

Discretionary leave guidelines

1. Purpose

The Company recognises that there may be times when additional time off work may be needed for absences that are not due to personal sickness or annual leave.

2. Principles

- 2.1 The Company wishes to support those through periods of personal difficulty.
- 2.2 Although there is no legislation covering Discretionary Leave (sometimes known as compassionate leave), the Company understands that employees may experience urgent domestic need and personal distress from time to time and wishes to support such employees by granting reasonable time off to deal with such issues.
- 2.3 It is important that this type of leave is granted in a fair and equitable manner across the Company and these guidelines apply to all staff. It is not the intention to provide a prescriptive policy, but to provide a framework of guidance as a basis for decision making.
- 2.4 The final decision on the granting of this type of leave lies with the General Manager, however Human Resources is available to advise on particular circumstances to ensure consistency. The granting of this leave will always take into account the business needs of the Company.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all UECS Ltd employees including those who are within their probationary period.
- 3.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the absence policy.
- 3.3 Discretionary leave covers the death or illness of a close relative or dependent or a personal emergency (e.g. burglary, house fire etc.)
- 3.4 Discretionary leave does not cover personal sickness, parental leave, time off for dependents or flexible working requests. Separate guidance is available for these.

4.0 How much notice do members of staff need to give?

- 4.1 Any member of staff needing time off for compassionate reasons should inform their line manager (or other appropriate person) as soon as possible, giving the details of the proposed absence, including the reason for it. A message via telephone or email will be sufficient if the member of staff is facing an urgent/crisis situation and time-off work is needed at very short notice.
- 4.2 If a member of staff is at work and needs to leave urgently, they should inform their line manager before they leave the premises providing as much information about the situation as possible. Should the line manager not be available, the member of staff should inform another appropriate person, ensuring that their line manager will be made aware of their absence.

5.0 How much time off could be granted?

5.1 Bereavement:

Bereavement affects every individual differently and each case will need to be reviewed on an individual basis. Below is a guide to how much time off could be granted. Managers must treat all requests with sympathetic consideration and use discretion where necessary, taking into account the relationship between the employee and the deceased, any involvement in funeral preparations and the distance from the local area.

5.1.1 Close relative (including dependants): Leave with pay for up to three days per occasion may be granted.

5.1.2 Other relatives/close friends: Normally one day with pay will be granted per occasion.

5.2 Other compassionate leave circumstances:

5.2.1 Leave with pay may be granted for the following situations depending on individual circumstances:

(a) Serious illness of a close relative/dependant – up to three days leave with pay.

(b) Any urgent and unforeseen circumstances (e.g. house fire/burglary/flood) which would prevent an employee from coming to work that are not covered by existing University policies – normally one day's leave with pay.

5.3 In all cases leave may be extended beyond the suggested amounts at the discretion of the line manager/HR Officer, according to the needs of the Department/Unit. However, additional time off will not necessarily be paid.

5.4 Should additional time off be required, where possible and at the discretion of the line manager (taking into account the needs of the Section/School/Department) employees could arrange to do one (or, where appropriate, a combination) of the following:

(a) Take the day(s) as annual leave from the current year's entitlement, or with the agreement of the Head of Section/School/Department, bring days forward from the next year's entitlement. The latter might be helpful if a situation has occurred towards the end of a leave year.

(b) Take the day(s) as unpaid leave. The line manager should inform Human Resources of this arrangement who will then instruct Payroll.

(c) Make up the time over an agreed time period (up to 3 months) if it is feasible to do so, taking into account the needs of the Department/School/Section.

6.0 Definitions

6.1 Close relative is normally defined as an employee's spouse/partner, father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, step-father, step-mother, son, daughter, grandson, granddaughter, step-son, step-daughter, brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, father/mother-in-law, son/daughter-in-law.

6.2 The definition of close friend or other relative (not listed above) could include but is not limited to: friend of the family, close personal friend, uncle, aunt, cousin, close family member of spouse/partner.

- 7.0 Time off for medical, dental or related appointments including time off for fertility treatment
- 7.1 Generally routine appointments (e.g. dentist, optician, and non-urgent doctor's appointments) for both full and part-time staff should normally be made outside of work hours. If this is not possible the appointment can be made and taken during work time, however the appointment should be made close to the beginning or end of the working day to minimise work disruption.
- 7.2 Since many doctors' surgeries now operate a system which requires appointments to be made on the day in question, staff may attend such appointments as necessary, although again staff are encouraged to make them at the beginning or end of the day as far as possible. Staff attending this type of appointment, or a hospital appointment, are not required to make the time up. This would be paid authorised absence for part of a working day.
- 7.3 The University wishes to support members of staff who decide to undertake fertility treatment and as such, a member of staff who wishes to take time off for fertility treatment should inform their line manager as early as possible that she will be seeking time off for this purpose. The member of staff should also give as much notice as possible of the specific dates on which time off will be required.
- 7.4 A member of staff may be granted up to a total of 3 working days' paid leave (pro rata for part-time staff) in any 12 month period to undergo fertility treatment. However, should additional time off be required, this will need to be taken using the methods described at point 6.4 above.
- 7.5 In all cases the member of staff should give their line manager as much notice as possible of unavoidable absences of this type, and if a member of staff has an ongoing health problem they should discuss it with their line manager so that any necessary adjustments can be made, in consultation with Occupational Health if required.
- 7.6 Managers have the right to request documentary evidence of any of the medical appointments stated above.
- 7.7 Any information provided to the line manager/Human Resources will be kept strictly confidential.
- 8.0 Time off to accompany dependants to planned medical appointments

8.1 In this instance time off will need to be taken using one of the three methods given at point 6.4.

Should you have any queries relating to these guidelines please contact Human Resources.