

## **Faculty Family Leave Flexibilities**

The US Naval Academy aims to help its faculty achieve work-life balance. In particular, USNA welcomes and supports faculty members and their families. Department Chairs/Supervisors, Deans, Provosts and Human Resources will work together with you to ensure you understand the benefits available to support your family's needs at various junctures throughout your career. The following can be considered in any conversation about family leave.

Faculty often have questions surrounding the impact of a family event on teaching continuity depending on the timing of the event and the effect on one's tenure timeline. Below are a set of common ways to manage the logistics of new additions to, or major events with, your family with respect to time off from working commitments for faculty here at USNA. These events may include the birth or adoption of a child, the placement of a foster child in your home, and dealing with a serious health condition for a family member. It is recommended that faculty begin with a conversation with their Department Chair/Supervisor. Other useful resources include your School's Associate Dean and Dean. The Office of the Provost Human Resources staff is ready and available at any time to inform and discuss the options available for leave and work flexibilities particular to each faculty member's situation. Best practices include developing a concrete and detailed plan and putting it in writing. Depending on the situation the plan will go through the approval process by the Department Chair, School Deans, and Provost. This list is not meant to be exhaustive, and members of the faculty should treat it as a starting point in developing a personalized plan to support their families in times of need. A faculty member may want to reach out to the Human Resources staff or Department Chair at any time, even before a family leave event is even on the horizon, just to clarify their options.

FMLA: Please note that employees at the US Naval Academy are covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which covers faculty that have been employed by USNA for at least 12 months. FMLA leave can be invoked during the twelve-month period following qualifying life events (<https://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs28.pdf>) and depending on the situation does not need to be taken consecutively. Additionally, all the following logistical items are potential options without invoking FMLA if it's agreed upon by the faculty member's supervisor.

### **Common Workplace Flexibilities:**

- Leave taken during a significant part or nearly all the semester
- Supervisors may approve reassignment of work (research, teaching and/or service) duties for a portion of the semester

## **Common Leave Resource Options:**

The following options might be available to you, based on your specific situation. We encourage you to consult with HR to see which apply to you.

- Annual Leave
- Advanced Annual Leave (i.e. leave borrowed from your future leave earnings) if the conditions for advanced leave are met
- Voluntary Leave Transfer Program (annual leave transferred to you from other USNA employees once all your other leave balances are expended) only available if the birth or adoption situation is eligible for the VLTP.
- Sick Leave
- Leave Without Pay (LWOP)
- Paid Parental Leave associated with one's FMLA benefit
- Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

## **Common Work Commitment Situation:**

There are various ways to continue to work while dealing with a family event. These include working remotely (e.g. from home), on a flex schedule (e.g. working just one or two days a week, or some portion of some days per week), and working a portion of a semester. It is possible for faculty to teach for part of a semester and then take leave when a family event occurs. Indeed, this is common when the family event is unexpected or is not aligned with a semester break. Another common situation is for the faculty member to return to work near the end of a semester, in which case it might not make sense to reassign teaching duties, but the faculty member might serve as a substitute instructor, available to cover for their colleagues in emergencies or for planned absences or perform other duties as assigned.

## **Illustrative Examples:**

Time off during the semester: Family event occurs before or near the beginning of the semester and the faculty member requests time off during the semester from teaching, research, and service. Leave is covered by a combination of sick leave (where eligible) and annual leave. If the event involves the addition of a child to your family, 12 weeks of paid parental leave is available, and additional leave time could be arranged with your supervisor. [A variation of this could involve LWOP and the 12 weeks of leave offered by the FMLA if not enough annual leave has been accrued.]

Academic year event: Family event occurs before or near the beginning of the semester and the faculty member exercises their leave benefit of up to 12 weeks off from teaching, research, and service, then returns with only research and service obligations (no teaching) on a schedule designed together by the faculty member and their supervisors. Time off could be covered by some combination of the paid parental leave, sick leave and annual leave during the 12 weeks of FMLA benefit and the faculty member is paid for the remainder of the semester, performing work as assigned by their supervisor.

Summer intersessional event: Family event occurs well-into or near the end of the spring semester. The faculty member requests the remainder of the semester off from teaching, research, and service using annual leave or approved leave without pay. Remains in a LWOP status through the summer and invokes their paid parental leave benefit at the beginning of the fall semester. Leave options could consist of a combination of paid parental leave, sick leave, and/or annual leave as appropriate. At the end of the 12 weeks the faculty member is paid for the remainder of the semester, performing work as assigned by their supervisor or additional leave options can be discussed with supervisor.

Summer Leave + Fall Research Accomodation: If the leave time-period impacts a period of external summer research funding, discuss options for shifting the research dates of that work.

**Promotion and Tenure Implications:** Though independent of the leave discussion, Assistant Professors can request a tenure clock extension for any life event. It is common to grant tenure clock extensions for events that involve a faculty member taking significant amounts of leave. The extension provides additional time until a tenure decision enabling the faculty member to build a robust package.

For questions and more information about how to invoke FMLA please contact the USNA Human Resources at [usna-fmla-group@usna.edu](mailto:usna-fmla-group@usna.edu).