



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Special Leave Policy

1. Policy Statement

The University is committed to helping its staff to achieve a good work-life balance. We understand there may be occasions when you need time off for reasons that do not fall within the scope of other leave policies. This policy explains the types of leave available to deal with these different situations.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of the University.

3. Principles

This policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- 3.1 Leave requests will be considered fairly, promptly and with sensitivity
- 3.2 Every effort will be made to agree leave requests, subject to reasonable notice and operational need.

4. Entitlement

The amount of time off you can take and whether leave is paid or unpaid will depend on the type of leave requested (see Appendix I).

Note: As there are limits to the amount of unpaid leave for sponsored workers, all requests for unpaid leave from a sponsored worker should be referred to HR Operations in the first instance.

5. Continuity of Employment and Pay

Continuity of employment is maintained during your leave which means there is no break in service during your absence from work. During your leave, you will continue to accrue your annual leave entitlement. You should ideally take the annual leave you have accrued during your

leave, at the end of your period of leave and before you physically return to work. In exceptional circumstances, where it has not been possible to take all of the current leave year's annual leave, your manager may agree to carry over any annual leave which exceeds the standard five days (pro rata if you are part time) carry over allowance.

Depending on the length of your unpaid leave you may not earn enough in a pay period to receive non-cash benefits, such as voluntary benefits paid via salary sacrifice i.e., childcare vouchers and cycle to work. If you have any questions regarding voluntary benefits you pay via salary sacrifice you should contact HRHelpine@ed.ac.uk.

6. Pension Contributions

If you take unpaid leave, you may not earn enough in a pay period to make your regular pension contribution. You should contact the Pensions team on your return from leave and they will advise you of your options regarding your pension.

7. Links to Other Relevant Policies and Guidance

You may find it useful to refer to other relevant University policies which you can find on the [HR web pages](#):

- [Absence Management Policy](#)
- [Annual Leave Policy](#)
- [Emergency Time off for Dependants](#)
- [Flexible Working](#)
- [Maternity Leave](#)

8. Policy History and Review

Approval Date: 12 April 2019

Approved By: University Executive

Year of Next Review: 1 April 2027

Special Leave Procedure

1. Requesting Special Leave

You must discuss your need for leave with your manager giving as much notice as possible. You can request special leave through People and Money. Your request will go to your manager for approval. Where additional evidence is required to support your application (e.g. jury duty notification), you must upload this at the same time.

If you can't request through People and Money in advance of the absence, contact your manager (or, in their absence, an appropriate deputy) as soon as possible to inform them of your absence, the reason and likely duration. Your manager can input your leave into People and Money.

If you take leave without prior authorisation from your manager, it may be considered an unauthorised absence, which may lead to disciplinary action. Managers should contact HR if a member of their team is absent from work without authorisation.

2. Considering Your Leave Request

Before approving the request your manager must consider:

- the number of days you have requested
- the reason for the request
- any previous requests you've made for special leave, and
- the needs and priorities of your business area.

If your manager can approve your request, they will inform you as soon as possible.

If your manager can't approve your request, they will explain the reasons why and suggest possible alternative options such as the use of [Annual Leave](#), [Emergency Time Off for Dependants](#) or [Flexible Working](#). All applications and decisions will be recorded.

3. Cancelling Leave

You can cancel your period of leave in People and Money. There may be occasions when you can't cancel your leave, e.g. where a formal contract to provide cover for your absence has been put in place.

There may be occasions where, for business reasons, your manager asks you to cancel a period of approved special leave. In such cases, your manager will discuss all options with you before making a decision.

Entitlement to Special Leave

Category	Circumstances	Entitlement – pro-rata for part week
Family Related Leave		
Attending a Funeral	Funeral for a family member, or someone with whom you had a close personal relationship.	Up to 1 day’s paid leave.
Bereavement Leave	For the death of an immediate or close family member, or when you have to make funeral arrangements. Additional time may be considered if a lot of travel is required or when plans have been delayed/complicated.	Up to 10 days’ paid leave (pro-rata) for loss of immediate family member; up to 5 days’ (pro-rata) paid leave in other circumstances. An immediate family member is defined as a spouse, civil partner, partner, parent, child (over the age of 18), sibling, grandparent or grandchild. The leave can be taken at any point within 56 weeks of the date of death.
Parental Bereavement Leave	For the death of your child, up to the age of 18. Mothers who experience a still birth after 24 weeks of pregnancy are entitled to parental bereavement leave, however in such circumstances, you may wish to refer to the Maternity policy for alternative leave options. As above, additional time may be considered if a lot of travel is required or when plans have been delayed/complicated.	Anyone with a parental, guardian or carer relationship with a child is entitled to parental bereavement leave, not just those who are a child's biological or adoptive parents. For example, the child’s parents, natural parent post-adoption, adoptive parent, intended parent in a surrogacy situation, anyone with parental, guardian or carer responsibility/ rights of a child, or the partner of the bereaved parent.

Category	Circumstances	Entitlement – pro-rata for part week
		Up to 10 days’ paid leave (pro-rata) for the loss of your child up to the age of 18 years. The leave can be taken in one block of two weeks, or two separate weeks, within 56 weeks of the date of death.
Carer’s Leave	<p>Can be used to provide or arrange care for a dependant who relies on you for care. A dependant does not need to be a member of your immediate family. It could, for example, be an elderly neighbour. The individual you are caring for must have a long-term health need (this can include issues relating to old age).</p> <p>You can request carer’s leave under the ‘unpaid leave’ category in People and Money.</p>	Up to 5 days’ (pro rata) unpaid leave per rolling year. The leave can be taken in consecutive, or non-consecutive, half-days or full days. If your leave needs to be rescheduled for an essential business reason, your manager will consult with you, and allow you to take the leave within one month of the originally requested leave date(s).
Compassionate Leave	Can be used for extreme personal circumstances involving your family or those for whom you have caring responsibilities.	Up to 5 days’ (pro-rata) paid leave per rolling year. A further amount of leave may be taken unpaid.
Civil Related Leave		
Campaigning for Election to Parliament	If you are campaigning for (re-)election to the Scottish, UK or European parliament.	Up to 10 days’ (pro-rata) unpaid leave for campaigning before election date.

