

Special Leave Policy

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November 2016: terminology updates

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April 2020: updated to incorporate Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay Regulations

June 2021: updated to include a maternity related special leave section (2.3)

July 2021: Policy updates agreed with our recognised trade unions

October 2022: Paid fertility leave added and unpaid grandparents leave incorporated

November 2022: Jury service pay arrangements updated after SLT approval

June 2023: Governor roles terminology update (3.3)

April 2024: Paid Carer's leave added (SLT approved 5.3.24)

November 2024 to March 2025: Policy updated to improve leave provisions; ensure inclusivity; and increase flexibility & manager discretion, with HR advice & guidance.

17 April 2025: VC approved, in principle, on behalf of the SLT, for consultation with union representatives and our staff networks.

3 June 2025: VC approved on the recommendation of the SLT

Special leave policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 As part of our commitment to helping our staff balance their work and personal/home lives and responsibilities, we recognise and understand that staff might need time away from work at certain times, to deal with events and personal circumstances in their lives.

Our Special Leave policy sets out provisions for special leave, which may be paid or unpaid, in the following circumstances:

- Illness of family members and/or dependants
- Bereavement
- Emergency leave for care of dependants
- Maternity related special leave
- Time off for fertility leave
- Grandparent leave
- Carer's leave
- Examinations
- Appearance in court
- Attendance as a witness in court
- Voluntary public duties including blood donation
- Jury service
- Personal or domestic emergencies
- Religious and cultural observance

- 1.2 This policy also covers territorial army, special constabulary, navy reservists and similar duties.

- 1.3 We recommend that staff read this policy alongside our maternity; adoption; paternity; shared parental leave and parental leave policies so that they are aware of the full range of support that is available to them.

- 1.4 We recognise that some requests for special leave might fall outside those that are covered within this policy. In such circumstances, Deans/Directors may exceptionally grant further time off (either paid holiday or unpaid leave) where they consider that the circumstances justify this and where the school/departmental operations are not adversely affected. Deans/Directors are advised to consider the sensitivity of the circumstances in each case and to apply consistency and equity, when granting any additional, unpaid, or compassionate leave. The maximum additional paid compassionate leave granted, plus any full pay sick leave can not exceed the member of staff's maximum occupational sick pay entitlements over any rolling 12 month period.

For example, a member of staff with the maximum occupational sick pay entitlement of six months, who has two months time off sick can, in exceptional circumstances, be granted a maximum four months additional paid compassionate leave. In this regard, additional paid compassionate leave can be thought of as counting towards occupational sick pay, but without the requirement to be signed off as unfit for work. The same restrictions do not apply to exceptional additional unpaid compassionate leave.

Deans/Directors are asked to seek advice from their HR contact, where needed, and in all cases prior to agreeing exceptional additional paid leave.

- 1.5 This policy is inclusive of same sex partners and is intended to be gender neutral.
- 1.6 This policy applies to all staff irrespective of their length of service. In many cases, the amounts of leave set out in the policy are based on weeks of leave, so this would mean a week based on the member of staff's contracted weekly hours. Where the provisions are based on days leave, these provisions would mean days based on the member of staff's contracted allocated daily hours.
- 1.7 Approved special leave should be recorded on the HR system.

2. Outline of the provisions

Special Leave is granted to provide a short-term solution to help members of staff to balance the demands of their personal, work and home responsibilities. Staff are entitled to request a reasonable amount of time off, depending on the circumstances.

It is not possible to categorically state what constitutes a reasonable period of paid (or unpaid) leave since this will vary according to circumstances of each individual case.

In cases of bereavement or the serious life threatening illness of a dependant, Deans/Directors can use their discretion to determine what is a reasonable amount of time depending on the individual's circumstances and relationship to the dependent subject to taking advice from HR and within the limits set out in 1.4.

Where exceptional leave is being considered, Deans/Directors are asked to summarise the circumstances to HR, who will advise with a view to ensuring consistency and equality of application.

The following sections of this policy provide suggested periods of leave, for particular circumstances.

