

PERSONAL AND OTHER LEAVE POLICY

Brief Description (max 50 words)	This policy sets out our approach to supporting our employees take leave, either paid or unpaid, for a variety of reasons, such as annual leave, special leave arrangements, carer leave, leave for emergencies, volunteering and much more.
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Equality Impact Assessment	This document has been assessed for equality impact on the protected groups, as set out in the Equality Act 2010. This Policy is applicable as outlined in the 'scope' irrespective of age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, race (which includes colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins), sexual orientation, religion or belief, marriage, or civil partnership.

Amendment History

Version	Date	Reviewer Name(s)	Summary of changes
1.0	06/06/2025	Teresa Steward	Consolidating the existing suite of personal and other leave-related policies into one new combined policy.

1.1	April 2026	Jo Campbell	Inclusion of bereaved partners paternity leave in line with recent legislation changes.
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Introduction

At the University of Suffolk, we recognise the importance of supporting our employees in balancing their professional and personal lives. This document brings together a range of leave provisions which have been designed with flexibility in mind to support employees in managing both their professional and personal lives while ensuring the smooth running of our operations.

We value the diverse needs of our employees and aim to offer leave options that support both individual and family needs, alongside those of the University. This policy offers clear guidelines on how and when leave can be taken, aiming to make it easier for employees to manage time away from work in a way that benefits both individuals and the university.

There are 6 sections within this policy:

- Annual leave
- Special leave
- Time off for dependants
- Supporting carers
- Discretionary 'Birthday' leave
- Volunteering

Details of eligibility, pay entitlements and arrangements, and procedures are contained within each section.

This policy does not form part of employees' contract of employment, and we reserve the right to amend or withdraw it at any time.

Scope

This policy applies to University of Suffolk employees.

Where service and other conditions attached to eligibility apply to any part of this policy, these will be detailed as relevant.

Roles and Responsibilities

Managers

Managers play a critical role in fostering a work environment that balances both individual and business needs. By modelling healthy work practices, supporting flexibility, and understanding the diverse needs of their teams, managers help create a space where employees feel valued and empowered. In doing so, they also ensure that business operations continue smoothly. Managers are encouraged to have open, supportive conversations with employees to understand their leave needs and work together to find solutions that support both personal wellbeing and the needs of the team and the university.

People and Organisational Development (POD) Directorate

The People & Organisational Development (POD) Directorate leads the implementation of the University's People Strategy, which includes fostering a flexible and supportive work culture. POD provides guidance to managers and employees on best practices and ensures the consistent application of leave policies. Any procedural responsibilities specific to this policy are outlined in the relevant sections. Employees are encouraged to contact the POD Directorate for advice on eligibility and the application of leave entitlements.

Individuals

Employees are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the leave entitlements outlined in this policy to ensure they understand their rights and responsibilities. Engaging with these policies promptly and seeking advice from their manager or the POD Directorate when needed helps ensure that requests are processed efficiently and with minimal disruption. Open communication with managers is key to balancing work and personal commitments effectively. By actively participating in these processes, employees contribute to a supportive and positive work environment.

Section 1: Annual Leave

This section of the policy sets out the university's approach to annual leave. The arrangements described apply to all university employees. Further information and FAQs can be found on MyView, the POD Self Service portal.

Annual leave entitlement

For employees in jobs banded 1 - 4 (inclusive), the entitlement is for 25 days per annum pro rata for those part time.

For employees in jobs banded 5 - spot (inclusive), the entitlement is for 30 days per annum pro rata for those part time.

Entitlement will be rounded up to whole hours.

The leave year

The leave year runs from 1 August to 31 July each year.

Taking annual leave

Annual leave is managed by the employee and their line manager, or their designate, and should be agreed and booked with them via the Leave Management section on MyView. Annual leave may only be taken with the express approval of the relevant line manager. The timing of leave must reflect the business needs of the university.

Requests for periods of annual leave of more than two weeks should be requested at the earliest opportunity for planning purposes, ideally within the autumn term. Such requests will be approved if the impact on the smooth running of the department can be mitigated. For teaching and frontline support employees, it will not normally be possible to take extended periods of leave during teaching weeks.

