

Cornell University Library Academic Parental Leave Policy

Cornell University and Cornell University Library (CUL) have long had policies that support librarians and archivists in balancing the many, sometimes competing, priorities of their work and personal lives. Librarians (the term librarian will be used generically to refer to all library academic staff, including librarians and archivists) who juggle parenting responsibilities and the needs of their career can rely on CUL's commitment to creating a culture that supports these important responsibilities. As part of that commitment, the university provides Cornell Academic Parental Leave (CAPL) under the [policy on Leaves for Professors and Academic Staff](#) (University Policy 6.2.1). CUL has developed implementation guidelines for this policy that are described in this document.

We recognize that in some very fundamental ways, there is a conflict between the needs and timing of a highly active professional career and those of parenting. While CUL cannot eliminate those conflicts, we are committed to providing support for librarians during the times in their lives when their personal situation requires greater attention.

CUL realizes the importance of the integration of work and family life, and expects librarians to need time away to tend to family-related matters. We also recognize that librarians share our commitment to providing faculty, students, and staff with a top quality library that enhances their research and assists in the educational process. In recognition of these shared values, librarians who need time away from work should explore the relevant leave possibilities with their supervisors as outlined below. We will make every effort to ensure that every eligible librarian who has a family-related event as described in this document has an opportunity to benefit from the policy.

Cornell Academic Parental Leave

The Cornell Academic Parental Leave Policy offers eligible librarians up to twelve weeks of partial relief with full pay.

Partial relief from duties for librarians who are eligible under library guidelines may be arranged through conversations with the unit librarian or library director, and with the approval of the Associate University Librarian.

Need for Cornell Academic Parental Leave will be discussed with the supervisor, unit librarian or library director, and AUL well in advance of the leave and, when possible, in time for any alternative staffing and other academic arrangements to be made.

Primary or Coequal Care-giving Parent

For purposes of the Cornell Academic Parental Leave Policy, a primary or co-equal care-giving parent is one who has significant responsibility for the care of a child, and for whom

those responsibilities interfere substantially with his or her professional responsibilities. If the child is adopted or placed for foster care, the child must be younger than five years old for the parent to qualify as a primary or co-equal care-giving parent.

Librarians, in taking advantage of the benefits of this policy, are obligated to act in an ethical and responsible way and should evaluate honestly the degree of their responsibilities as caregivers and the degree to which these responsibilities interfere with the librarian's professional responsibilities.

Relief

This policy is intended to provide partial relief from responsibilities. It is not possible for a central policy to determine the exact nature of relief under the Cornell Academic Parental Leave Policy because the nature of individual jobs and the needs of departments vary widely across the Library system. Therefore, the Cornell University Library's implementation of the Cornell Academic Parental Leave Policy will be determined on a case-by-case basis. It is the prerogative of each library director or unit librarian and the university librarian to establish guidelines for relief under this policy. Most colleges and units handle requests on a case-by-case basis to ensure flexibility for each situation, with particular flexibility when circumstances are extraordinary, such as multiple births, or special-needs children. The decision of that executive is final in terms of guidelines as well as individual arrangements.

In the context of collegial academic leave management, the unit librarian or library director and the librarian requesting leave should work together to minimize the impact of the leave on colleagues and to minimize the need for replacement costs. There is no change in the source of funds under Cornell Academic Parental Leave Policy. If a particular grant or contract disallows use of its funds to cover such a leave, an alternative source of funds should be resolved within the academic unit. There is no central pool for salary relief.

Extensions of Promotion Review

For a parent of a newborn, or during an adopted or foster child's first year in the household, in which parenting duties interfere substantially with progress in the promotion process, an extension of promotion review may be requested from the University Librarian through Library Human Resources. CUL may provide an extension of any anticipated promotion review for one year. The promotion review extension request must be filed with Library Human Resources.

Similarly, in situations in which the parent may not meet the qualifications of primary or co-equal care-giving parent, the age of the child, or their time in the household exceeds the guidelines above, but in which parenting duties interfere substantially with progress in the promotion process, extensions of promotion review may be requested from the University Librarian through Library Human Resources.

Leave Options in Caring for Family or for Yourself

Because this leave policy provides a variety of tools for attending to family and personal needs, some examples are provided:

Childbirth – mother:

- Short-term Medical Leave typically is used for approximately six to eight weeks (just before and for six or so weeks after childbirth), at full salary, with no Cornell University Library duties. For more extended leaves, see University Academic Policy 6.2.1 (Policy on Short-term Medical Leave and Family and Medical Leave).
- Because the nature of individual jobs and the needs of departments vary widely across the Library system, the Cornell University Library's implementation of CAPL will be determined on a case-by-case basis, provided that the CUL staff member is a primary or coequal care-giving parent. Up to twelve weeks of partial relief from duties may be requested. The librarian's supervisor, unit librarian or library director, and AUL must approve the leave in advance.
- Family and Medical Leave (unpaid) may be used if any of the annual twelve-week entitlement remains until the child's first birthday.
- Accrued vacation leave may be used to receive pay supplementing unpaid Family and Medical Leave, or in addition to other forms of leave, with the usual approval required for vacation.
- For Assistant and Senior Assistant Librarians, [CUL Procedure 13](#) (*Appointment and Promotion of Librarians*) provides for a one-year extension beyond the normal three-year term for "special circumstances." If interference with progress toward promotion is substantial, a one-year extension in appointment may be requested.