2.1 Compassionate leave

Entitlements to compassionate leave are detailed below:

2.1.1 Illness

Illness of:	No of days leave granted
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• spouse/partner• Parent• Parent in law or equivalent• Child• Step child or equivalent• sibling• grandparent• grandchild of a person standing in loco parentis¹ to the member of staff or to whom the member of staff stands in that relation.• a person whom the member of staff maintains or with whom the member of staff shares the home which results in domestic difficulties such that a doctor considers that the individual should not be alone and the member of staff needs to be with them.• Any disabled person living with the member of staff where the time off is related to the person's disability.• a close personal friend who is resident with the member of staff or• another close relative.	Up to one working week in total, with pay, in any rolling 12 month period.

2.1.2 Bereavement

	Provision	No of days bereavement leave including funeral attendance
i	Death of a child or step child of any age.	Two working weeks with full normal pay. This includes and is an enhancement of the statutory paid leave entitlements ² .
ii	Death of a baby in the womb after 24 weeks of pregnancy ³ .	Two working weeks with full normal pay. This includes and is an enhancement of the statutory paid leave entitlements ⁴ . Maternity leave also applies if parents suffer the bereavement of a child during or after the 24 th week of pregnancy (see section 2.3.3 of this Policy).

¹ A legal term for someone who is not the biological parent of a child but who acts like a parent to the child) or to whom the member of staff stands in that relation.

² [Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay and Leave legislation](#)

³ Miscarriage leave applies to pregnancies that do not go to plan prior to the 24th week.

⁴ [Statutory Parental Bereavement Pay and Leave legislation](#)

iii	Miscarriage	Two working weeks with full normal pay as set out in section 2.3.2 of this policy.
iv	Death of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spouse / partner • Sibling • Parent, step-parent or a person standing in loco parentis⁵. • Partner's child • Grandchild or step grandchild • Grandparent or step grandparent • Dependant • a person whom the member of staff had a close relationship with. • a close personal friend . • resident with the member of staff or • a close relative 	Two working weeks with full normal pay in any rolling 12 month period.
v	Death of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent-in-law, son-in-law or daughter-in-law. 	One working week with full normal pay in any rolling 12 month period.

We recognise that circumstances, the nature of relationships and the required observances of different religions, cultures and beliefs vary and might not be limited by the examples set out in the table above, which are not meant to limit the manager's discretion, as each request for such leave will need to be judged on the circumstances of the cases.

In circumstances where extensive travel or long periods of mourning are required, requests for additional leave will be given full and sympathetic consideration, and managers should consider an extended period of paid or unpaid leave.

If a member of staff feels that they need to take an extended period of leave, they are advised to investigate the other leave arrangements that we provide to staff (annual leave, unpaid leave of absence) with their manager to determine what might be appropriate in the circumstances.

Deans/Directors may exceptionally consider granting further time off (either paid holiday or unpaid leave) where they consider that the circumstances justify this and where the school/departmental operations are not adversely affected. Where exceptional leave is being considered, Deans/Directors are asked to consider the sensitivity of the

⁵ A legal term for someone who is not the biological parent of a child but who acts like a parent to the child) or to whom the member of staff stands in that relation.

circumstances in each case and to summarise the circumstances to HR, who will advise with a view to ensuring consistency and equality of application.

2.1.3 Applying for compassionate leave

Where reasonably practicable, staff are advised to request special leave from their line manager via the HR system. Where this is not possible due to the urgency of the situation, the member of staff is advised to discuss their request with their manager and the manager is then asked to formally record the member of staff's verbal request on the HRView system.

Deans/Directors are advised to treat requests for compassionate leave sensitively, sympathetically, consistently and equitably and to respond in a period of time that is conducive to helping the member of staff with their circumstances. This response could be given verbally to the member of staff and then confirmed in writing so that the member of staff is clear as to the period of special leave granted and whether it is with pay, without pay, or a combination of the two.

Staff and managers are asked to please formally record all approved leave via the HR system so that any salary deductions can be made, where applicable.

2.2 Emergency leave for care of dependants

2.2.1 Members of staff are entitled to a reasonable amount of unpaid time off to deal with unforeseen family emergencies involving a dependant. An emergency should not normally exceed one to two days leave. Some examples include:

- providing assistance when a dependant falls ill or is injured;
- making arrangements for the provision of care for a dependant who is ill or injured;
- dealing with the unexpected disruption or termination of care arrangements for a dependant;
- a dependant giving birth;
- dealing with an unexpected incident involving a child during school hours;
- making arrangements for the funeral of or to attend the funeral of a dependent (also refer to paragraph 2.2 below).
- A 'dependant' is a person who depends on the member of staff for help and might include:
 - a spouse/partner;
 - a child;
 - a step-child;
 - a parent;

- a step-parent;
- the parents of a spouse/partner;
- a grandparent;
- a grandchild;
- in some cases a person who lives in the same household as the member of staff as part of the family and is dependant on them;
- close relatives or any person who reasonably relies on the member of staff for care, assistance if they fall ill or in cases where the care of a dependent is unexpectedly disrupted;
- and
- persons who rely on a member of staff to provide care arrangements or in an emergency.

