

THE CO-PARENT

# PARENTAL LEAVE AAU

A guide for the meetings  
- after your parental leave

The co-parent



AALBORG  
UNIVERSITET

## 02

## ABOUT THE MEETINGS

At Aalborg University, meetings are held with all employees (VIP and TAP), men as well as women, both before and after long-term maternity or parental leave of more than 12 weeks. In addition, employees are offered a meeting during maternity or parental leave before returning to work.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETINGS

- Helps to retain employees in a phase of life that may give rise to opt-out of an academic career
- Creates dialogue between manager and employee about work-life balance
- Ensures a good transition from work to maternity/parental leave and from maternity/parental leave to work
- Challenges gender stereotypes and increases the incentive to take parental leave regardless of gender

## 03 AFTER LEAVE

### WHAT

After your parental leave, your manager will invite you for a meeting where you will revisit your agreements from before your parental leave and possibly during parental leave, talk about how your return to work has been and talk about how work and everyday life is going for you.

### WHEN

The meeting will be held no later than 8 weeks after you return to work.

### WHO

The co-parent and primary manager.

### QUESTION

### NOTES

How has it been to return to work/your research after your parental leave, both personally and professionally?

How has the return-to-work plan you prepared before and possibly during your parental leave worked for you?

Have you been able to get back into your work/research properly?

Are you experiencing any challenges since returning to work/your research in terms of eg. your work tasks/research, your position, your working hours?

If you have taken advantage of what Aalborg University has to offer employees returning from parental leave, how is this going for you?

Is there anything that should have been handled differently in terms of your return to work?

What are your expectations for the future in terms of your professional and personal development?

How can your manager best help you going forwards?

# 04 AFTER LEAVE

## SUMMARY AGREEMENTS

## 05 GUIDANCE - AFTER LEAVE

You have now returned from your parental leave and have been working for a few months. Therefore, you and your manager have a meeting where you take a look at how these past few months have been for you, both personally and professionally. This meeting is your opportunity to talk about how your initial return to work has been, and to set out any needs, challenges and wishes you have for the future.

You should therefore use this meeting to talk openly with your manager about how you are getting on and what thoughts you are having about work in order to get the very best out of your work after your parental leave and find the right balance. Notes and agreements from the meeting are journaled on your personnel case (case group 221) with insight for only you and your manager.

**How has it been to return to work/your research after your parental leave, both personally and professionally?**

Here, you and your manager look at how you have experienced your return to work after parental leave.

Some people find it challenging to return from parental leave because they have an expectation that they can get straight back to how things were before they left. It might also be that your ambitions and values have changed (which does not necessarily mean that they have been weakened by you becoming a parent, but they might have changed). You may also need to take a look at any new personal needs and challenges that have become apparent after you have been back for a few months.

Equally, a lot may have happened in your workplace while you were away. Maybe you have some new colleagues or different work tasks, or you've come back to a changed organisation or new cultural circumstances, all of which can have an impact on your well-being and motivation for work. Share this with your manager and tell him/she how it is affecting you in your work.

**How has the return-to-work plan you prepared before and possibly during your parental leave worked for you?**

Before your parental leave and possibly also during your parental leave, you and your manager talked about what your initial return to work should look like and how you would both ensure that you were professional up to speed and personally having the best return possible. Return to your plan for this and evaluate whether it has gone as expected. Have you received the right introductions to the team, are you working on the right tasks, are you prioritizing the right tasks etc.?

## 06 GUIDANCE - AFTER LEAVE

Have you been able to get back into your work/research properly?

You and your manager can take stock of how getting back into your work tasks/research and any new areas of work has been going.

It might be that you are now completely up to speed and would like to discuss how to take your work tasks one step further. There might also be areas where you do not yet feel you are completely up to speed and where you want either your manager or colleagues on your team to help you get going.

You might also be experiencing challenges or dissatisfaction with parts of your research/some of your work areas because you have been away for a long period of time. Maybe your work tasks have changed so much that you no longer feel comfortable with them, or they do not match your skills and ambitions. You might also be nervous about your schedule or the relevance of your research after you return. Discuss these concerns with your manager so that together you can find out if you need to make any adjustments.

Are you experiencing any challenges since returning to work in terms of eg. your work tasks/research, your position, your working hours?

At the meeting before and possibly also during your parental leave, you and your manager looked at what your expectations were for returning to work after parental leave. Following on from the questions above, you and your manager can look and see whether there is anything that is more challenging than expected. Maybe you're having difficulties finding the motivation for your current work or simply struggling in terms of time, or perhaps you feel that your current position does not correspond to the work tasks you currently have. Your manager can only actively assist you if you share your challenges with him/her.

## 07 GUIDANCE - AFTER LEAVE

If you have taken advantage of what Aalborg University has to offer employees returning from parental leave, how is this going for you?

In connection with your return to work, you might have taken advantage of one or more of the opportunities Aalborg University offers employees returning from parental leave. You and your manager now have the opportunity to discuss how things are going in this respect and whether you are getting the intended value from these offers in terms of returning to work.

For example, if you have chosen to have part of your semester research-free/teaching-free, or to extend the term of your postdoc or assistant professor role, do you then feel that this gives you a better foundation for a good return to work and the time you need to catch up professionally?

Or have you agreed with your manager that your working conditions should be more flexible, so that you can take advantage of flex time and work from home on some days, for example? How is this flexibility for you? Does it give you a good starting point for achieving a good work-life balance? Maybe there's one thing that works better than anything else.

Is there anything that should have been handled differently in terms of your return to work?

It might be that after a few months back you have had the chance to reflect on how both you and your manager could have handled your return better. Maybe you feel you should have prioritized things differently to the way you initially thought. Perhaps you should have had more flexibility in terms of your working hours to help you find the right rhythm, or maybe there was a need to share more challenges with your manager than what you had anticipated. If you share them now, you have the opportunity to make changes, and your manager can use this feedback in future.

## 08 GUIDANCE - AFTER LEAVE

What are your expectations for the future in terms of your professional and personal development?

You and your manager can discuss your expectations for the future and follow up on previous agreements. Your manager can tell you about your professional opportunities, while you can share your ambitions and desires for your work/research. You might follow up on some of the desires you expressed before or during your parental leave. Is now a good time for a shift in your career, for example? Do you want to focus on a specific personal or professional area of development? If so, how can you work on this in the coming period? You might also be thinking about what your future working hours should look like. Some people want periods where they reduce their hours, while others don't, but in any case perhaps there are some personal wishes you have regarding your working hours and conditions that need to be revisited.

How can your manager best help you going forwards?

You and your manager can discuss how your manager can best assist you in the coming period. You may need help prioritizing your duties/research differently, more feedback on your development and your work/research, or a greater focus on how to reach the next stage in your career. It might also be the case that you do not need anything specific from your manager professionally, but instead need help finding the best solutions for you personally so that you can achieve a good work-life balance.