UFT PARENTAL LEAVE – FAQs

Questions on the application process

When can I start taking UFT Parental Leave?
As of August 13, 2018, eligible employees may submit their application for UFT Parental Leave in SOLAS. Applications may be submitted for Parental Leave eligibility starting on September 4, 2018 and thereafter, including eligibility for covered events that may have occurred prior to September 4, 2018.

Who is eligible to take UFT Parental Leave?
New parents – including by birth, adoption and foster care - who are in titles represented by UFT are eligible to apply for Parental Leave. See the eligibility section for more details on additional requirements.

How do I apply?
Eligible employees must apply via Self-Service Online Leave Application System (SOLAS): https://dhrnycaps.nycenet.edu/SOLAS. In your application you will be asked about your anticipated event date, your plans to take CAR days (if applicable for birth mothers), your plans – if any to take a child care leave, as well as the child will also have a parent who is a DOE employee represented by the UFT.

When do I apply?
You should apply at least 15 days prior to the anticipated due or covered event date to ensure timely payment of the benefit from the UFT. In general you should apply as soon as possible when you know your plans for using CAR and any additional child care leave, however keep in mind that you will not be able to apply earlier than two months in advance of the anticipated event. You should also notify your school or work location so they can begin to plan for your absence.

When do I notify the DOE of the actual birth date?
After submitting your Initial Application, you should notify the DOE as soon as possible of the actual birth/event date using the same SOLAS system. You must notify the DOE within 10 days of the event to ensure timely payment of the UFT benefit from the UFT. You are also encouraged, of course, to keep in contact with your school or work location so they are aware of your absence.

What do I need to provide for documentation and how do I submit it?
One of the following supporting documents must be submitted:
- a copy of your child's birth certificate
- a copy of your child's footprints (must be on official letterhead that states the child's birth date, the name of the parents, and the type of delivery)
- a letter from the doctor or hospital (must be on official letterhead that states the child's birth date, the name of the parents, and the type of delivery)
- For adoption or foster care: you must submit official adoption or foster paperwork.

Supporting documentation may be uploaded to the application (preferred method) or faxed using the Fax Coversheet to SOLAS Fax number: 718-935-5175.

If I have all my documents and decide to apply less than 10 days after my baby's date of birth, can I submit everything all at once?
Yes – you may submit your application, confirm your event, and upload your documentation all at once.

I had a birth or covered event over the summer. Do I still need to submit an application 15 days in advance and notify the DOE within 10 days of the event?
For events prior to September 4, 2018, the advance application and event notice requirements are waived. 10 day requirement is waived. Eligible employees are still encouraged to apply as soon as possible and provide timely notice and documentation as soon as possible.

What if I am unable to give notice of the actual birth date within 10 days of the event?
Unless there are special circumstances you will not be eligible for a parental leave if you do not submit an application within 10 days of the event. Late applications will be accepted and subject to review for valid special circumstances.

For delivering parents, failure to submit during the proper time frame may result in being placed into a limited version of the Traditional Maternity Leave WITHOUT the right to borrow days or to use a grace period.

Why do I have to indicate in my application if I want to take a Child Care Leave after UFT Parental Leave?
Your Parental Leave application also serves as an official notice to your school or work office of your intentions of how long you plan to be out so that they can begin to prepare for your absence. You are encouraged to directly discuss your plans with your supervisor as well. You are able to amend your application and leave plans later if your intentions change.

When is the last day I can amend my application?
You can amend your application – planned use of CAR/sick and child care leave - through the 10th calendar day following the Covered Event date. After that time, you must adhere to your return date unless you can demonstrate that relevant circumstances materially changed.

If a holiday or other non-work day occurs during my Parental Leave, is that time included?
Yes. If a non-work day (e.g. holiday, school vacation, weekend) occurs during your 6 weeks of Parental leave, it is included and will not extend the duration of your Parental leave. Non-birth parents who must start their Parental Leave on the date of the event will do so even if that falls on a non-work day (other than the summer vacation for school year employees.)   However, if you are a birth mother who is using your CAR/Sick time for a recovery period prior to Parental Leave, paid holidays and vacations can count toward that time without charge to your CAR/Sick time.

Questions on Eligibility

I work for a charter school. Am I eligible for UFT Parental Leave?
No.

I am an F-status employee. Am I eligible for UFT Parental Leave?
No. Individuals who work F-status are not entitled to PL. Time worked F-status will also not count towards eligibility to take PL.

I had twins/triplets/quadruplets/etc. How much UFT Parental Leave time am I eligible for?
Multiple births from one pregnancy are considered one Covered Event, so you will get the same six weeks.