Tenants or boarders who live in the family home are not dependents.

2.2.2 A member of staff who wishes to take emergency leave for care of dependants is advised to discuss the details of the emergency with their line manager as soon as is practicably possible, estimating the amount of leave they may need.

2.2.3 Managers are advised to review the circumstances, with the member of staff and determine a reasonable amount of time off, to enable the member of staff to make alternative arrangements and for immediate domestic affairs to be managed. Managers are asked to take into account the particular relationship and responsibility for the relative or dependant in addition to the direct relationships set out above. In most cases the amount of leave will be one or two days' leave.

2.2.4 The member of staff is then asked to formally record all leave dates via the HR system either before or as soon as possible after their leave so that any salary deductions can be made.

2.3 Maternity related special leave

2.3.1 Maternity leave

Our maternity leave and pay provisions are set out in our Maternity leave policy.

2.3.2 Miscarriage

Any member of staff who experiences a miscarriage is entitled to two working weeks paid leave. This will be recorded as special leave on the HR/Payroll system.

The partner of the member of staff will also be entitled to two working weeks' paid leave.

If, following this period of leave, the member of staff feels that they need a longer period of leave, they are encouraged to talk to their manager

who will consider granting them compassionate leave within the provisions of this Special Leave Policy.

The redundancy protection set out in section 9.2 of our Maternity Leave Policy applies to staff who have suffered a miscarriage before 24 weeks of pregnancy, from the date they notify the university of the pregnancy until two weeks after the end of the pregnancy.

2.3.3 Still birth

If a baby is still born after 24 or more weeks of pregnancy, the maternity leave and pay provisions set out in our Maternity Leave Policy apply. The redundancy protection set out in section 9.2 of our Maternity Leave Policy would also apply.

The member of staff would also be entitled to two working weeks leave with full normal pay (an enhancement of the statutory paid leave entitlements) as set out in section 2.1.2 i of this policy.

2.4 Leave for fertility treatment

2.4.1 We would like to support staff who are undergoing fertility treatment by providing them with paid time off.

2.4.2 Staff who have worked with us for 12 months or more can take up to 5 days paid leave in any rolling 12 month period if they are having fertility treatment.

2.4.3 Time off for investigations related to fertility issues should be recorded as sickness absence under our Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure. Any such absences and time off for investigations should be recorded as fertility treatment related on the HR system, to ensure that they do not count towards sickness absence trigger points or formal processes under the Sickness Absence Policy and Procedure.

2.4.4 Staff who are supporting their partner who is undergoing fertility treatment can take up to two days paid leave to attend a specific appointment.

2.4.5 Staff are asked to request this leave from their line manager, giving as much notice as possible. Managers are advised to approve leave requests where possible or to discuss alternative options if necessary.

2.4.6 Staff who do not qualify for this leave or who need more leave than set out in these provisions are advised to request annual leave or unpaid leave.

2.5 Grandparent leave

2.5.1 Colleagues who would like to spend time with their grandchildren during the first year after their birth or adoption, can take up to one week's (pro-rata) unpaid leave, in a single block, in any rolling 12 month

period. If Grandparents are caring for their grandchildren, they could request Carer's leave, as provided for in section 2.6.

- 2.5.2 Staff are asked to seek approval for this leave from their line manager, giving as much notice as practically possible and ideally 8 weeks beforehand. Once approved, colleagues are asked to formally record the approved leave via the HR system so that salary deductions can be made.

2.6 Carer's leave

- 2.6.1 Colleagues who have caring responsibilities for a dependant⁶ with a long-term care need⁷, are entitled to up to two working weeks⁸ of paid carer's leave in any rolling 12 month period. This leave can be used to arrange or provide care.

