

SCHEDULE D: KEEPING CONNECTED GUIDELINES

This Schedule is pursuant to the [Gender Equity in Research policy](#)

Keeping Connected: Options for staff and their supervisors during parental leave

These guidelines should be used by staff and supervisors to assist in their planning regarding the staff member's interactions with Deakin during their parental leave and their return to work

These guidelines support the Gender Equity in Research policy and should be read in conjunction with the Career Continuity for Primary Carer in Research guidelines

Entitlements to parental leave

Staff are eligible for paid and unpaid parental leave in accordance with the Deakin University [Enterprise Agreement](#).

The government funded [Paid Parental Leave](#) (PPL) scheme also provides financial support for the child's primary carer (*of up to 18 weeks, paid at the national minimum wage*).

Planning interactions between staff and the workplace during parental leave

The Government's PPL scheme also allows for up to 10 Keeping in Touch (KIT) days for staff to remain connected with Deakin whilst on leave and to help with the transition back into work. The timing and taking of KIT days is subject to the mutual agreement between staff and supervisors. KIT days should help the staff member to:

- Transition back into the workplace
- Refresh their skills
- Become familiar with new or updated processes
- Be involved in planning discussions or meetings that may affect their role

Examples of KIT activities that are allowable under the PPL scheme are:

- Participating in a team meeting or team building exercise
- Participating in a planning meeting
- Performing on the job training
- Performing work to re-familiarise the staff member with the workplace and/or their role before returning to work.

Some areas across Deakin also hold targeted forums for primary carers, such as a "Women in the Workplace" day or morning teas for staff on parental leave. Supervisors and staff should discuss the availability and interest in attending such initiatives and the best way to communicate these opportunities whilst the staff member is on leave.

KIT activities are defined as paid work, so Deakin will pay for the work performed on these days in accordance with the staff member's substantive rate of pay. If a KIT day is accessed whilst on paid leave from Deakin (*which could be paid parental leave, recreational leave or long service leave*) the period of leave may need to be extended (*this may depend on how many hours they undertake a KIT activity and whether they are in receipt of paid leave at half pay*). Where a KIT day is used whilst on unpaid parental leave it does not require any change to be made to the booked parental leave.

What is the difference between “Keeping in Touch” and returning to work?

The Deakin University Enterprise Agreement allows some staff to access Return to Work Leave (RTWL) at the end of their period of parental leave. Whilst RTWL has some similarities to KIT days, it is much broader in its application and can include supporting a graduated return to work arrangement, or to support activities such as conference attendance or some other staff development initiative towards the end of their period of parental leave. RTWL is available once parental leave is ceased and therefore KIT days are no longer available.

If the supervisor agrees for the staff member to undertake duties beyond those as identified as suitable for KIT days, then in agreeing/requesting to come back to work the staff member will have effectively ceased their period of parental leave. To ensure they are not financially disadvantaged, staff should ensure that before they return to work they have already received their paid entitlements under the PPL scheme as well as their paid parental leave from Deakin.

Where the staff member and their supervisor would like them to undertake work for Deakin before the end of their period of parental leave, contact should be made with the [HR Client Partner or HR Adviser](#) who can discuss with them the options for the staff member’s return – which may include returning at a lesser time fraction for a set period of time (with potentially varied duties, such as a research only focus) and then reverting to the substantive position, or another time fraction after a determined period of time.

Targeted support available to our Researchers during parental leave

The Career Continuity for Primary Carers in Research (CCPCR) program aims to improve the retention and advancement of women in research, by mitigating the impacts that parental or carer’s leave can have on your research activity. The CCPCR also provides funding to support research-related activity during parental/carer’s leave.

If support is received under the CCPCR program which requires (or may require) the staff member to attend work and perform duties beyond KIT days whilst on parental leave, contact must be made with the HR Client Partner or HR Adviser for advice in relation to the options available to reflect the staff member’s participation in the workplace. Further information can be found in the CCPCR Guidelines.

Further information

Supervisors and staff members should contact their HR Client Partner or HR Adviser if they require any further advice, information or support in relation to keeping connected with Deakin during parental leave. HRD is here to support the staff member and their supervisor as part of planning parental leave (ie. prior to going on leave), and if circumstances change whilst on parental leave, we can assist with the options to keep connected.