

## Parental Leave Options for Eligible Employees: UGA and SPIA

### **UGA Parental Leave Benefits**

- As of July 1, 2021, UGA offers up to three (3) weeks of paid parental leave for eligible employees. Eligibility and conditions of this leave are available on the UGA HR website. (See: [https://hr.uga.edu/employees/leave/paid\\_parental\\_leave/](https://hr.uga.edu/employees/leave/paid_parental_leave/)). Please note that UGA Paid Parental Leave benefits run concurrently with the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA\*).

For parental leave at SPIA, [UGA Paid Parental Leave](#) benefits must be utilized first before additional leave options are invoked. An exception is if an employee is receiving short term disability benefits. When planning to utilize paid parental leave for instructional duties, please work with your respective department head as far in advance as possible so as to address course scheduling needs.

The options described in the example below are not exhaustive; there are a range of ways to enable parental leave at UGA and at SPIA. Department heads and the dean's office are ready to consult with SPIA employees at any time to explore solutions for specific situations.

As a hypothetical example for **full-time teaching faculty**: A faculty member has a four-course (per year) teaching load and develops a parental leave in consultation with their department head. The faculty member teaches two regular courses in the traditional classroom setting in semester 1. In semester 2, the faculty member takes intermittent paid parental leave from UGA for fifteen days (i.e., the [UGA Paid Parental Leave](#) benefit) concurrent with FMLA leave, and then some combination of the remaining days in the FMLA-approved leave, and/or intermittent sick leave, and/or undertakes departmental service duties (as determined by the department head) while at home (pending an approved teleworking agreement) to compensate for omitted teaching. In principle, this enables a faculty member to fulfill professional obligations while at home for a maximum of one full semester, depending on that faculty member's sick leave allowance. This scenario could also include annual leave or disability, depending on the faculty member's selected optional benefits.

Note that if a faculty member with a full-time teaching load wishes to take 3 weeks of paid parental leave intermittently over two consecutive semesters, only one semester of leave from teaching will be allowed through the combinations of leave opportunities mentioned above (i.e., combining the Paid Parental Leave policy + remaining FMLA days + sick leave, etc.) Note also, for a full-time faculty member with a course load of 3 courses per semester, to be excused from teaching during one semester, 3 days of leave must be taken per week, inclusive of days made available from the Paid Parental Leave policy. For a full-time faculty member with a course load of 4 courses per semester, to be excused from teaching during one semester, 4 days of leave must be taken per week, inclusive of days made available from the Paid Parental Leave policy.

Sick leave can be taken for any incapacity related to pregnancy and for the mother's recovery after birth, generally, 6- 8 weeks as recommended by her physician. Sick leave (with and without pay) policies apply for absences related to pregnancy and post-partum recovery ([https://policies.uga.edu/pdf/maternity\\_leave.pdf](https://policies.uga.edu/pdf/maternity_leave.pdf)).

\*The Family Medical Leave Act affords 12 weeks of unpaid leave in a 12-month period (See "[Rights and benefits of FMLA-eligible employees](#)" on the UGA HR website). Per UGA HR FAQs: 1) Does an employee have the right to use Paid Parental Leave only and elect not to use FMLA, even if they are eligible for both? No, USG employees must use these concurrently when eligible for both. 2) If an employee is FMLA eligible, does this mean this person could take 12 weeks in addition to 3 weeks off? No. Paid parental leave will be taken concurrent with the first three weeks of FMLA leave if the employee qualifies for both.