Carry forward of annual leave

A maximum of one working week (37 hours (pro rata for part-time employees)) may be carried forward to the next leave year.

Further flexibility may be possible in exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of the relevant Executive member.

Public holidays and university closure days

Public Holidays are paid in addition to annual leave. Paid leave will also be granted in respect of any days on which the university chooses to close.

Part-time members of employees will receive an entitlement to public holidays / closure days

which is pro rata to the full-time entitlement. Public Holiday / closure day entitlement will be added to the overall annual leave entitlement for part-time employees on the online leave management system and should be booked in the same way as other annual leave.

Payment in lieu of annual leave

Normally, payment in lieu of untaken annual leave will only be made to employees who leave the employment of the university during the leave year, where the accrued annual leave cannot be taken prior to the date of leaving. Where there has been the opportunity to take leave and this has not been taken, payment in lieu of untaken leave will not be made.

Leave for starters and leavers

Holiday entitlement in the first and last years of service shall be pro rata to the date of starting or leaving the university.

Accrual of annual leave during long-term absences

Unless otherwise specified, annual leave entitlement including bank holidays and closure days will continue to accrue during periods of absence (paid or unpaid), e.g., due to sickness, maternity leave, adoption leave etc. In these circumstances if the accrued outstanding leave cannot be taken within the normal annual leave period, other arrangements may be made to carry forward to the following leave year as follows:

Long term absence relating to maternity, adoption leave etc. – normal contractual annual leave including bank holidays and closure days.

Long term absence due to sickness – a maximum of up to four weeks leave to be taken within 18 months starting from the end of the leave year in which it is accrued. (e.g., annual leave accrued during the annual leave year 2024/25, up to a maximum of 20 days may be carried forward to be taken by 31 January 2027)

Annual leave for employees with term time only contracts

Employees working on a term-time-only basis exclusively take their holiday entitlement during academic holidays and are not therefore eligible to take holiday during term time (as per their contract of employment). Pay (salary) is adjusted for the annual reduction in hours due to only working during term time. Payment for annual leave (based on the weekly contractual hours and pay band for the role), will be made at the end of each month worked and this will be at the rate of 16.6% of basic salary to account for leave, public holidays, and closure days.

Annual leave for casual employees and for employees on variable hours

Casual employees who submit Occasional Work claim forms will be paid their holiday pay as calculated by the Payroll Department using the relevant hourly rate of pay and the number of hours worked. This is separately detailed on employees' payslips.

Section 2: Special Leave

Introduction

In addition to annual leave, there are a number of occasions on which the university may grant leave, with or without pay. This section of the policy summarises our approach to requests for time off for reasons not covered in other university policies and provisions and addresses a range of different circumstances. If a particular situation is not covered by this section of the policy, line managers will take a reasonable approach to requests for leave and are encouraged to consult the POD Directorate before making decisions.

All requests for special leave must be submitted to line managers. Requests may be made by email or using the Personal and Other Leave Form. Details of approved or unapproved leave requests must be forwarded to the POD Directorate for recording and monitoring purposes. In considering requests for special leave, managers will take into consideration business needs as well as the priorities of the employees member concerned.

Bereavement leave

We understand that bereavement can be one of the most difficult experiences in a person's life. We are committed to supporting our employees during these times by offering bereavement leave.

In the event of the death of an immediate family member, employees may be granted up to 1 working week (i.e., pro rata to working hours/days) paid leave. An immediate family member is defined as a:

- Spouse or partner
- Parent (including stepparent)
- Child (further details below)
- Sibling (including step sibling)
- Grandparent
- Grandchild

It is recognised that some family members may have the closeness of a parent without being one (i.e., an aunt / uncle) and in such circumstances discretion may be applied to support employees members who are bereaved. The requirements for bereavement leave may vary depending on the relationship and requirements of the individual (i.e., those who need to make funeral arrangements may require the full working week of leave whereas attendance at a funeral may only require 1 or 2 days leave). Employees will receive normal pay during bereavement leave.

Parental bereavement leave

Employees have a right to take up to 3 weeks of paid parental bereavement leave in the event

of the death of a child (regardless of age).

Whatever their length of service, employees may take this bereavement leave as:

- A single block of three weeks; or
- Separate one-week blocks at different times.