Childbirth – father:

- Because the nature of individual jobs and the needs of departments vary widely across the Library system, the Cornell University Library's implementation of CAPL will be determined on a case-by-case basis, provided that the CUL staff member is a primary or coequal care-giving parent. Up to twelve weeks of partial relief from duties may be requested. The librarian's supervisor, unit librarian or library director, and AUL must approve the leave in advance.
- Family and Medical Leave (unpaid) may be used for up to twelve weeks until the child's first birthday.
- Accrued vacation leave may be used to receive pay supplementing unpaid Family and Medical Leave, or in addition to other forms of leave, with the usual approval required for vacation.

- For Assistant and Senior Assistant Librarians, CUL Procedure 13 (*Appointment and Promotion of Librarians*) provides for a one-year extension beyond the normal three-year term for “special circumstances.” If interference with progress toward promotion is substantial, a one-year extension in appointment may be requested.

Use of Family and Medical Leave (F&ML) with Cornell Academic Parental Leave

Relief under Cornell Academic Parental Leave Policy counts as part of the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act entitlement. The library administration should send the F&ML Confirmation Form to the librarian, and the time should be recorded as F&ML. It is not necessary for the library to file a University Personnel Action Form (UPAF) to implement Cornell Academic Parental Leave.

Previous use of all twelve weeks of F&ML entitlement does not affect a librarian’s eligibility to take Cornell Academic Parental Leave; that is, CAPL may be requested even if no F&ML remains due to its use for another qualifying event. To the extent that any of the twelve-week F&ML entitlement remains after the use of Cornell Academic Parental Leave, it is possible for a librarian to request unpaid leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act. Unpaid leave would require the library administration to file the **University Personnel Action Form**.

The twelve-week F&ML may be prorated if not used full-time. For example, if a librarian were granted CAPL on a half-time basis for twelve weeks (working half-time and on CAPL for the other half), he/she would have used half of the F&ML entitlement since it runs concurrently at fifty percent for the twelve weeks. The librarian could then request the balance of the F&ML (six weeks of unpaid leave) to be used either on a full-time or part-time basis. Carrying the example above forward, the librarian could request that he/she continue working half-time for a further twelve weeks using unpaid F&ML for the other half of the appointment (half salary would be paid during this period).

Adoption or new foster-care placement (child younger than five years old):

- Because the nature of individual jobs and the needs of departments vary widely across the Library system, the Cornell University Library’s implementation of CAPL will be determined on a case-by-case basis, provided that the CUL staff member is a primary or coequal care-giving parent. Up to twelve weeks of partial relief from duties may be requested. The librarian’s supervisor, unit librarian or library director, and AUL must approve the leave in advance.

-Family and Medical Leave (unpaid) may be used for up to twelve weeks during or in anticipation of the child's first year in the household.

- Accrued vacation leave may be used to receive pay supplementing unpaid F&ML, or adjacent to other forms of leave, with the usual approval required for vacation.

- For Assistant and Senior Assistant Librarians, CUL Procedure 13 (*Appointment and Promotion of Librarians*) provides for a one-year extension beyond the normal three-

year term for “special circumstances.” If interference with progress toward promotion is substantial, a one-year extension in appointment may be requested.

Care of others, including eldercare and special-needs children:

- Family and Medical Leave (unpaid) may be used for up to twelve weeks.
- Accrued vacation leave may be used to receive pay supplementing unpaid F&ML, or adjacent to other forms of leave, with the usual approval required for vacation.
- For Assistant and Senior Assistant Librarians, CUL Procedure 13 (*Appointment and Promotion of Librarians*) provides for a one-year extension beyond the normal three-year term for “special circumstances.” If interference with progress toward promotion is substantial, a one-year extension in appointment may be requested.

One's own medical condition:

- Short-term medical leave may be used for up to six months (per condition, not per year) upon a health-care professional's certification.
- The University Librarian may approve bridging leave (potentially with salary if for a reasonably short period) if there is a gap between Short-term Medical Leave and Long-term Disability.
- For Assistant and Senior Assistant Librarians, CUL Procedure 13 (*Appointment and Promotion of Librarians*) provides for a one-year extension beyond the normal three-year term for “special circumstances.” If interference with progress toward promotion is substantial, a one-year extension in appointment may be requested.