Universum International College
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# Labour (Maternity and Family Support) Policy

*September, 2025*

## Article 1
## Purpose

The Maternity and Family Support Policy of Universum International College (UNI) establishes institutional measures to support employees and students during pregnancy, maternity, parental responsibilities and the transition back to work or studies.

The Policy aims to ensure that pregnancy, maternity and family responsibilities do not constitute barriers to women's participation, academic or professional development, employment, promotion, education or access to institutional opportunities.

UNI is committed to maintaining an inclusive, respectful and non-discriminatory environment in which employees and students can balance academic, professional and family responsibilities.

## Article 2
## Scope

This Policy applies to:

- academic and administrative staff;
- full-time and part-time employees;
- students enrolled at UNI;
- pregnant employees and students;
- employees and students returning from maternity or parental leave; and
- other members of the UNI community who have relevant family or caregiving responsibilities.

The provisions of this Policy shall be implemented in accordance with the applicable legislation of the Republic of Kosovo and other relevant institutional policies and regulations.

## Article 3
## Policy Principles

UNI shall implement maternity and family support based on the following principles:

**Non-discrimination:** Pregnancy, maternity, parental responsibilities or family status shall not result in discrimination or disadvantage.

**Equal participation:** Women shall have equal opportunities to participate in employment, education, research, professional development, decision-making and institutional activities.

**Respect and dignity:** Pregnant employees and students shall be treated with dignity, respect and confidentiality.

**Career continuity:** Maternity or parental leave shall not unfairly affect an employee's opportunities for promotion, professional development, research participation or career progression.

**Academic continuity:** Students shall be provided with reasonable academic arrangements where pregnancy, childbirth or maternity responsibilities affect their ability to participate in scheduled academic activities.

**Flexibility:** Where operationally and academically feasible, UNI shall provide reasonable flexibility to support employees and students with family responsibilities.

**Confidentiality:** Personal information concerning pregnancy, maternity and family circumstances shall be handled confidentially.

## Article 4
## Maternity Leave

UNI shall provide maternity leave in accordance with Law No. 03/L-212 on Labour, as amended and supplemented, particularly Articles 49–53, and any other applicable legislation of the Republic of Kosovo.

Employees requesting maternity leave shall follow the institutional procedures established by the Human Resources function and shall provide the documentation required under applicable legislation and institutional regulations.

Maternity leave shall not be considered a disciplinary matter or a basis for discrimination.

Employees returning from maternity leave shall be entitled to return to their previous position or an equivalent position in accordance with applicable legislation.

## Article 5
## Paternity Leave

UNI recognizes the importance of the father's participation in the care of a newborn or adopted child and shall provide paternity leave in accordance with Law No. 03/L-212 on Labour, as amended and supplemented.

Under Article 50 of the Law on Labour, an employed father is entitled to:

- two (2) days of paid leave on the occasion of the birth or adoption of a child;
- two (2) weeks of unpaid leave following the birth or adoption of a child, to be used. The employee shall inform the employer of the intention to use this leave at least ten (10) days in advance.

Paternity leave shall not constitute a basis for discrimination, disciplinary action, adverse staff evaluation, denial of professional development opportunities or unjustified limitation of career progression.

## Article 6
## Protection Against Discrimination

UNI shall not discriminate against an employee or student on the basis of:

- pregnancy;
- maternity;
- parental responsibilities;
- family status; or
- lawful use of maternity or parental leave.

Pregnancy or maternity shall not be used as a negative factor in employment decisions, staff evaluation, promotion, professional development, allocation of institutional opportunities or student academic decisions.

Any concern regarding discrimination or inappropriate treatment may be reported through UNI's established complaint and grievance mechanisms.

## Article 7
## Flexible Working Arrangements

Where reasonably possible and compatible with institutional requirements, UNI may provide flexible working arrangements to employees during pregnancy, following maternity leave or when managing significant family responsibilities.

Such arrangements may include:

- adjusted working schedules;
- temporary modification of working hours;
- flexible scheduling of meetings;
- appropriate workload adjustments;
- remote or hybrid working arrangements where the position permits; and
- other reasonable arrangements agreed between the employee and the relevant supervisor.

Flexible arrangements shall be assessed on an individual basis and shall take into account institutional, academic and operational requirements.

## Article 8
## Support for Pregnant Employees

UNI shall seek to provide reasonable working conditions for pregnant employees.

Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments may include:

- adjustment of work schedules;
- temporary modification of duties where justified;
- opportunities for appropriate rest;
- access to suitable facilities; and
- other reasonable measures required by applicable legislation or occupational health and safety requirements.

No employee shall be required to disclose unnecessary personal or medical information.

## Article 9
## Return to Work and Reintegration

UNI shall support employees returning from maternity or parental leave in resuming their professional responsibilities.

Where appropriate, reintegration support may include:

- information about institutional developments that occurred during the leave period;
- updates regarding changes in policies, procedures or responsibilities;
- opportunities to participate in relevant professional development;
- reasonable assistance in re-establishing professional responsibilities; and
- appropriate workload planning during the transition period.