Category	Circumstances	Entitlement – pro-rata for part week
Jury Service	If you have been called for jury service, inform your manager as soon as possible. You can request Jury Service leave through People and Money. Your request will go to your manager for approval. Where additional evidence is required to support your application (e.g. jury duty notification), you must upload this at the same time. Keep your manager informed about how long you are likely to be away from work. If duty lasts less than half a day, or you are no longer required, you must return to work where practicable.	You will be paid for the duration of the service. You do not need to claim reimbursement for earnings. You should claim expenses and subsistence from the Court.
Police Statement	If you are required to give a police statement as a victim or witness of a crime.	Up to 1 day's paid time off for the appointment if it can't be made outside your normal working hours.
Representing Your Country	If you are representing your country in a competitive event.	Annual leave should be used in the first instance with up to 10 days' (pro-rata) unpaid leave available for high profile events.
Army Reserves/ Volunteer Reserve Forces	If you are a reservist you are entitled to time off for training and mobilisation.	Up to 5 days' paid and 5 days' unpaid time off for training. If mobilised, time off is unpaid. Full employment will be restored upon return from military service, to the same or a similar role at an equivalent level. Let your manager know when you are able to return to work.

Category	Circumstances	Entitlement – pro-rata for part week
Voluntary Public Service/Leave for Public Duties	<p>If you are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a Justice of the Peace or - an independent prison monitor <p>you are entitled to time off to perform any duties of your office.</p>	<p>Up to 12 days' (pro-rata) paid leave per rolling year. You must provide your manager with a timetable of your commitments at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>Any additional agreed leave will be on an unpaid basis.</p>
	<p>If you are a member of the following, you are entitled to time off to attend a meeting of the body and fulfil your responsibility as a member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a local authority - a statutory tribunal - a police authority established under the Police Act 1996 - an independent monitoring board for a prison or a prison visiting committee - a relevant health body - a relevant education body 	<p>Up to 12 days' (pro-rata) paid leave per rolling year. You must provide your manager with a timetable of your commitments at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>Any additional agreed leave will be on an unpaid basis.</p>

Category	Circumstances	Entitlement – pro-rata for part week
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Scottish Environment Protection Agency - Scottish Water - a panel of lay observers, who monitor conditions in court custody and under escort - a visiting committee of immigration removal centres - a visiting committee of immigration short-term holding facilities. 	
Volunteering Activities	You can request time off to volunteer. This can be with a charity or local organisation or at a sporting or other high profile events, e.g. Royal Edinburgh Hospital, the Commonwealth Games.	Up to 1 day's paid leave per rolling year.
Witness at Court	If you have been called as a witness to court, inform your manager as soon as possible. Submit your summons with your Special Leave Form (the summons will be returned to you). Keep your manager informed about how long you are likely to be away from work. If duty lasts less than half a day, or you are no longer required, you must return to work where practicable.	<p>You will be paid for the duration of the service. You do not need to claim reimbursement for earnings. You should claim expenses and subsistence from the Court.</p> <p>If you are unofficially requested to be a witness i.e. not by Court Citation, unpaid leave of absence will normally be provided dependent on the circumstances.</p>

Category	Circumstances	Entitlement – pro-rata for part week
	If you are appearing in court for any other reason (including to make or defend a claim or bring a case of your own), please consider annual leave or unpaid leave.	
Personal Leave		
Blood Donations	Regular blood donations or where an emergency call for blood donors is made, e.g. in the event of a major accident.	Regular donations must be made in your own time. In the event of major accident, then time off with pay will be given.
Elective Procedures	This is defined as non-essential surgery that you choose to undertake for personal reasons. Examples include cosmetic surgery, eye surgery, and the donation of a kidney. Although these procedures may be done "electively," they can be significant and potentially life-changing operations. You should notify your manager as soon as possible when considering a procedure.	Time off for consultations or any other pre-surgery appointments, should be made in your own time or covered by annual leave. You will be entitled to paid time off for surgery and recovery under our Absence Management Policy .
Emergency Domestic Situations	These might include dealing with the immediate consequences of fire, flood or theft at home.	Up to 1 day's paid leave.

Category	Circumstances	Entitlement – pro-rata for part week
Extended Unpaid Leave	If you need time off for an extended period, unpaid leave may be granted. You should discuss this arrangement with your manager as soon as possible before you plan to start the leave.	Unpaid leave may be granted and will be determined by the circumstances of the situation. Managers should consult with their HR Partner before confirming the leave. You, or your manager, should also consult with the University Pension's Office to consider the impact of extended unpaid leave on your pension.
Fertility Treatment	If you are following a course of treatment, paid time off is available. Time off is also available if you are supporting a partner during a treatment cycle.	Up to 5 days' (pro-rata) paid leave per rolling year during treatment. Up to 2 days' (pro-rata) leave to provide support for partner during treatment. If additional time off is necessary you should consider using Annual Leave or unpaid leave. If you become ill as a result of treatment, you should follow the Absence Management Policy .