A bereaved employee can take parental bereavement leave at any time from the date of the death of their child until 56 weeks after the date of death. The length of this period recognises that bereaved parents may need some flexibility as to when to take the leave. Employees will receive normal pay during parental bereavement leave.

Bereaved Partner's Paternity leave

In the very sad event that the mother or adopter of their child dies within the first year of the child's life or adoption, eligible fathers and partners are able to take up to 52 weeks of unpaid bereaved partner's paternity leave in order to care for the child.

If the bereavement occurs within 13 days before the end of the relevant 52-week period, you may take your bereaved partner's paternity leave up to 14 days after the bereavement, even if it falls outside of the 52-week period.

The amount of leave available will depend on the bereavement date and when the leave is taken, but all the bereaved partner's paternity leave must be taken within 52 weeks of the day following the child's birth, or from the day after the child is placed for adoption. For adoptions from overseas this is the day after the child entered Great Britain. This is also available where a child is born through a surrogacy arrangement.

You will be eligible if:

- You are the child's biological father, or spouse, civil partner, or partner of the child's mother or child's adopter
- You have the main responsibility for the child's upbringing.

You may start your leave immediately if you plan to start your leave within the first eight weeks after the bereavement, provided you contact your line manager before you are due to start work on your first day of absence.

At a later stage, within the eight weeks of the bereavement date, and at least one week before you intend to return to work, you will need to complete a short form confirming the date you intend to return to work.

If you plan to start your leave more than eight weeks after the bereavement you will need to give your line manager at least one week's written notice before your leave is due to begin and confirm the date you intend to return to work. Details of how to submit this notice included

Personal and other leave policy

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[here](#)

Compassionate leave

Line Managers may grant up to 5 days of paid compassionate leave in the event of the serious illness of a close relative. The term close relative generally may be taken to include husband, wife, partner, child, parent, sibling, parent-in-law.

Additionally, we recognise that employees may be grieving following the death of an individual who is not an immediate family member, but with whom the employee may nevertheless have a close relationship, for example an aunt, uncle, cousin, or close friend. If this is the case the employee may request compassionate leave and it will be up to line manager's discretion to grant compassionate leave on a case-by-case basis. The decision will depend on the circumstances, considering issues such as:

- A closeness of your relationship with the deceased
- Any obligations towards the deceased (for example, responsibility for arranging the deceased's funeral)
- Travel required (for example, if there is a need to travel a significant distance to be with relatives); and
- Any bereavement requirements in relation to religion, such as an extended period of mourning (with the onus on the employee to tell their line manager about these requirements).

Up to a further 5 days of paid leave may be granted by the relevant Executive member, taking into consideration the circumstances of the case, the availability of annual leave and the opportunity for flexible working.

Sometimes, the circumstances giving rise to compassionate leave may result in the employee being absent due to ill health; in this situation the usual certification arrangements will apply.

Managers seeking to support an employee during a period of personal stress, may also consider other supportive measures, which might include flexible working, unpaid leave, or referral to Occupational Health. The POD Directorate may be called upon to offer advice, guidance, and information in these circumstances.

Disability leave

As part of our commitment to provide reasonable adjustments to employees who have declared themselves disabled, we offer up to 10 days' disability leave (pro rata for part time working) per academic year which may be taken for reasons related to their disability.

The Equality Act 2010 states that a disability is a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on someone's ability to do normal activities usually for more than 12 months.

The university is committed to supporting employees with disabilities to stay in work. When a disability is declared, we may seek advice from Occupational Health or other agencies to identify reasonable adjustments. If Occupational Health confirms the condition meets the Equality Act 2010 definition of a disability, the employee will be entitled to disability leave.

For all instances of disability leave, employees or management must report this to the POD Directorate by using the Personal and Other Leave Form.

Disability leave shall not be recorded against sickness absence and will not count against entitlement to occupational sick pay. However, disability leave will be reviewed in accordance with normal absence monitoring procedures. Disability leave may be used on a planned basis (for rest, rehabilitation, specialist appointments, or other purposes related to the employee's disability) or on an unplanned basis.

Employees taking unplanned disability leave must notify their manager of their absence as soon as possible on the first day of leave.

