

Maternity and Parental Leaves Guide

Eligibility for a maternity and parental leave

Under the Employment Standards Act of Ontario any employee is entitled to an **unpaid** pregnancy/maternity (up to 17 weeks) and **unpaid** parental leave (up to 61-63 weeks) provided they were employed for a least 13 weeks prior to taking such a leave.

- [Employment Standards Act \(ESA\) link](#)

Eligibility for top-up payments

Generally, continuing and term employees with at least 6 months of continuing service at the university are eligible for top-up payments during maternity and parental leaves.

Note: please refer to your [collective agreement](#) or [HR policies](#) for specific details regarding leave entitlements and benefits.

Top-up payments

There are 17 weeks of top-up payments available from the University to employees within the Professional Services employee groups (up to 21 weeks for CUPE 2424 members). The balance of leave is unpaid (EI or QPIP benefits only).

Faculty members are entitled to top-up payments for the entire duration of leave provided they are eligible for EI or QPIP maternity and/or parental benefits.

Note: top-up payments, regardless of the type of EI parental benefit rate (standard or extended), are equal to the difference between 95% salary and the **standard** EI or QPIP benefit rate.

Pregnancy/Maternity

You must submit to the Human Resources (HumanResources@cunet.carleton.ca) the completed and signed (by you and the head of your unit) [maternity/parental leave request form](#) accompanied by a medical certificate stating the due date. To ensure timely processing of leaves, three-four months of advance notice is appreciated.

You can start pregnancy/maternity leave as early as 17 weeks prior to the due date and start receiving EI maternity benefits as early as 12 weeks prior to the due date.

Important: It is recommended that you start maternity leave on a Monday closest to the due date but not past it. If the birth occurs past the due date your leave starts on the requested date. If the birth occurs before the due date, your leave starts right away on the date of delivery.

The start date can be changed with a 2-week notice. Return date can be changed with a 4-week notice. Under ESA (Ontario) splitting leave is not permitted: once started the entire leave has to be taken until the return from leave date.

Maternity benefits

The birth mother is entitled to 15 weeks of EI maternity benefits (or 18 weeks of QPIP benefits) paid at the **standard** rate and topped up to 95% of salary.

- To apply for EI Maternity/Parental benefits [click here](#).
- To information on the Quebec Parental Insurance Plan [click here](#).

Parental leave

You must submit to the Human Resources (HumanResources@cunet.carleton.ca) the completed and signed (by you and the head of your unit) [maternity/parental leave request form](#) accompanied by a proof of birth or a certificate of adoption, if available (submit the document as soon as available). To ensure timely processing of leaves, three-four months of advance notice is appreciated.

The start date can be changed with a 2-week notice. Return date can be changed with a 4-week notice.

Under ESA (Ontario) splitting leave is not permitted: once started the entire leave has to be taken until the return from leave date.

For a birth mother unpaid parental leave (up to 61 weeks) usually follows the end of the pregnancy/maternity leave except in special circumstances.

For all other parents, including adoptive, up to 63 weeks of unpaid parental leave is available.

If applicable, one-week waiting for EI benefits at the start of leave and one-week bridge-to-work at the end of leave would be paid at 95% salary. These two weeks are included within top-up payments.

Parental benefits

Both parents may share up to 40 weeks of **standard** EI parental benefits (one parent cannot receive more than 35 weeks of standard benefits) or up to 69 weeks of **extended** EI parental benefits (one parent cannot receive more than 61 weeks of extended benefits).

Note: the same selected type of parental benefits (standard or extended) would apply to both parents. Once the benefits commence to flow, the type of EI parental benefits may not be changed.

Example: 12-month standard leave (52 weeks) for a birth mother

1 week waiting for EI benefits paid by the university at 95%

15 weeks of EI maternity benefits topped up to 95% by the university

Up to 35 weeks of EI **standard** parental benefits

1-week bridge-to-work paid by the university at 95% (to bridge gap in income between the end of EI benefits and return to work, if applicable)

Note: the second parent is entitled to at least 5 weeks of EI **standard** or 8 weeks of **extended** parental benefits (parents can share parental benefits as they see fit to suit their family needs). Parents can take EI parental benefits at the same time or sequentially.

- For more information on EI benefits [click here](#).
- **Quebec residents** are eligible for QPIP benefits [click here](#).

Closer to the leave start date your Record of Employment (ROE) will be submitted to Service Canada and you will be notified by email so that you could apply for EI or QPIP maternity and/or parental benefits.

EI parental benefits have to be applied for and received within 12-month claim period (usually by the child's 1st birthday) for standard benefits and within 18-month claim period for extended benefits (at 18 months after birth).

Benefits coverage

A benefits costing will be prepared prior to leave to help you decide which benefits to maintain or waive for the duration of unpaid (if applicable) portion of your leave.

While in receipt of the top-up payments, cost for any maintained benefits will be deducted from the payments. You can quickly estimate the cost for the benefits by viewing the employee column of your latest paystub on [Carleton Central](#).

During the unpaid portion of leave (if applicable) costs for any maintained benefits will be taken directly from your bank account on regular paydays. If you decide to waive pension contributions, then on return or sometime later you have the option of buying back the eligible service at full cost (employee and employer shares of the cost). Costs will increase with age and salary.

Note: annual leave continues to accrue while on maternity and parental leave. Accrued annual will be credited to the employee on actual return to work.

Annual leave accrued **prior** to leave can be used to bridge between the end of leave and actual return to work date.