I am a surrogate. Am I eligible for UFT Parental Leave?
No. A surrogate (an individual who is delivering a child on behalf of another) is eligible for Traditional Maternity Leave, but not UFT Parental Leave. Individuals who become parents as a result of surrogacy shall be treated in the same manner as a person who adopts a child and are eligible for UFT Parental Leave.

Questions on Terminology

What is active status?
Active status is defined as being on any one of the following –
- on payroll, using CAR days or sick time, on annual leave, on a paid leave, on UFT Parental Leave
- on an unpaid leave for a pregnancy related condition
- on an unpaid leave due to a medically disputed line of duty injury for up to three months
- on a leave pursuant to the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), FMLA or other statutory leave

What is CAR?
In referring to UFT Parental Leave, the term "CAR" is used but meant broadly to encompass Cumulative Absence Reserve time, as well as - if applicable for your title - sick days, annual leave and any frozen/vested annual leave.

What is extenuating special circumstance?
If you failed to apply for UFT Parental Leave within 10 calendar days after the Covered Event, you may request an exception based on special circumstances which prevented you from submitting a timely application. A valid special circumstance could relate to, but is not limited to, one of the following: a medical condition of the employee or the employee's family member, a premature birth, a death in the family, or reasonable travel necessary to adopt a child.

What is a material change in relevant circumstances?
If you would like to modify your UFT Parental Leave application (i.e. return date) after 10 calendar days from the Covered Event, you may only do so if you had a material change in relevant circumstance. A material change in relevant circumstance means a medical or unforeseeable material change in circumstances, including but not limited to a medical condition, death in the family, material change in family income, or a material change in circumstances related to child care.

Other Questions

Both parents are represented by the UFT. Can we both take UFT Parental Leave?
Yes, both parents may take UFT Parental Leave. However, if both parents are planning to take UFT Parental Leave, they may not take more than 6 weeks of UFT Parental Leave combined. Applications will be processed to prioritize the delivering parent's request. As such, we encourage both parents to appropriately plan for their usage together.

For example, the six weeks of UFT Parental Leave can run concurrently (three weeks each, at the same time) or consecutively (three weeks for one parent followed by three weeks for the other parent, or four weeks for one and two weeks for the other, zero weeks for the delivering parent and six weeks for the non-delivering parent, etc.). Special rules apply for concurrent use, please be sure to review the further information on this site.

If I take UFT Parental Leave, do I have to return to work?
Yes. Following UFT Parental Leave (or another approved leave(s) taken consecutively after PL, i.e. Child Care Leave), you must return to active service for a total of 12 calendar months. If you do not return to active service for 12 calendar months, you will be required to pay back the UFT Parental Leave benefit.

If I am taking the UFT Parental Leave, can I borrow days and/or use a grace period?
Under UFT Parental Leave, parents are not permitted to borrow days nor are they permitted to use a grace period. For birth mothers, if you wish to borrow days or use a grace period, please select the Traditional Maternity Leave instead.

Can I take UFT Parental Leave on an intermittent basis?
No. UFT Parental Leave must be taken on a continuous basis over no more than a six week calendar period

Can I work while on UFT Parental Leave?
No, you cannot work while on UFT Parental Leave, either for the DOE, the city or any other employer.

If I take UFT Parental Leave and I have another qualifying event in the future, when will I be eligible to take another Parental Leave?
Members are eligible for an additional UFT Parental Leave if they have been an eligible employee in Active Status for 10 calendar months following the initial Covered Event exclusive of time on unpaid leave other than Parental Leave.

If I am on parental leave on the date of the lump sum payment (e.g. October 1, 2018, 2019 or 2020) when will I receive the payment?
If you return by the last day of February in the same school year, you will receive your lump sum on March 15 of that same school year. If you return after the last day of February, you will receive both your missed payment and the next lump sum payout, if any, on the next October 1 payroll when you are active.

If I have to travel to adopt my child, will the travel time count?
No, travel time does not count. UFT Parental Leave will start on the date of adoption.

If I work on the day of the birth/covered event when will my UFT Parental Leave start?
For non-birth parents, your Parental Leave will start the next day but still will end no later than 6 calendar weeks starting on the day of the event. For birth mothers, Parental Leave will start after the use of after the use of any CAR/sick days toward a recovery period.

Additional Questions?
Please contact your UFT Borough Office for assistance with general inquiries about Parental Leave.
Brooklyn: 718-852-4900
Bronx: 718-379-6200
Manhattan: 212-598-6800
Queens: 718-275-4400
Staten Island: 718-605-1400

Should you require assistance with specific Parental Leave inquiries (such as payment information), please contact the UFT Welfare Fund at 212-539-0550.