Religious festivals & pilgrimages

Reasonable unpaid time off may be granted to employees who wish to observe a religious festival pertinent to their faith. Such time off must be arranged in advance with their line manager.

Trade union duties

The university's approach to supporting Trade Union representatives is set out in our policy entitled "Trade Union Recognition and Arrangements for Staff Consultation and Negotiation".

Fertility treatment

The university recognises that undergoing fertility treatment can be a significant and sensitive time. To support employees, up to three days of additional paid leave per year may be granted for fertility treatment. Employees requesting this leave are asked to provide their line manager with a letter from a qualified medical practitioner confirming that treatment is recommended, along with a valid appointment card.

Elective surgery

Employees wishing to undergo elective non-essential surgery (such as cosmetic surgery) are not normally entitled to paid sick leave or paid special leave for this purpose. However, should the surgery result in injury, the usual sick pay arrangements will apply.

The sickness absence section of the university's Health and Wellbeing Policy will apply in the case of any surgery that is recommended by a suitably qualified medical practitioner, and to

surgery relating to bone marrow donors and to gender reassignment surgery.

Public duties

The university supports employees who hold public office or undertake approved public duties. This includes roles such as magistrates, elected members of local councils or police authorities, members of statutory tribunals, school or college governors, members of relevant NHS bodies, and members of Prison Independent Monitoring Boards. Employees undertaking such duties are entitled to reasonable time off.

Employees requesting time off for public duties must seek prior approval from their manager for any planned absence. Managers will consider the amount of time requested, any time already granted for these duties, and the potential impact on the university's operational needs.

Time off for public duties will normally be without pay. Paid time may be granted in the case of employees holding very senior public positions, such as Council Leaders. Requests for such exceptions should be made in writing to the relevant Executive member and the Director of POD before the start of the academic year.

Reservist Duties (Volunteer Reserve Forces)

The Volunteer Reserve Forces include the Royal Naval Reserve, Royal Marines Reserve, Army Reserve (formerly the Territorial Army), and the Royal Auxiliary Air Force also known as RAF Reserves.

Employees who are members of the Reserve Forces may be required to undertake an annual training period, usually lasting two weeks during the summer. Requests for unpaid leave to attend this training must be submitted in advance using the relevant Personal and Other Leave form. While there is no statutory obligation to grant this leave, line managers are encouraged to support such requests wherever operationally feasible.

In the event of compulsory mobilisation for military operations, the university reserves the right to apply for an exemption or deferral in exceptional circumstances. However, the university is generally committed to supporting employees who are mobilised.

Special constables

As a general rule, the university does not make specific provision for employees serving as Special Constables, as these duties can be carried out outside normal working hours. However, in the event of a local civil emergency that places increased demands on Special Constables, requests for special leave will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Such requests should be made in writing to the employee's line manager and copied to the Director of POD.

Sporting events

Employees selected to represent their county or country in sporting events may be granted paid leave to participate in events that take place during their normal working hours. Requests should be submitted in advance to the appropriate line manager for consideration.

Jury service and court appearances as a witness

Employees required to undertake jury service or to attend court as a witness will be released from work for the necessary period. Salary will continue to be paid but will be adjusted to reflect any compensation received from the Court. Any such payments must be disclosed to the POD Directorate.

Unpaid leave

For a variety of reasons, employees may wish to take a period of unpaid leave. Employees contemplating this for family reasons should refer first to other sections within this policy and the university's Family Friendly Policy which may be better suited to their circumstances.

Employees considering seeking unpaid leave are advised to discuss their needs with their line manager at an early opportunity. In considering such requests, managers will reflect on the reason for the request, the amount of any unpaid leave previously taken, the likely impact on the students and / or business as usual, and the feasibility of arranging cover. Requests for significant periods of unpaid leave (in excess of 2-3 weeks) will be discussed with the relevant Executive Team member. A relevant member of the POD Directorate may also be consulted.

Periods of authorised unpaid leave will count towards the employee's continuous service with the university, unless otherwise notified. However, annual leave and other service-related benefits will not accrue during unpaid leave. Prior to any period of unpaid leave, employees are advised to check the implications of the arrangements for their pension provision, and check with their pension provider. The POD Directorate can provide further information.

