

TSL Family-Friendly & Equality Policy

INTRODUCTION

TSL is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to the promotion of equal opportunities for all its employees. The Laboratory aims to build equality, diversity and inclusiveness and is committed to creating a culture in which diversity is actively embraced.

Employees are jointly employed by TSL and UEA and therefore many aspects of this policy are dictated by the employment terms of the University.

TSL Visiting Fellows (eg EMBO, DFG) may need to refer to the policies issued by their individual funding bodies.

AIMS

This policy is designed to ensure that all TSL employees are treated fairly and with dignity and respect. The Laboratory is committed to ensuring that no employee will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, marital status, gender reassignment, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, religion or belief, political belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy or childbirth, part-time working or age.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY AND EQUALITY AREAS

The following key areas of TSL life are covered by the guidelines set out in this policy.

Age

TSL values the diversity and benefits of engaging staff of all ages and actively seeks to ensure that employees are not discriminated against on the basis of age.

Gender & Sexual Orientation

The Laboratory has a legal duty to promote equality of opportunity for all and to eliminate discrimination and harassment of people that is related to their gender or sexual orientation.

Disability

The Laboratory is committed to ensuring that staff with disabilities and those staff who develop a disability during the course of their employment are supported to achieve progress throughout their time at TSL. We are also committed to ensuring that disabled people are encouraged to apply for employment with the Laboratory. Every reasonable effort will be made to provide a supportive environment and to ensure that they have an equal opportunity, so far as is practicable, to be selected, trained and promoted. TSL will provide, wherever possible, such resources as may be necessary to support the employment of disabled people and to make reasonable adjustments to support and enable disabled staff to be retained in the employment of the Laboratory.

Race & Religion

TSL is a multi-cultural, international environment and discrimination on the grounds of race or religion is never tolerated in any form. Employees may have religion-specific requirements and these will be considered upon request.

Harassment & bullying

Everyone who works at TSL should be treated fairly, consistently and with respect. One of the measures in place to reinforce these principles is the UEA Guidelines for Dealing with Harassment (<https://www.uea.ac.uk/hr/employee-information/policies/harassment>) which provide a set of procedures, and advice on support structures, for those responding to and dealing with instances of harassment.

Maternity

TSL has a statutory duty to protect the health and safety of employees who are pregnant and wishes to take all reasonable steps to ensure that their working conditions contribute to a healthy pregnancy. This being the case, TSL encourages employees who are pregnant to contact the HR Manager and Laboratory Manager for information and advice at the earliest possible date.

TSL strives to ensure that expectant mothers are fully informed of the benefits for which they are eligible as soon as possible. However, this is a complex area and detailed information can be found in the UEA Guidelines on Maternity Leave and Pay (<https://www.uea.ac.uk/hr/employee-information/leave/maternity>).

Visiting Fellows should refer to their respective funding body for specific policies on this topic.

Paternity

The Laboratory actively supports the right of new fathers to take a maximum of two weeks paid Paternity Leave, which is designed to allow time for the care of the child or support for the new mother.

More details can be found in the UEA Guidelines on Paternity Leave and Pay (<https://www.uea.ac.uk/hr/employee-information/leave/maternity>).

Shared Parental Leave

Shared parental leave can be created by the mother reducing maternity leave by ending it early, so that the remaining period of leave can be shared between the two parents. Leave can be taken by both parents at the same time or separately. The leave can be taken in one go or in separate blocks, although each period of leave must last no less than one week.

The total duration of shared parental leave available will be 52 weeks less the amount of maternity leave which has been taken. The maximum period of shared parental leave that can be created is 50 weeks.

More details can be found in the UEA guidelines <https://www.uea.ac.uk/hr/employee-information/leave/maternity/shared-parental-leave>

Unpaid Parental Leave

The right to parental leave entitles all eligible employees who have completed one year's qualifying service to take a period of unpaid leave to care for their children. This right is in addition to statutory paid maternity and paternity leave, and applies to mothers and fathers and to a person who has obtained formal parental responsibility for a child. Parental leave is available to give parents the right to take a period of time off work to look after a child or make arrangements for the child's welfare. Parents can use it to spend more time with children and strike a better balance between their work and family commitments.

More information can be found in the UEA Parental Leave Guidelines (<https://www.uea.ac.uk/hr/employee-information/leave/parental>).

Parental leave and promotion of junior group leaders

TSL recognises that standards for promotion from Junior to Senior Group Leader are high. Whenever applicable, The Laboratory will therefore stop the 'promotion clock' and extend the contract of the Junior Group Leader accordingly for a period of up to 6 months corresponding to parental leave. In addition, potential additional arrangements (such as the appointment of maternity/paternity cover) would be considered in negotiation with the Executive Director.

TSL recognises that the progress of Junior Group Leaders who are being assessed for promotion can be slowed if group members take a period of maternity leave. Group Leaders in this position are therefore encouraged to use their discretionary 'deficit fund' of up to £100k to cover the cost of hiring maternity cover, subject to agreeing a repayment schedule with the Executive Director.

Support for Primary Care-Givers

TSL provides a support fund for all employees who are primary care-givers, including parents and those with other family responsibilities. This provides access to funds designed to cover exceptional costs incurred as a result of a need for the primary care-giver to attend a conference, meeting or training event.

Applications for such funds should be made to the Head of Administration. All applications should include a justification for the proposed travel and evidence that support has been requested from the event organisers, but is unavailable. A cap of £2,000 per individual per year will be applied.

