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POLICY TITLE	Paid Parental Leave
SCOPE OF POLICY	USC System
DATE OF REVISION	October 16, 2026
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Vice President for Human Resources and Organizational Excellence
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE	Division of Human Resources

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PURPOSE

This document sets forth the University of South Carolina's Paid Parental Leave (PPL) program in accordance with applicable South Carolina law and State Human Resources regulations and guidance.

DEFINITIONS

Base Pay: The rate of pay approved for an employee in their position exclusive of any additional pay, such as supplements, bonuses, temporary salary adjustments, shift differential pay, on-call pay, special assignment pay, or market or geographic differential pay.

Child: a newborn biological child or foster child in state custody and under the age of 18 or a child initially legally placed for adoption and under the age of 18. No child can have more than two parents eligible for paid parental leave.

Eligible State Employee: An employee occupying any percentage of a full-time equivalent (FTE) position, research grant (RGP) position or time-limited (TL) position as of the date of the qualifying event. Employees in temporary positions are not eligible for PPL.

Paid Parental Leave (PPL): Six weeks or four weeks of paid leave, as applicable, based on the qualifying event and the employee's relationship to the child. PPL is paid at the employee's rate of pay at the time the leave is taken. Leave for an eligible part-time employee is prorated based on the percentage of hours the employee is normally scheduled to work.

Parent/Co-Parent: the person listed as a legal parent in the applicable required documentation (birth certificate, adoption order, etc.) or the foster parent of a child.

Qualifying Event: the birth of a newborn biological child to an eligible state employee, or after a co-parent's birth of a newborn child, fostering a child in state custody, the initial legal placement of a child by adoption or stillbirth. Stillbirths are considered births for the purposes of PPL. A "Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth" issued in accordance with Section 44-63-55 of the South Carolina Code of Laws should be provided as documentation of this qualifying event.

Rate of Pay: the base pay of an employee to include any non-base salary adjustments to be paid through the University's payroll system that is in effect at the time paid parental leave is taken. This may include an administrative salary adjustment, faculty overload, grant salary adjustment, market or geographical differential pay, special assignment pay or temporary salary adjustment. Rate of pay does not include bonuses, lump-sum payments, dual employment compensation, compensation paid directly by a foundation or other external source or a salary adjustment that is not in effect while the employee is using paid parental leave.

POLICY STATEMENT

Eligible employees are entitled to paid parental leave upon the occurrence of a qualifying event, subject to the eligibility requirements, leave amounts, and usage provisions in this policy. Paid parental leave is available for birth or stillbirth, adoption, and foster-care placement.

Eligibility

To be eligible for PPL the employee must occupy all or part of an FTE, RGP or TL position. Employees in temporary positions are not eligible for PPL. There is no service requirement to be eligible for PPL. Employees occupying all or part of an FTE, RGP or TL position are immediately eligible for PPL.

Eligibility determinations are made as of the date of the qualifying event. If an employee does not meet all eligibility requirements as of the date of the birth, stillbirth, adoption, or foster care they are not eligible for PPL even if they later meet the eligibility requirements.

An eligible state employee may receive no more than one occurrence of paid parental leave during any twelve-month period, even if more than one qualifying event occurs. A subsequent qualifying event may occur within that twelve-month period; however, paid parental leave for the subsequent event may not begin until at least twelve months after the end date of the employee's prior period of paid parental leave.

Regardless of the qualifying event, the entitlement to PPL expires at the end of the twelve-month period beginning on the date of the qualifying event. PPL does not accumulate for subsequent use, may not be donated and any unused PPL is forfeited at the end of the twelve-month period or upon separation from employment.

Paid Parental Leave Entitlement

The amount of PPL available depends on the qualifying event and the employee's relationship to the child. Employees occupying all or part of a full-time equivalent (FTE) position, research grant (RGP) position or time-limited (TL) position are eligible for PPL as described below:

Qualifying Event	Eligible Employee	PPL Available
Adoption	Employee who is primarily responsible for furnishing the care and nurture of a child under age 18 initially placed for legal adoption.	Six Weeks
Adoption	Employee who is not primarily responsible for furnishing the care and nurture of a child under age 18 initially placed for legal adoption.	Four Weeks
Birth or Stillbirth	Employee who gives birth to a child or experiences stillbirth of a biological newborn child.	Six Weeks
Birth or Stillbirth	Employee whose co-parent gives birth to a child or experiences stillbirth of a biological newborn child.	Four Weeks
Foster Care	Employee who fosters a child under age 18 in state custody.	Four Weeks

Only one eligible state employee may be designated as the parent primarily responsible for furnishing the care and nurture of a child initially place for legal adoption. If both parents are eligible state employees, PPL may be taken concurrently, consecutively or at a different time than the other eligible state employee. No child may have more than two parents eligible for PPL.