Employees taking unpaid leave should ensure their manager is provided with contact details during their absence so they can be reached in the event of an emergency or if circumstances arise that may impact their employment.

Section 3: Time off for Dependants

Introduction

This section of the policy applies to all employees who need to deal with an unexpected or sudden emergency involving someone who is reasonably described as a dependant.

Eligibility for time off for dependents

Employees are entitled to take a reasonable amount of time off to deal with an emergency involving a dependant. A dependant, for these purposes, is:

- A spouse or partner
- A child
- A parent
- A person who lives with you as part of the family (not your tenant / lodger or employee)
- Any other person who would reasonably rely on you for assistance during an emergency or in the event of illness/injury.

Reasonable time is deemed to be sufficient time to deal with the immediate emergency. If an employee has prior notice of an event requiring them to take time off, this is unlikely to come within the remit of this policy.

Circumstances in which time off is appropriate

Below are some examples of circumstances within which time off for dependants would be appropriate:

- To provide assistance if a dependant falls ill, gives birth, or is injured or assaulted
- To make arrangements for the provision of care for an ill or injured dependant
- To deal with the unexpected interruption or termination of care arrangements of a dependant
- To deal with an incident that involves your child and occurs unexpectedly during school hours

Advising the university of your need to take time off

Line managers must be informed of the need for time off as soon as possible. The POD Directorate should also be notified, including the reason for the absence and an indication of its expected duration, as soon as is reasonably practicable. Early notification enables the university to inform students, colleagues, or service users and put appropriate arrangements in place to minimise disruption.

Leaving a message by telephone or email for your line manager and colleagues will suffice if you are facing an urgent situation/crisis. However, you must make direct contact with your line manager as soon as you can.

Pay during dependants leave

There is no statutory entitlement to paid time off for dependants, and such leave is normally unpaid. However, in some circumstances, pay may be maintained if the absence is managed under an alternative form of leave — for example, using accrued time off in lieu, flexible working arrangements (for short absences, typically up to two days), or another applicable family-friendly policy. This should be discussed with the line manager and the POD Directorate. Where leave is confirmed as unpaid, an appropriate salary deduction will be made and itemised on pay slips.

Pension contributions whilst taking time off

You can maintain your scheme membership, but you must continue to make contributions for the period of unpaid emergency leave. Contributions will continue to be taken (and the university will continue to make employer contributions) unless you inform the POD Directorate in writing or email to the contrary.

If you choose to stop your contributions the employer contributions will stop too, and the period of unpaid leave will be treated as Suspended Membership. In this case, the period of unpaid leave will not count towards your total pensionable service. This will affect your benefits.

If you wish to take advice before deciding to suspend membership, please contact the POD Directorate in the first instance.

Section 4: Supporting Carers

Introduction

The university values the important role that carers play, both at work and at home. We understand that balancing work and caring responsibilities can be demanding, and we are committed to offering support that helps make this balance more manageable. This section of the policy outlines the guidance and options available to employees with caring responsibilities.

A carer is an individual who provides unpaid support to a family member, partner, or friend who is unable to manage without their assistance due to illness, disability, mental health needs, frailty, or addiction.

A dependent of an employee has a long-term care need 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 and cannot cope without a carer's support; or
- They require care for a reason connected with their old age.

This statutory right to carer's leave applies to a wide range of caring situations, but excludes general childcare, except where your child meets the definition of a dependant with a long-term care need.

The activities that carers undertake are wide ranging, including but not limited to:

- help with personal care;
- help with mobility;
- managing medication;
- practical household tasks;
- emotional support; and
- help with financial matters or administration.

Identification and disclosure

Employees are not required to disclose caring responsibilities to their line manager but are encouraged to do so, as this enables the university to offer appropriate support. Any information shared will be treated confidentially. Employees also have the option to record caring responsibilities in the 'Equal Opportunities' section of MyView.

Carers Leave

Employees who are carers are entitled to up to 5 days' paid leave (pro rata for those part time)

in an academic year to care for, or arrange care for, a dependant with long-term care needs (as defined above).

Carers leave is available to employees from the first day of their employment.

