

Steps Towards Family Care @ Universität Hamburg

Thanks to the Care Leave Act (Pflegezeitgesetz, PfZG) and the Family Care Leave Act (Familienpflegezeitgesetz, FPfZG), if an employee at Universität Hamburg needs to care for a close relative, they have several options for combining work and family care.




- I. A **short-term absence from work** is an option when an employee's relative is in a critical situation and needs care. The employee may then be absent **for up to 10 workdays**. In this case, please complete the following steps:
 - First, immediately notify your manager (team leader / supervisor) and the responsible clerk in the Human Resources Department that you will be unable to come to work. Please also inform them of the expected duration.
 - Provide your employer with a medical certificate (submit this to the Human Resources Department). The certificate should confirm that the person is in need of care and requires assistance from the relative. (The employer may not reject the leave of absence.)
 - You may apply for a care allowance (Pflegeunterstützungsgeld) from the care fund (Pflegekasse) to support you in the care of a relative. This benefit serves to compensate you for lost earnings as you are not entitled to remuneration from your employer during periods of short-term care leave.

- II. The second option, provided for in the **Care Leave Act**, is to take care leave with a partial or complete leave of absence from work for **up to six months**. During this period of absence you will not receive any remuneration, but will continue to be covered by the German social security scheme. In this case, please complete the following steps:
 - Notify your supervisor in writing no later than 10 days before the date you intend to commence care leave, explaining the duration and scope of the absence of leave from your work duties.
 - Also inform the responsible clerk in the Human Resources Department no later than ten days before the date you intend to commence care leave. You must provide written confirmation from the care fund (Pflegekasse) or the health insurance medical service (Medizinischer Dienst der Krankenversicherung). If the person in need of care is privately insured, relevant proof must be provided.
 - You are legally entitled to an interest-free loan to cover your subsistence during the period of care leave. You can apply for this at the Bundesamt für Familie und zivilgesellschaftliche Aufgaben (Federal Office for Family and Civic Duties, BAFzA). The loan is paid out in monthly installments and later paid back in installments.

- III. The third option, provided for in the Family Care Leave Act, is to take care leave with a partial leave of absence from work for up to twenty-four months. During this period of leave your remuneration is reduced to account for your reduction in work hours and you continue to be covered by the German social security scheme. In this case, please complete the following steps:
 - Notify your supervisor in writing no later than eight weeks before the date you intend to commence care leave, explaining the duration and scope of the absence of leave from your work duties as well as your preferred work schedule.
 - Also inform the responsible clerk in the Human Resources Department no later than eight weeks before the date you intend to commence care leave. You must provide written confirmation from the care fund (Pflegekasse) or the health insurance medical service (Medizinischer Dienst der Krankenversicherung). If the person in need of care is privately insured, relevant proof must be provided. The family care leave agreement forms to be completed can be found here: <http://www.uni-hamburg.de/familienbuero/pflege/familienpflegezeit.html>
 - You are legally entitled to an interest-free loan to cover your subsistence during the period of care leave. You can apply for this at the Bundesamt für Familie und zivilgesellschaftliche Aufgaben (Federal Office for Family and Civic Duties, BAFzA). The loan is paid out in monthly installments and later paid back in installments.



Combining work and family care—new statutory provisions since 2015

“Act for Better Reconciliation of Family, Care and Work (Gesetz zur besseren Vereinbarkeit von Familie, Pflege und Beruf)” - legal entitlements as per the Care Leave Act (Pflegezeitgesetz, PflegeZG) and the Family Care Leave Act (Familienpflegezeitgesetz, FPfZG)		
		
What should I do if a relative is in a critical situation and needs care?	What should I do if I would like to reduce working hours or stop work completely for a longer period of time?	What should I do if six months is not sufficient?
Short-term inability to report to work LEAVE OF ABSENCE	Medium-term care CARE LEAVE	Long-term care FAMILY CARE LEAVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• up to ten workdays of short-term and complete leave of absence in a critical situation to care for a relative or to organize a new care situation• entitlement to a care allowance (earnings compensation benefit)<ul style="list-style-type: none">• job protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• up to six months of partial or complete leave of absence for the care of a close relative (at home)• up to three months for tending a close relative in the last phase of life• entitlement to an interest-free loan• job protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• up to twenty-four months of partial leave of absence for the care of a close relative at home<ul style="list-style-type: none">• minimum working hours of 15 hours per week• entitlement to return to regular working hours• entitlement to an interest-free loan• job protection
Without notice <i>Applies to companies of all sizes</i>	Notice of ten days <i>Provision for small companies: does not apply to companies with 15 or fewer employees</i>	Notice of eight weeks <i>Provision for small companies: does not apply to companies with 25 or fewer employees</i>

What's new?
Tighter integration of the Care Leave Act with the Family Care Leave Act: combination of the two is possible up to a total duration of twenty-four months.
Legal entitlement to reducing your working hours.
Extension of the term “close relative” to include step-parents, sisters-/brothers-in-law, and life partners.
Care allowance , for a max. of ten days your wages are paid to the amount of 70% of your gross salary or 90% of your net salary. Applications are submitted to the care fund (<i>Pflegekasse</i>) of the person receiving care.
Interest-free loan for care leave and family care leave covering up to half of the net salary you do not receive. Applications are submitted directly to the Bundesamt für Familie und zivilgesellschaftliche Aufgaben (Federal Office for Family and Civic Duties).
Job protection , valid from the time you give notice until the end of your leave of absence.
Source of illustration: Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ): Brochure entitled <i>Bessere Vereinbarkeit von Familie, Pflege</i> (Better Reconciliation of Family, Care and Work)