Paid Parental Leave Usage

Employees do not have to exhaust all other forms of leave before being eligible to take PPL. If an employee requires leave before the birth, adoption, or foster care placement due to medical reasons or to fulfill legal obligations, other available leave balances shall be utilized per the University's leave policy. PPL may not be used before the qualifying event.

When a holiday falls during a period of PPL, the employee is entitled to holiday pay and the holiday will not be counted toward the total leave hours received for PPL.

PPL is paid at the employee's rate of pay at the time the leave is taken.

A. Adoption, Birth or Stillbirth:

1. Leave taken for an adoption or birth must be taken consecutively.

2. Once leave commences, the employee must continue leave until the leave is exhausted or the employee chooses to return to work. Any leave remaining when the employee returns to work is forfeited.

B. Foster Care:

1. Leave for foster care placement may be taken consecutively or upon request and approval in nonconsecutive one-week increments.

2. The employee is not permitted to take leave in increments smaller than one week.

Paid Parental Leave and FMLA Leave

PPL must run concurrently with leave taken pursuant to the Family Medical and Leave Act (FMLA) and any other unpaid leave to which the eligible state employee may be entitled as a result of the qualifying event.

However, an eligible state employee shall be eligible for PPL even if the employee has exhausted their FMLA leave, or is not eligible for FMLA coverage, at the time of the qualifying event.

If an employee becomes eligible for FMLA leave while on PPL, the employee must use FMLA leave, and the PPL runs concurrently with FMLA leave.

Payment While Using Paid Parental Leave and Accrual of Other Leave Types

The hours of PPL are calculated based on the employee's average workday.

Eligible state employees shall accrue annual and sick leave at the normal rate and receive holiday pay while on PPL, if applicable.

Requesting Paid Parental Leave

Employees must complete and submit the PPL Request.

Request to use PPL should be submitted at least thirty (30) days before the date the PPL will start. If thirty (30) days' notice is not possible, an employee is required to provide notice as soon as practicable.

An employee may withdraw their request for PPL at any time prior to the start of the PPL. However, an employee on FMLA leave may not use leave without pay if PPL is available. The request to withdraw the request must be submitted in writing.

Upon receiving a request for PPL and required documentation following a qualifying event, the University will notify the employee of their eligibility status within five (5) business days or as soon as is practical.

Required Documentation

The documentation required for PPL is provided in the table below. The employee is required to supply only one form of documentation and may choose which documentation to provide based on the applicable qualifying event.

Qualifying Event	Required Documentation (Employee Selects One)
Adoption	• Adoption order and/or agreement confirming initial date of placement
Birth or Stillbirth	• Birth Certificate or Proof of Birth • Certificate of Birth Resulting in Stillbirth • Certified DNA Results • Custody Order
Foster Placement	• Foster Care Placement Agreement • Custody Order

Employees must submit the requested required documentation to receive PPL within thirty (30) days of the start of PPL or as soon as is practical after the documentation becomes available. Employees may be permitted to begin PPL following the qualifying event and pending receipt of this documentation. However, if the required documentation is not provided within thirty (30) days from the start of the PPL, the employee will be required to substitute all other paid leave available and, if sufficient leave is not available, will be placed on Leave Without Pay for the period they were absent from work. Please note the documentation required related to FMLA leave is governed by the FMLA. While the request for PPL and the paperwork related to FMLA leave require some of the same information, the PPL request and FMLA paperwork are separate documents.

All documents must include the date of the qualifying event and reflect the employee's legal relationship to the child, as applicable. Documentation of stillbirth must meet applicable State Human Resources guidance and University procedures.

PROCEDURES

Procedures, forms, and general guidance related to this policy can be found on the Division of Human Resources website at http://hr.sc.edu/

Related University, State and Federal Policies

HR 1.03 Annual Leave

HR 1.06 Sick Leave

HR 1.07 Family and Medical Leave

HR 1.09 Other Leave with Pay

HISTORY OF REVISIONS

DATE OF REVISION	REASON FOR REVISION
October 1, 2022	New Policy Approval
September 18, 2024	Updated to comply with the new State Human Resources Regulations and other clarifications.
October 16, 2026	Updated to comply with the expanded paid parental leave eligibility, qualifying events and amount of leave.