Carers leave can be taken at any time and no evidence is required to support a request. Employees must give notice to their line manager in advance of taking leave. If the request is for one day or less, the notice period must be at least 3 days. If the request is for more than one day, the notice period must be at least twice as long as the requested leave (e.g., if the request is for 2 days leave, there must be at least 4 days' notice). Carers leave may only be taken with the express approval of the relevant line manager. In the event of an emergency, the Time off for Dependants section of this policy would apply.

Carers leave can be taken in one continuous block, as individual days, or as half days. If you are caring for more than one dependant, you do not have a separate entitlement to carer's leave for each dependant.

If an individual's request for carer's leave is likely to cause significant disruption to business operations, the university may request that the leave be postponed. The line manager will discuss the situation with the employee to agree on an alternative date for the leave, which will be no later than one month from the original requested start date or part-day. The line manager will confirm the reason for the postponement and the new agreed date within 7 days of the original request, and prior to the requested start date of the leave.

To request carers, leave, please complete the request form on Hub – [Application for Carers Leave](#)

Carers Passports

A carers passport is a tool to support discussions between employees and line managers around what support can be provided to the employee. It is advised that a line manager uses this tool with any carers in their teams.

The carers passport can be found on MyView under the 'Adjustments at Work' category. The completed form can then be viewed by both the employee and line manager at any time.

Section 5: Discretionary Birthday Leave

Introduction

The university offers a discretionary one day of paid birthday leave per annum for each employee (subject to the eligibility criteria below) for the purpose of celebrating their birthday. This leave does not form part the employee's standard annual leave entitlement. Individuals who do not recognise or celebrate their birthday are still eligible to request an additional day of leave, subject to the same criteria as all other employees laid out below.

Eligibility criteria

Employees must meet all of the following criteria to be eligible for birthday leave:

- Have been in post for a minimum of 12 months
- Have successfully completed their probationary period
- Be employed on their birthday
- Have a clean disciplinary record (i.e., no active warnings)
- Not be subject to formal performance management (capability) procedures
- Coordinate with their line manager to arrange the date of leave, which will usually fall within two weeks of the birthday (either two weeks before or after). In exceptional circumstances, where operational requirements prevent taking leave within this timeframe, the leave may be extended to occur within one month of the birthday (either one month before or after)
- Submit the request for discretionary birthday leave at least two weeks in advance of the desired date

Employees are advised to gain approval of their leave day prior to making any arrangements. The university will not be liable for any financial loss individuals may suffer due to arrangements made before the time off has been agreed if the leave is refused.

If the birthday falls on a weekend or a non-working day the eligibility remains the same – with the expectation that the employees will request another working day off within the two weeks either side of the actual birthday.

Unused birthday leave

Any unused discretionary birthday leave will be forfeited if it is not planned (approved) and taken in accordance with the points above. Birthday leave does not form part of the standard annual leave entitlement and there is no entitlement for payment upon leaving or if arrangements have not been put in place for it to be used.

General

Requests for birthday leave will be assessed by the line manager, taking into account staffing levels and business needs at the time of the request. Any impact on face-to-face teaching or

student activities must be minimised, so if the leave cannot be taken within two weeks of the birthday due to teaching or student commitments, this will typically be considered an exceptional circumstance. In such cases, an extension of up to one month from the birthday (as outlined above) may be granted.

Employees who may be prevented from taking birthday leave due to maternity, paternity, adoption, or sickness leave will be eligible to take the day upon their return to work either within one month of the birthday or, where the absence lasts longer than one month, within the first month of their return. It is for the individual to ensure the appropriate notice / agreements have been obtained in respect of this and the day will be lost if the individual does not make appropriate arrangements.

This discretionary benefit will be reviewed annually, and the university reserves the right to vary, amend or withdraw it without notice.

Section 6: Volunteering

Introduction

This section of the policy sets out the university's commitment to supporting employees whose voluntary commitments may from time to time need to be undertaken in usual working hours.

At the University of Suffolk, we are committed to making a positive impact on individuals, our community, and beyond. As a Civic University, we embrace our role in supporting and engaging with the region through knowledge-sharing, collaboration, and community partnerships.