Maternity leave shall not result in unjustified exclusion from professional, research, training or institutional opportunities.

## Article 10
## Support for Academic Staff and Researchers

UNI recognizes that maternity and family responsibilities may temporarily affect academic and research activities.

Where appropriate, maternity or parental leave shall be taken into consideration when evaluating:

- research productivity;
- publication activity;
- participation in research projects;
- professional development;
- academic workload;
- promotion and career progression; and
- participation in institutional activities.

The purpose of such consideration is to ensure that maternity or parental responsibilities do not create an unfair disadvantage in academic career development.

## Article 11
## Support for Students

UNI shall provide reasonable academic support to students who become pregnant or who have significant maternity or parental responsibilities.

Subject to academic requirements and applicable institutional regulations, support may include:

- reasonable flexibility in attendance requirements;
- alternative arrangements for assessments where justified;
- rescheduling of examinations or other academic activities;
- approved temporary interruption of studies where applicable;
- support in returning to studies after maternity leave;
- reasonable arrangements for participation in academic activities; and
- referral to relevant student support services.

Academic support shall be provided without lowering academic standards or compromising the learning outcomes of the study programme.

## Article 12
## Family and Caregiving Responsibilities

UNI recognizes that employees and students may have responsibilities for children or other dependants.

Where reasonably possible, UNI shall consider family and caregiving responsibilities when arranging:

- meetings;
- academic activities;
- professional development activities;
- institutional events; and
- other activities requiring participation outside normal schedules.

Such considerations shall be implemented while maintaining institutional and academic requirements.

## Article 13
## Parental Support

UNI encourages shared parental responsibilities and shall, where applicable, support employees and students in exercising their legally established parental rights.

Relevant provisions concerning parental leave and family responsibilities shall be implemented in accordance with applicable legislation and UNI regulations.

## Article 14
## Confidentiality and Data Protection

Information concerning pregnancy, maternity, parental leave and family circumstances shall be treated as confidential personal information.

Such information shall only be collected, processed, stored and shared where necessary for legitimate institutional purposes and in accordance with UNI's Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy and applicable legislation.

## Article 15
## Responsibilities

### 14.1 Human Resources

Human Resources shall:

- administer maternity and parental leave procedures;
- provide employees with information regarding their rights;
- maintain appropriate confidential records;
- support return-to-work arrangements;
- monitor implementation of this Policy; and
- advise management regarding applicable legal and institutional requirements.

### 14.2 Academic and Administrative Management

Deans, Heads of Departments and other responsible managers shall:

- ensure non-discriminatory treatment;
- facilitate reasonable arrangements where appropriate;
- support employees returning from maternity leave; and
- ensure that maternity does not unnecessarily affect professional participation.

### 14.3 Student Support Services

Student Support Services shall:

- provide information and guidance to pregnant students and student parents;
- coordinate appropriate academic support;
- facilitate communication with relevant academic units; and
- maintain confidentiality.

### 14.4 Employees and Students

Employees and students are responsible for:

- following established institutional procedures;
- communicating relevant requests in a timely manner;
- providing documentation where legally or institutionally required; and
- respecting applicable academic and institutional requirements.

## Article 16
## Complaints and Grievances

Any employee or student who believes that they have experienced discrimination, disadvantage or inappropriate treatment related to pregnancy, maternity or parental responsibilities may submit a complaint through UNI's established complaint and grievance procedures.

All complaints shall be handled fairly, confidentially and without retaliation.

## Article 17
## Monitoring and Quality Assurance

Implementation of this Policy shall be monitored as part of UNI's institutional quality assurance and equality mechanisms.

Where appropriate, UNI may monitor indicators such as:

- use of maternity and parental leave;
- return-to-work rates;
- retention of female employees;
- participation of women in professional development;
- participation of women in research and institutional decision-making;

- continuation and retention of student mothers; and
- feedback concerning maternity and family support.

Relevant findings may be incorporated into institutional improvement planning and the QA Action Plan where improvement measures are identified.

## Article 18
## Related Policies and Regulations

This Policy shall be implemented in conjunction with relevant UNI policies and regulations, including:

- Regulation on Non-Discrimination;
- Gender Equality Treatment Policy;
- Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy;
- Human Resources Policies and Procedures;
- Staff Promotion Procedure;
- Faculty Professional Development / Training Policy;
- Student Support Policy and Procedures;
- Student Progression / Students at Risk Model; and
- relevant occupational health and safety provisions.

## Article 19
## Review of the Policy

This Policy shall be reviewed periodically and, at minimum, every three years or earlier where required by changes in legislation, institutional strategy, quality assurance requirements or identified institutional needs.

The review shall consider implementation evidence, feedback from employees and students, relevant statistical indicators and recommendations arising from the institutional quality assurance system.

## Article 20
## Final Provisions

This Policy shall enter into force following approval by the competent institutional authority.

Any matters not specifically regulated by this Policy shall be addressed in accordance with applicable legislation of the Republic of Kosovo and other relevant UNI policies and regulations.

UNI is committed to ensuring that maternity and family responsibilities do not constitute barriers to women's equal participation, academic development, professional advancement or contribution to the institution.

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