UNSW Breastfeeding Guidelines

Policy Hierarchy link | UNSW Equity and Diversity Policy Statement
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Responsible Officer | Vice-President, University Services
Contact Officer | Manager, Workplace Diversity
Superseded Documents | These Guidelines supersede the 2003 version of the same document
File Number | 2012/03584
Associated Documents | Children on Campus Early Years Policy Staff Complaint Procedure A2B: Aim to Balance, Guide to Flexible Work Practices at UNSW

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1. Introduction and Scope

There are various laws in Australia which support an employee’s right to breastfeed and to not face discrimination at work on the grounds that they are breastfeeding.

Amendments to the federal *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (the “Act”) in 2011 now mean that breastfeeding is an entirely separate ground of unlawful discrimination. This gives effect to Australia’s international obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Some examples of what may constitute unlawful discrimination on the grounds of breastfeeding may include:

- An employer failing to properly allow a woman to breastfeed and/or to express milk;
- An employer failing to make reasonable arrangements for lactation breaks in order to facilitate the breastfeeding process.

UNSW understands that many women will return to work while they continue to breastfeed and acknowledges the value of providing breastfeeding support. To ensure the University provides a supportive environment for breastfeeding women, UNSW has sought accreditation from the Australian Breastfeeding Association as a recognised Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace.

The purpose of these Guidelines is to accommodate the needs of breastfeeding employees within the context of the University’s legal obligations, the needs of the University and individual work units. Whilst the needs of breastfeeding employees are minimal and short-lived, often varying as a child ages, UNSW will endeavour to provide appropriate arrangements to support employees for the period they continue to choose to breastfeed.
2. Definitions

**Breastfeeding Facilities:** Includes the range of facilities needed to enable breastfeeding employees to breastfeed, express breastmilk or engage in an activity necessary to the act of breastfeeding. Many of the facilities required to support breastfeeding are already available in the workplace.

**Lactation Break:** a break taken by a breastfeeding employee to breastfeed, express breastmilk or otherwise engage in an activity necessary to the act of breastfeeding.

3. Breastfeeding Guidelines

3.1 Breastfeeding Facilities

The University is committed to providing employees who are breastfeeding with access to appropriate facilities. Such facilities include:

- a clean, private room with power point, lockable door and comfortable chair; and
- access to a refrigerator, hand washing facilities and breastpump storage area.

Many of the facilities required to support breastfeeding are already available in the workplace. Any facility used for breastfeeding related activities must meet appropriate health and safety standards and be clean and hygienic.

When new facilities are being planned consideration will be given to the provision of facilities for breastfeeding employees as outlined in this guide.

3.2 Parents Room

The Parents Room, located at LG52 Morven Brown Building, provides a place on the Kensington campus for staff and students to attend to the needs of their children. This room is fully equipped to support breastfeeding employees. If suitable breastfeeding facilities are not available at the work unit or the work unit is not an appropriate place for breastfeeding, staff are able to use the Parents Room.

The location of rooms designated for breastfeeding and changing babies/infants can be found at [http://www.hr.unsw.edu.au/employee/locationsmap.pdf](http://www.hr.unsw.edu.au/employee/locationsmap.pdf).

3.3 Lactation Breaks

The University is committed to providing employees with flexibility to take lactation breaks during their workday. These breaks should be negotiated between the employee and her supervisor as part of a flexible working hours arrangement.

This may include:

- Time off for an employee to express breast milk, to breastfeed her baby at a child care centre, or to engage in an activity necessary to the act of breastfeeding;
- Flexible start and finish times;
- Allowing lunch and other breaks to be taken to coincide with feeding times; and/or,
- A short period of time off to return home.

The needs of the breastfeeding employee and the work unit’s operational requirements should be taken into consideration when negotiating lactation breaks, with due regard to these Guidelines and UNSW’s legal obligations.

3.4 Flexible Work Options

A breastfeeding employee can negotiate flexible work options (such as flexi-time, part-time, home-based work) with her supervisor taking into account both the employee’s and the work unit’s needs. If after discussing your individual needs with your supervisor a
workable solution cannot be found please contact (insert relevant contact person) to assist with the facilitation of a suitable arrangement.

3.5 Individual Needs of Breastfeeding Employees
The University recognises that the individual needs of mother, carer and baby will vary, and is committed to providing work arrangements that will meet the needs of the employee as well as operational requirements.

3.6 Support from Supervisors
Supervisors should be aware of UNSW’s obligation to adhere to the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 and its commitment as an employer to support employees with breastfeeding responsibilities, particularly through the accommodation of reasonable requests for flexible work arrangements, including accommodating the need for lactation breaks or time to enable breastfeeding of children. Supervisors need to ensure the health and safety requirements, particularly those specific to breastfeeding employees are addressed.

3.7 Support from Work Colleagues
Support from colleagues is crucial to providing an inclusive workplace for breastfeeding employees. All employees have a responsibility to treat employees who are breastfeeding with respect and dignity.

3.8 Access to breastfeeding guidelines
Employees who are pregnant or considering pregnancy will be provided with these guidelines. The guidelines will also be communicated to new staff through the UNSW workplace induction.

3.9 Protection from Unlawful Discrimination or Harassment
The ability to breastfeed is a unique and defining characteristic of being a woman. Being treated unfairly or harassed at work, e.g. teased or mocked because you are breastfeeding, is against the law. Federal and State anti-discrimination legislation provide protection against discrimination and harassment for breastfeeding women. If you experience unwanted or harassing behaviour in the workplace you should consult the UNSW Staff Complaint Procedure and raise the matter with your supervisor.

4. Breastfeeding Support and Information
The Australian Breastfeeding Association has trained volunteer breastfeeding counsellors available on the National Breastfeeding Helpline 24 hours per day for information and support on combining breastfeeding and paid work. Call 1800 mum 2 mum – 1800 686 268 or visit www.breastfeeding.asn.au for email counselling and contact details in your state.

As an accredited Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace through the Australian Breastfeeding Association Breastfeeding Friendly Workplaces Program University of New South Wales’ employees and supervisors have access to BFW Consultants to help formulate suitable workplace solutions, including the identification of suitable expressing/breastfeeding facilities, to assist employees returning to work while still breastfeeding. For assistance please contact the BFW Consultant in your State www.breastfeedingfriendly.com.au.

5. Review and History
This Guideline will be reviewed prior to December 2014

6. Acknowledgements
The Australian Breastfeeding Association Breastfeeding Friendly Workplaces Program.

Appendix A: History

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