Volunteering involves offering time and skills to benefit others, without monetary compensation. We recognise the valuable contribution volunteers make to local communities and how volunteering can provide our employees with a sense of purpose and connection.

We encourage and support employees who wish to engage in voluntary activities, understanding the mutual benefits for both the individual and the community.

Types of volunteering that we support.

We recognise that volunteering opportunities are diverse, and we support activities that align with our core vision and mission. We encourage volunteer work that contributes positively to the community, fosters engagement with the university, enhances access for prospective students and their families, supports vulnerable individuals, or promotes environmental sustainability - all in line with the university's values.

Volunteering opportunities are typically available through registered charities, not-for-profit organisations, educational institutions (such as schools and colleges), hospices, hospitals, and healthcare organisations.

Types of volunteering that we do not support

We do not support activities which are political, or which support causes which are not directly aligned to our vision and mission (or which support personal causes – for example voluntary work within a family business). Managers may use discretion in discussing and approving the relevance of specific volunteer activities under this policy. If agreement cannot be reached regarding alignment with the university's vision, mission, and Civic University principles, alternatives will be discussed. These may include using annual leave, unpaid leave (up to a maximum of 2 days per year), or agile / flexible working arrangements. In cases where the activity does not align with the university's interests, the individual will need to manage their volunteering outside of work hours.

Please note that charity days related to team-building events are not covered under this policy. Activities aimed at raising funds for charity, such as fun runs, marathons, charity walks, abseils, or skydives, do not qualify for volunteer leave.

Volunteer leave

All employees are entitled to a maximum of 2 days (14.8 hours) paid volunteer leave per year, or a pro rata equivalent if you work part-time.

Volunteer leave may be taken as full days, half days, or blocks of at least one hour. Any unused volunteer leave may not be carried over from one year to the next.

Volunteering leave is intended to support activities that can only take place during normal working hours. It is not offered in lieu of volunteering undertaken outside of these hours. Some volunteering commitments may involve a mix of in-hours and out-of-hours' time, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

As volunteering is, by definition, unpaid, the provision of paid time from the university to support it is discretionary. This offer may be reviewed or withdrawn at any time.

Requesting volunteer leave

Requests for volunteer leave should be submitted via MyLeave on the MyView self-service portal. The request must include details of the intended volunteering activity, along with the specific dates and number of hours being requested as volunteering leave.

Employees must give at least 2 weeks' notice when booking volunteer leave unless agreed otherwise with their line manager.

All volunteer leave must be approved in advance by the employee's line manager.

Participation in volunteering during usual working time will only be approved if it is not detrimental to the operational requirements of the team, department, or university.

If a line manager considers that absence could cause difficulties for the organisation, they will ask the employee to take their volunteer leave at a different time.

If a manager refuses the application for volunteering and provides a reasonable explanation for not agreeing and supporting the request, the manager's decision is final and not open to appeal by the employee.

DBS checks and insurance

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Arrangements for any DBS checks, Health & Safety arrangements, risk assessments and insurance should be arranged by the charity or organisation providing the volunteering opportunity and is not the responsibility of the university.

Fees and Expenses

The University is not responsible for any travelling or other expenses incurred in association with volunteering activities.

Standards of behaviour

During any period of volunteer leave undertaken during normal business hours—particularly where there may be a reasonable association with or representation of the University—individuals are expected to maintain appropriate and professional conduct. Employees should avoid actions or statements that could harm the university's reputation or compromise confidential business information.

The University's employment policies continue to apply during the volunteering activity and period of volunteering leave.

Appendix A Supported Volunteering Activities (examples)

(This list is not exhaustive)

- School Governor
- Academy Governor / lay member
- Charity trustee or lay member (unpaid)
- Charity volunteer
- Hospice or Healthcare / hospital volunteer
- Educational charities

Appendix B Not supported Volunteering Activities (examples)

(This list is not exhaustive)

- Charity fundraising activity i.e., charity walk / run / skydive / cake stall
- Parent / Teacher Association (PTA)
- Volunteering with organisations which do not have a direct link to our Civic University pledge or our vision and mission
- Political campaigning
- Voluntary work within family or friend's business
- Charitable activities organised for team building events

Links to other leave policies

Family Friendly policy

Personal and other leave policy

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