.lboro.ac.uk/schools/aacme/edi/committee/members/) *members.*