TSL also recognizes that a number of scientific and social events associated with the Laboratory can impact on care-givers obligations. In agreement with their line manager, staff with such obligations can therefore arrange to be excused occasionally from such events.

The Laboratory assists Group and Team Leaders in making use of their generous core funding to help support child care and travel arrangements of their group members when attending scientific events. The Laboratory also encourages staff to request that organisers of scientific events provide funds and/or facilities to encourage parents of young children to attend these events.

Family Responsibilities & Compassionate Leave

Employees have the right to take reasonable time off during working hours where action is necessary to deal with a crisis affecting dependants. A dependant may be defined as the individual's parent, partner, child or another person who may reasonably rely on the employee for care.

This right covers emergencies, rather than events that can be planned for in advance and for which other forms of leave may be available.

Employees are expected to inform their line-manager and the HR Manager when taking compassionate leave.

Health & Wellbeing

TSL aims to provide a safe and healthy workplace for its employees by minimising the risks of suffering ill-health as a result of work, finding ways to allow people to work despite health problems or disability and promoting a healthy and productive workforce. We provide a full range of occupational health services for employees who are experiencing health related difficulties at work (<http://intranet/cms/954>)

Recruitment and promotion

TSL endeavours to ensure that, at all times, no job applicant who is disabled, receives less favourable treatment than others on the grounds of that disability unless, after making reasonable adjustments, there remain material and substantial reasons why it is not possible to do so.

Selection practices, promotion criteria and access to training and development activities are kept under review to ensure that the selection, promotion, training and development of individuals are carried out on the basis of the job requirements and individuals' relevant skills and abilities alone.

Pay

TSL is fully committed to the UEA Code of Practice on Equal Pay (<https://www.uea.ac.uk/hr/employee-information/equal-opportunities/equal-opportunities>). This Code sets out the steps that are taken to achieve equal pay for the same or broadly similar work, for work rated as equivalent and for work of equal value across all grades and classes of employment.

Employment and relocation

Visa and health surcharge costs will be covered by GL funds for postdocs and students when joining a TSL Research Group. Whether these costs will be also covered for family members will be at the discretion of individual GLs.

Relocation costs will remain negotiable and will be provided up to a maximum of two-thirds of total costs, at the Group Leader's discretion.

Flexible working

TSL employees have the right to make reasonable requests for flexible working arrangements, and the Laboratory encourages employees and line managers to find creative working solutions that suit them both. The employee has a responsibility to think carefully about the desired working pattern when considering making an application and TSL will ensure that applications are considered properly.

All employees are encouraged to make use of the VPN facility which allows access to the IT network and system from home.

Study Leave and Unpaid Leave

TSL is fully committed to staff training and development, recognising that affording employees the opportunity to undertake study or training will benefit both the employee and the Laboratory. Therefore employees have the right to request time off for these activities and to have this request considered by their Line Manager.

REPORTING ALLEGATIONS OF DISCRIMINATION

The senior management team is responsible for dealing with allegations of discrimination. Employees who believe that they have not been treated fairly and in accordance with the terms of this policy should raise the issue with their line-manager in the first instance.

If the complaint is directed against the line manager, staff should raise the issue with the HR Manager in the first instance. It is beneficial if the complaint can be resolved informally, but if this is not possible then the HR Manager will refer the matter to the Head of Administration for further action.

TSL PROCEDURE FOR INVESTIGATING ALLEGATIONS OF DISCRIMINATION

Informal Discussions

It is hoped that the majority of complaints will be resolved at this stage. If employees have a grievance relating to possible discrimination, where possible this should first be discussed informally with the immediate line manager. If this is not possible then staff should raise the issue with the HR Manager in the first instance.

Formal Discussions – Stage 1

If an employee feels that the issue has not been resolved at the informal stage, they should put their grievance in writing to their line manager. The line manager shall endeavour to arrange a meeting within five working days. Employees may be represented or accompanied at this meeting by a fellow employee. The HR Manager will also attend this meeting. Following this meeting, it may be necessary for the line manager to undertake further investigations and/or hold such further meetings as considered appropriate. Following the final meeting, the manager will respond formally in writing, normally within one week, informing the employee of the decision.

Formal Discussions – Stage 2

If the matter is not resolved to the employee's satisfaction, then the employee can within one week of the date on which the decision was sent to him/her, raise the issue with the Head of Administration. The Head of Administration will contact the employee to arrange a further grievance meeting, which will normally be held within two weeks of receiving the employee's letter. Employees may be represented or accompanied at this meeting by either a fellow employee or trade union representative. The HR Manager will also attend this meeting. Following this meeting the Head of Administration may carry out further investigations and/or hold such further grievance meetings as considered appropriate. Following the final grievance meeting, the Head of Administration will respond formally in writing, normally within one week, informing the employee of the decision.

Formal Discussions – Stage 3

If the matter is not resolved to the employee's satisfaction, the employee can appeal in writing to the Executive Director within one week of the date on which the decision was sent to him/her. The Executive Director will contact the employee to arrange a grievance meeting, which will normally be held within two weeks of receiving the written appeal. Employees may be represented or accompanied at this meeting by either a fellow employee or trade union representative. The HR Manager will also attend this meeting. Following this, the Executive Director will respond formally in writing, normally within two weeks, informing the employee of the decision. The Executive Director's decision will be final.