For staff who work irregular hours, HR will calculate how much carer's leave the member of staff is entitled to take, based on their working hours by adding up the total number of hours worked in the previous 12 months and dividing that total by 52 (or however many weeks since they started the job, if they've been in the job less than a year).

- 2.6.2 The leave can be split into days, half days or taken in a week's block.

- 2.6.3 Colleagues are asked to make requests for carer's leave to their line manager:

- Specifying the days on which they wish to take leave; and
- Giving notice before the relevant date (twice the length of time being requested, or three days, whichever is the longest)

- 2.6.4 Managers cannot refuse requests for Carer's leave but they can ask the member of staff to take this leave at a later date if *'the employer reasonably considers that the operation of their business would be unduly disrupted if the employee took carer's leave during the period identified in the notice'*.

- 2.6.5 Managers cannot require colleagues to provide evidence in relation to carer's leave before approving the leave.

- 2.6.6 Any agreed flexibilities to help support our carers to balance their caring responsibilities and their work can be documented in our [Carer's Passport](#).

⁶ a person is a dependant of an employee if they:

- are a spouse, civil partner, child or parent of the employee;
- live in the same household as the employee, otherwise than by reason of being the employee's boarder, employee, lodger or tenant; or
- reasonably rely on the employee to provide or arrange care.

⁷ as set out in section 80J of [The Carer's Leave Act](#) a long-term care need exists if:

- they have an illness or injury (whether physical or mental) that requires, or is likely to require, care for more than three months;
- they have a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010; or
- they require care for a reason connected with their old age.

⁸ A 'week' means the length of time they usually work over 7 days. For example, if someone usually works 3 days a week, they can take 3 days of carer's leave.

- 2.6.7 Employees and managers should formally record all approved leave dates via the HR system to help ensure accurate reporting of carer's leave.

3. Other time off work

3.1 Examinations

A period of time off with pay, as is considered to be reasonable, will be granted by the dean/director for attendance at examinations directly connected with the work of the member of staff. These examinations would normally be in respect of a professional educational qualification directly connected with the work of the member of staff. Employees and Managers should formally record all approved leave dates via the HR system.

3.2 Appearance in court or attendance in court as a witness

In line with legislation, periods of time necessary for appearance at court with pay will be granted to a member of staff summonsed in the capacity of a witness either on subpoena, other direction from a court or other authorised body, or at the request of the police or the parties, as directed by the court or other authorised body.

Paid time off will be granted to a member of staff for attendance at an inquest as a witness.

Employees and Managers should formally record all approved leave dates via the HR system.

3.3 Leave for voluntary public duties

Subject to the needs of the school/department, members of staff may be granted leave by their dean/director and to serve as:

Public Duty	Amount of time off
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• donating blood	Time needed to travel to the donation location, give blood, recover as advised by the donation team and travel back to place of work. Estimated 0.5 days per donation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a magistrate (or Justice of the Peace)• a local authority leader of council• a local authority committee chair• a member of a local authority• a member of a police authority (this does not include being a special constable)	<p>Up to 5 days' paid leave per year in any year, (a year being a rolling 12 month period) (pro rata for fractional staff).</p> <p>Pay shall be the normal pay of the member of staff less an amount equal to any allowance to which they would have been entitled under section 177 of the Local Government Act 1972 or any other statutory enactment in respect of loss of earnings.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a member of any statutory tribunal e.g, an employment tribunal • a member of a relevant health body • a member of the boards of prison visitors or a prisoners visiting committee • a member of the managing or governing board or a trustee of an educational establishment maintained by a local education authority, an academy trust or a further or higher education corporation 	<p>The Local Government Act 1972 allows for payment of a financial loss allowance to organisations covered by the Act where members of staff are required to undertake public duty leave. This provides that the organisation may claim back a proportion of the member of staff's salary for time spent on public duties. No payment shall be made in the event of full loss of earnings being recoverable by the member of staff concerned by way of claim for financial loss allowance under section 177 of the Act. (Note: when the member of staff is receiving an attendance allowance instead of financial loss allowance, the deduction should be at the rate of the financial loss allowance; if this deduction appears excessive in individual cases, the Director of Human Resources may make such lesser deduction as deemed appropriate in the circumstances).</p>
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Members of staff are asked to submit their requests for time off to their line manager via the HR system with sufficient advance notice for the manager to consider their request and to provide the manager with any documents pertaining to their public duty appointment. Managers are advised to consider requests as promptly as possible and to apply consistency and equity, when granting leave for public duties. Managers may turn down requests if they consider that the request is unreasonable or will adversely affect school/departmental operations.

