

FERTILITY TREATMENT LEAVE PROCEDURE

1. Purpose

1.1. University of Limerick (UL) is committed to supporting staff undergoing fertility treatment by providing clear guidance on leave entitlements, confidentiality, and workplace flexibility.

This procedure aims to support staff who are undergoing fertility treatment, and to set out the types of leave that are available. The University recognises the emotional, physical & financial challenges which may arise from undergoing fertility treatments and wishes to support members of staff who wish to or are currently undertaking fertility treatment.

1.2. This procedure aligns with UL's commitment to employee wellbeing, equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

1.3. This procedure should be read in conjunction with:

- UL Sick Leave Procedure
- UL Flexible Working Procedure
- UL Special Unpaid Leave Procedure
- UL Remote Working Policy and Procedure
- UL Data Protection Policy

2. Scope

2.1. This procedure applies to all pensionable UL employees.

2.2. The procedure applies to staff undergoing fertility treatment.

2.3. Leave requests will be considered fairly, promptly and in a sensitive manner.

2.4. Every effort will be made to facilitate leave requests, subject to reasonable notice and operational needs.

3. Definitions

3.1. **Fertility Treatment** Clinically recognised assisted reproductive procedures including IVF, ICSI, IUI, egg or sperm retrieval, embryo transfer and fertility related diagnostic procedures.

3.2. **Medical Confirmation** A brief note from a treating clinician confirming appointment dates or procedures. No detailed medical information is required.

4. Principles

4.1. **Confidentiality** – All information disclosed under this procedure will be treated with strict confidentiality and stored in accordance with the UL Data Protection Policy.

4.2. **Dignity and Respect** Staff undergoing fertility treatment will be treated with sensitivity and compassion. UL wishes to create an inclusive culture where colleagues are supported and feel valued.

4.3. **Flexibility** UL will provide reasonable flexibility in working arrangements where operationally feasible, in line with the UL Flexible Working Policy.

4.4. **Equity** The university will ensure that no employee is disadvantaged in relation to performance, career progression, or employment conditions as a result of availing of fertility leave.

4.5. The University of Limerick's Culture Charter forms an important backdrop to all University policies and procedures. The Values and Behaviors outlined in the Culture Charter should guide how we act, interact and connect with one another in the challenges and successes of university life. The Values and Behaviors outlined in the Culture Charter should also guide how we interpret these policies and procedures.

5. Entitlements

5.1. Paid Fertility Treatment Leave

5.1.1. Staff undergoing fertility treatment may avail of paid leave as detailed at 5.1.2 of this procedure for:

- Fertility related medical appointments
- Egg or sperm retrieval
- Embryo transfer
- Clinically advised recovery time

5.1.2. The University will normally provide up to 5 days paid fertility treatment leave per cycle of treatment, either as a block or at critical stages of the treatment process, up to a maximum of three cycles. This leave may be taken as a block or one day at a time as required.

5.1.3. Where additional recovery time is medically required, staff may be eligible for leave under the **UL Sick Leave Procedure**, subject to medical certification.

5.1.4. If additional time off is required (for a fourth or subsequent cycle) then alternative leave arrangements should be agreed where appropriate with your line manager which may include annual leave or unpaid leave

5.2. Flexible Working Arrangements

5.2.1. Managers can approve short term adjustments such as:

- Temporary flexible hours
- Adjusted duties
- Remote working

5.2.2. Requests should be considered in line with the **UL Flexible Working Procedure** and **UL Remote Working Policy and Procedure**.

5.3. Additional Leave Options

5.3.1. Staff can supplement fertility leave with:

- Annual leave
- Special unpaid leave (subject to approval under the UL Special Unpaid Leave Procedure)
- Other approved leave types as deemed appropriate.

6. Procedure for Requesting Fertility Treatment Leave

6.1. Notification

6.1.1. Staff may apply on the employee requests portal for Fertility treatment leave. As outlined at 3.2 of this procedure, medical confirmation should accompany the leave application submitted on the employee request portal.

6.1.2. Employees whose application for Fertility leave is refused shall be provided with an explanation for the refusal. The staff member may submit an appeal of the decision not to grant Fertility leave within 10 days of being notified of the decision. The review request must be made in writing to the Executive Dean/Divisional Director or where the Dean/Divisional Director made the decision to the next person in the management line. The person conducting the review will make a decision within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal and this decision will be final.

6.2. Documentation

6.2.1. Staff will be asked to provide brief medical confirmation of appointment dates or procedures as part of their application for fertility leave.

6.3. HR Responsibilities

6.3.1. HR will:

- Confirm eligibility
- Outline available leave options
- Ensure confidentiality
- Support managers in implementing arrangements

6.4. Manager Responsibilities

6.4.1. Managers must:

- Treat requests sensitively and confidentially. Managers must be aware that disclosure may be particularly difficult for employees.
- Respect the employee's right to confidentiality who decide to disclose sensitive information to them.
- Facilitate reasonable leave and flexibility where operationally possible.
- Ensure no adverse impact on the staff member's employment conditions
- Refer to relevant HR procedures and policies where applicable such as **UL Sick Leave Policy, UL Remote Working Policy and Procedure** or others where relevant.

7. Confidentiality and Data Protection

7.1. All records will be stored securely by HR in compliance with the UL Data Protection Policy.

8. Support Services

8.1. Colleagues are reminded of the availability of the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) which is an independent and confidential counselling service available 24/7 on Freephone:1-800-817-433. Further information is available on the HR SharePoint here: Employee Assistance Programme.

Appendix A: Manager's Guidance Note

A1. Approach and Sensitivity

- Acknowledge the request with empathy and discretion.
- Avoid intrusive questions; only essential information should be sought.
- Offer a private space for discussion.

A2. Planning and Flexibility

- Discuss anticipated appointment dates and potential scheduling impacts.
- Explore flexible working options in line with the UL Flexible Working Policy if appropriate.

A3. Confidentiality

- Do not share information with colleagues unless the staff member explicitly consents.

Appendix B: Staff FAQ's

B1. Do I need to tell my manager the details of my treatment?

No. Only general confirmation of appointments or procedures is required.

B2. How much paid leave can I take?

Paid leave is available for key fertility procedures and related appointments. Up to 5 paid fertility treatment leave days per cycle of treatment are available, up to a maximum of three cycles.

B3. What if my treatment schedule changes suddenly?

UL recognises that fertility treatment can be unpredictable. Inform your manager as soon as possible, and adjustments will be made where feasible. Amended applications for leave, if required, should then be submitted on the Employee Requests portal.

B4. Will taking fertility leave affect my career?

No. The procedure explicitly protects staff from any negative impact on performance reviews, progression, or employment conditions.

B5. Can I combine fertility leave with annual leave or other leave types?

Yes. You may use annual leave or unpaid leave to supplement your entitlements.

B6. Who will know about my request?

Only your manager and HR, unless you choose to tell others. All information is handled confidentially.

Document Version	Version .1
Document Owner	Human Resources Division
Approved by	Executive Committee
Date	2 September 2026
Effective Date:	2 September 2026
Scheduled Review Date:	2030
Related Documents	