

# **Guidelines on academic staff holiday entitlements and arrangements (July 2020 version)**

Please note, these are temporary academic staff holiday entitlement and arrangement guidelines that should be referred to as of 22 July 2020, which reflects the current approach to annual leave carry over due to COVID-19.

## **Annual leave - temporary variation to annual leave carry over rules (2 years, maximum 10 days) that is applicable to all staff**

We continue to encourage everyone to continue to take their annual leave entitlement as planned and distribute it as they usually would over the course of the year. This will mean that we spread annual leave over the full year, which will benefit everyone in the long run.

Whilst we understand that holiday plans may have been cancelled, it is important to make a distinction between holiday and annual leave. Please help us by taking a common sense approach. The general principle to be applied with annual leave is that we should take regular breaks, when we can, in line with personal needs, in line with business needs and to not store up annual leave for when campus-based operations increase.

Our standard annual leave policy is that a maximum of 5 days of annual leave can be carried over to the next leave year with permission from your People Manager. In light of the current exceptional circumstances, we are introducing a temporary variation to our annual leave carry over policy, effective immediately and for the next 2 leave years (this leave year and next leave year). Please see below for further information.

## **Temporary variation to annual leave policy (effective from 22 July 2020)**

All staff can carry up 2 working weeks (pro rata'd dependent on contractual hours) of outstanding leave into the next leave year (whatever their leave year is as stipulated in their contract), but only with advanced agreement of a line manager and in exceptional circumstances eg. where there has been no opportunity to take leave in the leave year period.

We would like to continue to encourage people to spread annual leave entitlement throughout the year wherever possible; for example, this may mean taking shorter, more frequent breaks). It's important to all of us that we get a chance to rest and recuperate when we can for our wellbeing.

## **Guidelines on academic staff holiday entitlements and arrangements (original April 2012 version)**

Below is the usual approach to academic staff holiday entitlements and arrangements that will resume after the next 2 leave years.

These guidelines are produced as an interpretation of the contract of employment to assist both managers and individual members of staff and have been agreed with UCU. The guidelines set a framework within which faculties and services should establish detailed local arrangements to give effect to the principles set out below. Deans and Heads of Service should publish the local scheme of implementation and it should be available to all staff and managers.

### **Annual leave**

#### **Principle 1: There is a leave entitlement**

The holiday entitlement is 35 days in addition to the 8 statutory Bank Holidays and between 4 and 5.5 extra statutory/Christmas closure days when the University is also closed. The only extra statutory day to fall outside of the Christmas period is the day after Easter Monday. When employment commences or terminates during the holiday year holiday entitlement is accrued on a pro-rata basis for each complete month of service.

#### **Principle 2: Leave should be taken within the leave year**

The holiday year runs from January to December, unused holiday entitlement may not be carried forward into the next holiday year except by agreement with the manager. The normal expectation is that there will be no carry over of holiday entitlement.

### **Principle 3: The time of leave is constrained**

The taking of holidays is subject to the agreement of the manager. In those circumstances where this requires the replacement of direct teaching or other time-constrained activities, individuals requesting leave are expected to provide possible and realistic solutions as to how this might be done. Leave cannot be granted until appropriate plans have been put into place.

Holidays may be taken at any time of year as long as the individual meets their professional responsibilities and has the agreement of their manager. Given the nature of the academic year the taking of holiday during teaching periods can present particular problems and therefore would need careful forward planning and liaison with the immediate line manager and other relevant colleagues.

Managers will also need to balance the number of requests for leave at any one time of the leave year. Thus it may not always be possible to grant leave either during the times requested or for the amount requested.

The University runs on a year round basis and there are tasks and roles to be performed on the same basis. As professional academics staff have a collective responsibility to ensure that the reasonable expectation of the University is met at all times and in a manner that is reasonably fair and equitable in relation to their colleagues.

For individuals to meet this expectation they need to have an understanding of the tasks and roles that need to be covered, in particular during the popular holiday periods, and there needs to be some oversight of holiday booking.

### **Principle 4: Leave arrangements need to be managed**

As early as possible after 1 September each year the Faculty/Service will set out the expectation for cover during the coming calendar year and staff will be invited to indicate the periods that they wish to take as holiday. This will usually involve some form of leave logging system.

No later than the end of November the pattern of holiday requests will be reviewed to identify any problems of cover and managers will then work with individuals and teams as necessary to resolve the problems. The intention will be to resolve matters to the satisfaction of all parties wherever possible.

### **Principle 5: There are contractual obligations on the University**

When seeking to ensure that appropriate cover is provided managers will bear in mind that staff have a right to expect to take their full holiday entitlement within the year. The contract

states that an individual will be granted up to 6 weeks of their normal holiday entitlement in one continuous period during the summer holiday period and, subject to the organisational requirements of the institution, such a request will not be unreasonably refused.

However, it needs to be recognised that organisational requirements may be such that it might not be possible to meet all requests for this length of continuous leave. However, it is highly unlikely that all staff would wish to adopt this leave pattern. Further, the University is committed, as far as possible, to continuing with its practice of minimising those organisational requirements that require academic staff to be present at work during the summer period, mid-July - early September.

In agreeing to any request for such a block of leave managers will need to consider the fair distribution of such authorisation between competing requests both within a leave year and over a number of years. When considering leave requests managers must also give special regard to staff with family responsibilities to help them, where possible, to balance work and caring roles. Once again, the need for a fair distribution of such support must be kept in mind when requests are considered.

## **Principle 6: Leave must be set in the context of the complete workload**

It can be difficult to manage holiday schedules effectively without having some insight into the scholarly activity being undertaken by an individual and their other duties. In considering holiday requests managers must consider these in relation to the planned and authorised scholarly activity of the individual and other responsibilities to ensure there is the opportunity to accommodate both work and holiday and that it is clear when each is to be undertaken within the year.

**Please refer to UWE Bristol's [Scholarly Activity guidelines](#).**