

Special Leave – Guidance Note

This guidance provides details of the entitlements to special leave, which will only apply in the specific circumstances outlined below. Please also refer to our Annual Leave and [Flexi-time Scheme](#) guidance and separate policies in relation to Bereavement Leave and Family Leave.

All requests for special leave must be made through OneUni for line manager approval.

1. Medical Appointments

Employees attending medical appointments (with the exception of ante-natal and/ or appointments covered by the disability leave provision below) are expected to arrange them outside their core working hours, as far as possible. Appointments in work time should be approved in advance and should be taken as either annual leave, flexi-leave or unpaid leave.

2. Disability Leave

The University provides up to one week (of normal contracted hours) leave per annum, as may be required for particular purposes such as assessment and/or treatment in relation to the disability, or servicing of necessary equipment or other aids. It is not intended for Disability related sick leave.

Disability leave applies to staff who have disclosed a disability, and where the time off work is verified by a medical or occupational health report or an appointment letter. Disability leave is also available to staff with disabled dependants. A dependant is a spouse or civil partner, parent, child, someone who lives in the household as part of the family, or someone who “reasonably relies” on the employee for assistance in making care arrangements if they fall ill or are injured.

Paid time off is limited to five days (pro rata) per year in total for both personal use and for use in relation to a dependent.

A disability under the Equality Act 2010 would be a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on the ability to do normal daily activities ([Definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#))

Requests for disability leave should be submitted via OneUni for line manager approval.

3. Leave for medical procedures (not related to sickness)

The University recognises that there can be a range of situations where staff need time off work for appointments and procedures that are medical, but do not relate to ill health, for example, procedures associated with:

- IVF treatment
- Transitioning (please see our [Trans Inclusive Framework](#))
- Cosmetic surgery

The University appreciates that these types of procedures are extremely important to the individual, and may cause anxiety and distress, in much the same way as having treatment for a serious health condition.

Staff are encouraged to discuss their individual circumstances with their line manager, so that appropriate support and flexibility at work can be provided. Any information provided to the manager will be maintained in strict confidence, unless the member of staff is happy to be open with colleagues. The reason for any absence will be disclosed only on a "need-to-know" basis and in agreement with the employee. Where staff don't feel comfortable to discuss their needs with their manager in the first instance, support can be obtained from Human Resources.

The employee's line manager and the employee will jointly agree the flexibility that is needed to be able to attend appointments. Appointments will be treated in line with all other medical appointments and should be made outside of core hours where possible. Employees are expected to make up for the time lost or use flexi/annual leave, or otherwise the time off will be unpaid.

Any sickness or ill health resulting from such procedures will be treated in accordance with the University's procedures for managing sickness absence.

4. Jury Service

The University recognises jury service as an important civic duty and as part of our commitment to community engagement, employees who are called for jury service will be granted time off to attend. However, in circumstances where the timing of the jury service raises major staffing or operational issues, assistance will be provided to the employee in order to appeal to the court to delay the dates of service.

Employees being asked to attend for jury service must notify their line manager immediately.

Employees must keep their line manager regularly informed about how long they are likely to be away from work. Where jury service lasts for less than half a day the employee must return to work for the remainder of the day, wherever practicable.

On confirmation of a period of jury service, the employee will receive a [Certificate of Loss of Earnings or Benefit](#) from the Court Service. This form should be given to Payroll immediately, who will complete it and return it to the employee. The employee must then take the completed form with them on their first day of Jury service. During attendance at the court, employees should claim from the court, any compensation for loss of earnings. The University will then pay the difference between such entitlements and normal average earnings.

Upon return to work the employee must submit to Payroll a completed [Attendance Payments for Public Duties form](#), together with evidence of the actual payments claimed and received (i.e. the Remittance Advice) from the court. Payroll will then make the appropriate adjustments to pay (pension contributions will not be affected).

Employees will also be entitled to claim any travel or subsistence expenses that they may have incurred from the court and these will not be taken into account in the deductions from salary.

5. Time off for Magistrate duties

The University recognises that magistrates are an invaluable part of our justice system, and as part of its overall commitment to community engagement supports employees who are, or who wish to become, magistrates. What follows demonstrates the support of the University for employees who are, or wish to become, magistrates and provides a framework for allowing such employees time away from the workplace for the performance of magisterial duties.

Any member of staff applying to be a Magistrate should inform their line manager who will ensure that the Head of School/ Department is informed. Once appointed as a magistrate, employees will be permitted a maximum of 13 days paid leave per year for magistrate service to meet the minimum sitting requirement required for magistrates. This will be in addition to contractual annual leave entitlement.

The University understands that Magistrates are provided with their rota of sittings a year in advance so they can be scheduled to reduce any potential conflict with work priorities. The member of staff should provide their line manager with details of their rota as soon as it is available so that the scheduling of time off can be agreed a year in advance, having regard to the needs of the business and the occasions on which the employee is required to sit in court.

Employees should not commit more than 13 days without first discussing this with their line manager. Where needed, time which exceeds the minimum sitting requirement will need to be taken as annual leave.

This policy can only be varied where it is determined by the Head of School/ Department, in liaison with the Head of Human Resources, that the needs of the business make it impossible for a particular employee to be released under the terms of the policy.

A Head of School/ Department can refuse to support more than one magistrate in an area of working (i.e. a department, programme area) where staffing numbers are small and to support more than one Magistrate would impact on business efficacy.

6. Leave of Absence for members of the Reserve Forces

The University is supportive of employees who are members of the Volunteer Reserve Forces, and recognises the benefits of their membership to both the University and the employee. These benefits include the development of valuable skills such as leadership, teamwork, effective communication and organisational ability.

Reservists are typically committed to 30 days training per year, during evenings and weekends. Where an employee is unable to arrange training on days they would not normally be working, consideration will be given to granting additional paid leave. To enable attendance at annual camp (a 15-day continuous training period), the University will grant Reservists two weeks paid leave, in addition to their normal annual leave entitlement. A further week may be granted as unpaid leave.

7. Governor Responsibilities

By its very nature the university endorses the promotion and progression of education in the community and is aware that there are members of staff who serve as members of Governing Bodies of a school, college or university.

In order that we can support staff promoting and supporting education in this way, in exceptional circumstances, paid leave of absence may be granted for training days up to a maximum of 2 days per year provided that evidence of the appointment to the role is received. Members of staff should provide such evidence to their line manager.