



UMass Amherst has a wealth of resources for faculty, as well as very progressive family-friendly policies. In addition to a commitment to diversity and self-care, the University offers high quality day care, a generous sick leave bank, paid parental leave and postponement of the Tenure Decision Year for new parents, and a variety of ways of accommodating the needs of dual-career couples. In fact, the [Massachusetts Society of Professors](#) recently won what might be the best parental leave policy in the country for faculty with a new baby, whether biological or adopted.

The following are some questions that new faculty frequently ask when they arrive on campus.

## Personal Resources

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- [What if I have questions about my benefits \(e.g., health insurance\)?](#)
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## Family Resources

- [What resources are available for dual-career couples?](#)
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## What are my health care options?

As a faculty member, you have a choice of several HMO and PPO insurance plan options. You will learn about these plans at the Human Resources New Employee Information Program, which you will attend shortly after beginning your employment with UMass Amherst. Human Resources also offers a [brief outline of benefits](#) online, which you may wish to consult prior to attending the orientation program.

On-campus medical care is offered through:

- [University Health Services](#), which serves UMass Amherst students, faculty and staff, along with their spouses, domestic partners and dependents.

The major hospitals and medical centers in the region include:

- [Cooley Dickinson Hospital](#) in Northampton, MA, which is part of the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Health Care System.
- [Bay State Medical Center](#) in Springfield, MA, which is affiliated with Tufts Medical School.

- [Shriner's Hospital for Children](#) in Springfield, MA.

### **What if I have questions about my benefits (e.g., health insurance)?**

New incoming faculty with questions about their benefits are encouraged to contact one of the benefits specialists listed below in the Human Resources Office.

- Kelly Pleasant, Benefits Supervisor, 413-545-1478, [kpleasant@admin.umass.edu](mailto:kpleasant@admin.umass.edu)
- Francine Phelps, Benefits Specialist, Employee Service Center, 413-545-6113, [francine@admin.umass.edu](mailto:francine@admin.umass.edu)
- Beth Ives, Insurance Specialist, 413-545-6115, [bives@admin.umass.edu](mailto:bives@admin.umass.edu)

### **What is the sick leave policy? What is the "Sick Bank"?**

Faculty accrue sick days on a bi-weekly basis for a total of 12 days per year to a maximum of 120 days or 960 hours. Faculty members may also participate in the [Sick Leave Bank](#) by donating one day of personal sick leave. Effective one month after their initial appointments, faculty members automatically become members of a Sick Leave Bank, and one day of their personal sick leave is assigned to the bank in return. Faculty members may choose not to participate in the Sick Leave Bank by completing a form for this purpose in the Human Resources Office. After exhausting personal sick leave, a faculty member may apply to draw upon the Sick Leave Bank.

### **What resources are available to help manage work or family problems?**

The [Faculty and Staff Assistance Program](#) ("FSAP") is a confidential resource to help you resolve problems or stresses that might affect your personal, work, or family life. FSAP staff members are licensed professionals who offer assessment, counseling, and referrals to all faculty, staff, and their immediate family free of charge.

### **What resources are available for dual-career couples?**

UMass Amherst is part of the [Academic Career Network](#) ("ACN"), a regional consortium formed to serve dual-career couples and support greater diversity in the academy. ACN provides resources, information and contacts that assist faculty partners and spouses to find jobs nearby. It also helps faculty fellows make their home in the region by identifying opportunities at neighboring institutions.

### **What are my child care options?**

The Center for Early Education and Care ("CEEC") is a department of the University under Student Affairs that has served the University community for over three decades. CEEC offers full-day and flexible-schedule services for toddlers and pre-school aged children (ages 15 months through five years) throughout the year. The program is licensed by the state and accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children ("NAEYC"). Children at CEEC receive an educational program based on energy, attention, and dedication developmentally appropriate practices as delineated by NAEYC and benefit from the of the professionally trained Supervising Teachers and Teachers with assistance from undergraduate Assistant Teachers, interns, and volunteers.

The Center for Early Education and Care also maintains up-to-date information on local child care centers and can provide faculty with alternatives to center based care and referrals for other related matters. For more information about the Center for Early Education and Care and to request an enrollment application call the Center's Office at (413) 545-1566.

In addition, the state Department of Early Education and Care ("EEC") maintains [a listing of all of the licensed center based and family child care services in the area.](#)

The state also operates regional [Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies](#) that provide parents with referrals to licensed child care providers, information on child care options and on how to select care that meets their needs. Please note that these links have been included on this website for informational purposes only and should not be regarded as endorsements of individual care providers or child care centers.

## **How can Flexible Spending Accounts help me pay for child care and healthcare?**

[Flexible Spending Account Plans](#) (“FSA”) allow you to use pre-tax dollars to pay for certain unreimbursed expenses for dependent care (such as day care, nursery schools, and day camp), as well as healthcare (such as office visits, prescription drug co-payments, and excessive eye and dental care needs). Information on FSA plans is available at the Human Resources New Employee Information Program and online.

## **What is the Parental Leave Policy?**

UMass Amherst has one of the most progressive parental leave policies in the nation. Any male or female full-time tenure-track faculty member or state-funded non-tenure track faculty member with at least six years of service is entitled to take a semester off at full pay when they have a new baby, whether biological or adopted. More information on the [Parental Leave Policy](#) is available on the Massachusetts Society of Professors website.

## **Can I stop the “tenure clock”?**

A pre-tenure faculty member who becomes the biological or adoptive parent of a child less than five years old may apply to delay his or her tenure decision date for one year. The decision to delay tenure can be made up to six months after birth or adoption or up to two months after concluding parental leave. While this option is rarely offered more than once, the decision to stop the tenure clock multiple times is at the discretion of the department chair. For more information, visit the link to the Parental Leave Policy above.

## **Will I receive similar support if I adopt a child?**

The University offers the same options to biological and adopting parents. Faculty adopting children under five years old are offered paid parental leave and are also allowed to delay their tenure decision date. See above for more details.

## **Where can I find information on tuition waivers for me or my family members?**

The Office of Human Resources offers information on [tuition waivers and tuition remission](#) for full-time benefited UMass Amherst employees, their spouses, domestic partners and unmarried dependent children (through age 25).

## **I have a question that wasn't answered here. Where should I look?**

Many questions regarding Faculty Benefits and University Policies can be found on the following websites:

- [Faculty Senate Page](#)
- [Human Resources](#)
- [Massachusetts Society of Professors](#)
- [Office of the Provost](#)
- [President's Office](#)
- [Current MSP Contract](#)