CHUKWUEMEKA ODUMEGWU OJUKWU UNIVERSITY

POLICY ON PATERNITY LEAVE AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY SUPPORT

1. PREAMBLE

Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) recognises the fundamental role of family wellbeing and shared parental responsibility in fostering staff welfare, workplace productivity, mental health, and gender equality across its academic and non-academic communities.

The University is committed to supporting male employees in balancing professional obligations with familial responsibilities during the critical period following the birth or legal adoption of a new child, ensuring that fathers can provide necessary care, bond with their newborns, and support mothers during perinatal recovery.

This Policy establishes the University's institutional provisions, eligibility criteria, entitlement terms, and application procedures governing Paternity Leave for eligible staff members across all campuses.

The Policy is intended to operate consistently with the Public Service Rules of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, federal statutory directives on parental leave, Anambra State public service directives, the University's enabling statutes, regulations, conditions of service, and applicable international labor standards regarding work-life balance.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- grant paid paternity leave to eligible male staff upon the birth or legal adoption of a child;
- support newborn bonding, maternal health recovery, and shared domestic responsibilities within employee households;
- provide clear procedural guidelines for requesting, processing, approving, and recording paternity leave benefits;
- ensure uniform and equitable application of paternity leave entitlements across all academic, administrative, and technical cadres;
- protect employees from career penalty, bias, discrimination, or disadvantage for exercising paternity leave rights; and
- promote an empathetic, inclusive, and family-friendly organizational culture within the University community.

3. SCOPE

This Policy applies across all campuses, faculties, directorates, and operational units of Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, and covers:

- all confirmed full-time male academic staff;
- all confirmed full-time male administrative, technical, and professional staff;
- male junior staff on full-time pensionable appointments; and
- male staff on fixed-term academic or professional contracts of at least twelve (12) months duration.

Nothing in this Policy shall be interpreted as authorising unapproved absences, fraudulent claims, misrepresentation of parental status, or non-compliance with University academic continuity and administrative clearance requirements.

4. ENTITLEMENT AND ELIGIBILITY TERMS

4.1 Duration and Frequency of Paternity Leave

An eligible male employee shall be entitled to a maximum of fourteen (14) working days of fully paid Paternity Leave upon the delivery of a child by his registered spouse or upon the legal adoption of a child under one (1) year of age. Paternity Leave may be taken a maximum of two (2) times within a consecutive period of two (2) calendar years.

4.2 Commencement Period

Paternity Leave shall commence on or immediately after the date of delivery or legal adoption, and must be fully utilized within eight (8) weeks following the birth or placement of the child. Unused paternity leave days cannot be accumulated, carried forward, or converted into cash payment.

4.3 Continuity of Pay and Benefits

During the period of approved Paternity Leave, the employee shall receive full basic salary and all regular statutory allowances. The leave period shall count fully toward continuous service, pension calculations, and promotional eligibility.

5. APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCEDURES

An employee intending to proceed on Paternity Leave must submit a formal written application through his Head of Department/Unit to the Registrar (Human Resources) at least two (2) weeks prior to the expected date of delivery, accompanied by evidence of pregnancy/expected delivery. In unforeseen circumstances or premature delivery, notification must be provided within forty-eight (48) hours of the event.

Formal confirmation, including a valid medical birth notification/certificate from a recognized hospital or legal adoption documentation, must be submitted upon resumption of duty.

6. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

In cases involving multiple births (such as twins or triplets), or severe maternal complications following childbirth, an extension of up to seven (7) additional working days of paid leave may be granted upon recommendation by the University Health Services Director and approval by the Vice-Chancellor.

7. PROTECTION FROM RETALIATION AND DISCRIMINATION

No male employee shall be subjected to improper discrimination, intimidation, adverse performance appraisal, denial of promotional assessment, or loss of legitimate professional opportunities solely because he requested or utilized Paternity Leave under this Policy.

8. RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES

Eligible male staff members exercising rights under this Policy shall:

a. provide authentic documentation and truthful information regarding birth or adoption events;

b. make reasonable arrangements for the delegation of urgent teaching, administrative, or research tasks prior to departure;

c. adhere strictly to approved leave timelines and resume duty on the designated date; and

d. notify the Head of Department promptly should emergency extensions be necessitated by medical conditions.

9. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

The University Management shall:

a. ensure prompt, objective, and non-discriminatory processing of all paternity leave applications;

b. facilitate appropriate teaching relief and administrative cover for departments during staff leave periods;

c. maintain confidential, secure records of parental leave applications through the Registry; and

d. periodically review family support policies to maintain alignment with national labor directives.

10. GOVERNANCE AND COMPLIANCE OVERSIGHT

The Registry (Human Resources Division), in consultation with the University Health Services and relevant Deans/Directors, shall monitor compliance with this Policy and submit an annual Paternity and Family Leave Utilization Report to the Vice-Chancellor.

11. PUBLICATION AND TRANSPARENCY

This Policy shall be published on the official University website and staff portal, and incorporated into staff orientation materials. The University shall maintain an official policy control record detailing approval dates, effective dates, and scheduled reviews.

12. REVIEW AND REVISION

This Policy shall be reviewed at least once every three years or earlier where required by amendments to the Public Service Rules, national labor legislation, or University Council decisions. Every review shall be formally documented and approved.



Prof. Kate Azuka Omenugha, Fnipr

Vice Chancellor **Date:** 24/10/2026