

THE CO-PARENT

PARENTAL LEAVE AAU

A guide for the meetings
- during your parental leave

The co-parent



AALBORG
UNIVERSITET

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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 DURING LEAVE

WHAT

During your parental leave, your manager will offer you a meeting. You decide for yourself whether you want to make use of this offer.

At this meeting, you will revisit some of the topics you and your manager looked at during the meeting before your parental leave, and you will talk about your impending return to work. That is, you will both look backwards and forwards.

WHEN

The meeting is held no later than 5 weeks before your return to work.

WHO

The co-parent and primary manager.

QUESTIONS

NOTES

How has your parental leave been?

How has it been to be away from your work/research?

Have you been satisfied with the collaboration with your manager?

What are your expectations of returning to work/your research, both personally and professionally?

Do you want to make use of Aalborg University's offer to employees returning from leave regarding a partially teaching- or research-free semester, extension of the postdoc or assistant professor course and increased opportunity for flexible working conditions? (Requires a minimum of 12 weeks leave).

What do you need during your initial return, both personally and professionally?

[In collaboration with manager] How will the resumption of your work/your research take place for the first period of time after your parental leave?

[Update from manager] What changes have there been at the workplace since you went on parental leave that are significant for you.

04 DURING LEAVE

SUMMARY AGREEMENTS

05 GUIDANCE - DURING LEAVE

You will soon be nearing the end of your extended parental leave, and in this regard you will be offered a meeting with your manager no later than 5 weeks before you return. Here, you and your manager can revisit the topics you talked about before you went on parental leave and what your expectations are for the period after your parental leave, both personally and professionally.

This meeting is about your needs and the opportunities Aalborg University offer you to ensure you have the best return to work. You have probably already come across various prejudices and stories about what it means to return from parental leave. But this meeting is your opportunity to talk about the experiences you have had during your parental leave and what needs you will have when you return, so that you and your manager can work out the best starting point for you. We therefore encourage you to accept the meeting and share your thoughts openly with your manager. Notes and agreements from the meeting are journaled on your personnel case (case group 221) with insight for only you and your manager.

Below is a guide to what the various questions might cover.

How has your parental leave been?

It might be nice for both you and your manager to share your experience of having been on/being on parental leave as there may be many things that have changed for you during this period. Becoming a parent might have been a bigger challenge for you than you expected. It might have given you a new perspective on your work life that your manager should know about.

You may also have felt it was good to have a bit of time away from work, and that this has given you a greater insight into what is important to you, where your strengths are, and what you enjoy doing the most. You might also have used your parental leave to acquire new skills or to cultivate personal interests that you would like to share with your manager and that you know will be beneficial to you in the future. However, your manager will not expect anything from you in this regard.

How has it been to be away from your work/research?

Here, you can tell your manager about how you have experienced being away from your work/research. Feel free to look back on what you and your manager talked about before your leave period. Was it as you expected?

It might have felt worse for you during certain periods because you felt you were completely losing touch with your development, you were missing your work/research, or you missed collaborating with colleagues and how your work challenged you. It might also be that not thinking about work has been easier for you than you expected, and that your parental leave hasn't really left you with much time or energy for thinking about your work.

If, during your parental leave, you have been worried about whether your skills and your work/research are still relevant, then you should share this with your manager too, as this can increase your feeling of security in terms of returning to work.

06 GUIDANCE - DURING LEAVE

Have you been satisfied with the collaboration with your manager?

Before your parental leave, you and your manager discussed how your manager could best help you before and during your parental leave, as well as how you should communicate during your parental leave. Has this lived up to your expectations? Is there anything you would have liked more or less of from your manager?

What are your expectations of returning to work/your research, both personally and professionally?

It can be hard to put into words what you are expecting when you return to work. However, it is important to consider whether you can and want to continue working in the same vein as before your parental leave. Many people use their parental leave as a career break. You might expect changes to occur to your work/research, your working hours, your position and so on. You might also have particular expectations of how your work is going to fit in with your family life.

This is therefore your opportunity to tell your manager about your desires and ambitions. Do not assume that your manager knows. Some people want a strong focus on their development and next steps in their career when they return, while others have a desire for less responsibility in the period after their parental leave. The starting point is what is most important to you and how best to prioritise this.

You and your manager might also previously have talked about new career opportunities or your professional development after your parental leave, which you should revisit. Will this be relevant when you come back? And if so, how can you best achieve this? It might also be that you want to revisit this at your meeting when you have returned to your work.

07 GUIDANCE - DURING LEAVE

Do you want to make use of Aalborg University's offer to employees returning from leave regarding a partially teaching- or research-free semester, extension of the assistant professor course and increased opportunity for flexible working conditions?

During the meeting before your parental leave, you and your manager talked about what your thoughts were at that time regarding returning to work.

Here, you talked about what Aalborg University can offer in terms of achieving the best return to work, including the right to have a semester that is partially research-free/teaching-free, extending the term of your postdoc or assistant professor role and increasing your opportunities for flexible working conditions. You can read more [here](#).

You are near the end of your parental leave now so it's important that you let your manager know whether it makes sense for you to take advantage of some of the offers above. Be realistic with yourself and say what you want clearly. You might know that there will be challenges in relation to working hours, and that you need greater flexibility when dropping off/picking up your child/children, for example. Or maybe you'd like to have no teaching or research for part of your semester because you see a great deal of value in getting back up to speed professionally.

It might also be the case that it doesn't make sense for you to take advantage of any of the offers.

What do you need during your initial return, both personally and professionally?

Here, you and your manager can discuss explicitly how your first days back from parental leave should be. For example, it might be a good idea to schedule a meeting with your team where they can update you on activities. You might also want to have more status meetings with your manager at the beginning so you can discuss tasks, catch up and so on. You might also have some personal needs when you come back, e.g. if your family has any special needs that should be taken into consideration when you first return to work. Feel free to write down an overall plan for your initial return which you and your manager can use as a basis for planning.

08 GUIDANCE - DURING LEAVE

[In collaboration with your manager] How will the resumption of your work/your research take place for the first period of time after your parental leave?

You might have given some thought to what work task or areas of your research you would like to prioritise when you return. Equally, it might be that your manager has suggestions for how you can best get back up to speed on your work/research, and how your work task should be prioritized when you return.

If a substitute has taken care of your work tasks while you have been away, then your manager will let you know how this has gone and what the transition should look like when you return. Here, you can also tell your manager if you have any thoughts or concerns about this phase.

[Update from your manager] What changes have there been to the workplace since you went on parental leave that are significant for you.

Your manager will let you know about any changes that may have occurred while you were away. Maybe new colleagues or new managers have joined, or there are new work tasks. There might also be new and different challenges that weren't there before, but that you need to know about before you return.

You are very welcome to prepare questions yourself regarding any changes to your team, your work tasks/research or what's been happening at Aalborg University in general.