Any periods of special leave requested in excess of the entitlements listed in section 3.3 will be conditional on the time lost being made up or, if that cannot be done, on any such additional leave being unpaid.

3.4 Army reservists, special constabulary, navy reservists & similar duties

Deans/directors are advised to apply the [Ministry of Defence guidance](#).

3.5 Jury Service

Members of staff who are called up for jury service will be allowed time off for this. Further information on jury service is in Appendix 1.

3.6 Unpaid leave for personal or domestic emergencies

We recognise that colleagues might experience personal or domestic emergencies which mean that they need to request time off work at short notice. Whilst this is not an exclusive list, examples might include:

- Home emergencies e.g flooding or heating issues;
- Thefts and burglaries;
- Accidents;

- Relationship breakup or domestic abuse/violence.

In cases where staff have experienced domestic abuse/violence or where a manager suspects that a member of staff has experienced domestic abuse/violence, the manager is advised to deal with the issues in a sympathetic and confidential manner and to remind the member of staff about the support available to them from our Employee Assistance Programme. Advice from HR can also be sought.

In such circumstances, employees are asked to contact their line manager when the emergency arises. Managers are advised to deal with requests for such leave with discretion considering individual circumstances.

Staff will normally be granted one day's leave without pay per annum.

3.7 Unpaid leave for religious and cultural observance

Staff might wish to request time off for religious and cultural observance. For some staff this will be on a daily or weekly basis or for a day off for a religious or cultural occasion.

Managers are advised to be sympathetic to such requests and to try to accommodate them, wherever it is reasonably practicable to do so, subject to the needs of the service.

Managers can approve the following:

- flexibility in working hours, arrangements or shifts;
- annual leave, flexible hours or unpaid leave.

4. Appeal

Any member of staff who disagrees with a decision made in respect of a request for special leave is advised to discuss this in the first instance with their immediate line manager/dean/director, endeavouring to resolve the issue. The objective should be to settle the matter via informal channels, wherever possible, with Human Resources' guidance and advice, as appropriate. If informal resolution is not successful, the individual might then wish to consider raising their concern through our [Grievance Procedure](#).

Information for staff due to undertake jury service

1. The process

- 1.1 If you are called for jury service you will receive a jury service 'summons' from the court. This will include details of the jury service process. You are advised to respond immediately to the Court by completing part of the summons form and returning it to them, following the instructions in the summons.
- 1.2 You will also receive a 'Certificate of Loss of Earnings or Benefit' form. You do not need to complete the **loss of earnings part** of this form as we will pay your salary normally during your jury service.
- 1.3 Please inform your manager of the dates when will be absent from work due to jury service as soon as you become aware of them. It will not normally be possible to cancel or postpone jury service but please refer to section 3 below if there might be a need to try to do so.
- 1.4 Jury service normally lasts two weeks. On arrival, potential jury members may be asked by the court whether they are available to serve on cases which are expected to last longer than two weeks, or they may be asked specifically to serve on such a case. The University asks staff to please advise the court that their employment makes them unavailable for a period longer than two weeks. Please also refer to section 2 below.
- 1.3 Once jury service has ended, the court will reimburse jury members for 'travel expenses' and 'subsistence', if applicable.
- 1.4 You will need to formally record your period of jury service via the HR system.

2. Long court cases

- 2.1 Occasionally a court case may unexpectedly become extended for an indefinite period and the court will declare, mid-way through a case, that a jury member cannot be released to return to work after two weeks. In such an event the court will give written notice to the jury member. In such circumstances, the member of staff should please let their manager know as soon as possible and share the written extension notice from the court with them.

3. Postponement/cancellation of jury service

- 3.1 It is not normally possible to postpone or cancel jury service. However, if your manager foresees that your absence on the requested dates will cause serious operational difficulties, your

manager is advised to contact their normal Human Resources contact and provide a rationale for requesting that the summons be cancelled. Human Resources will write to the court and make the request. If the court refuses to cancel the summons, you will have to attend.

5. Further information

- 5.1 If you need any further information, please contact your normal [Human Resources contact](#).