

Compassionate Leave Proposal

Summary

The proposal is to increase compassionate leave to 10 days* for all colleagues who are currently entitled to receive 3 days* [*pro-rata for part-time colleagues].

Context

The University has a number of people-related policies, procedures and benefits that were being considered as part of a Pay and Conditions Review. This review was paused in 2024 due to financial pressures facing the University. However, the proposal to change the compassionate leave benefit is being made because it improves an important element of our staff conditions for a significant number of people across the University and because the University believes it is affordable in the current financial context.

Current Position

The current leave for compassionate reasons for colleagues who are in grades 1-6 is covered within the ['Leave and Absence From Work' guidance](#) on the [University HR policy pages](#).

Within this guidance the section on 'Compassionate reasons' (section h) states: "It is not possible to itemise how much leave should be granted in particular cases, but it is normal to grant up to three days, or even up to five days in some cases, e.g. for the death of a close relative. A HR Business Partner or HR Associate should be consulted before granting more than five days." That is, the default is three days, subject to the possibility to extend.

Roles benefitting from this proposed improvement

- Professional Services roles up to Grade 6
- Technical roles
- Tutors (Doctoral, Language, School)
- And other roles such as Associate Researchers, Graduate Interns, PGR Tutors, Associate Tutors, ITS Associate Staff, Sports Tutors.

Proposal 1 (increase to 10 days pro rata)

Amend the current wording in the 'Compassionate reasons' guidance (as referred to above) to:

"Staff will be provided with up to 10 days (pro-rata for part time staff) for compassionate leave. Whilst it would be rare for any extension beyond this provision, any request for more than 10 days should be made by the line manager and approved by the Executive Director of HR and the Chief Operating Officer/DVC and Provost or their delegates where there are unique and extenuating circumstances."

Proposal 2 (add 'close friend')

It is also proposed to add "or close friend" within the examples quoted in the compassionate leave procedure such that the text changes:

From

"Compassionate leave is given for compelling reasons when the member of staff could not be expected to carry out normal work and where it would be unreasonable to expect the member of staff to bear the expense of leave without pay. Examples of such compelling reasons would be the death of a close relative, the serious illness of a member of the family, or the illness of a dependant such as to require the presence at home of the member of staff."

To

"....without pay. Examples of such compelling reasons would be the death of a close relative **or close friend**, the serious illness of a member of the family **or close friend**, or the illness of a dependant such as to require the presence at home of the member of staff."

Next steps

1. 19 June -18 July 2025: Formal consultation with trades unions
2. By 18 July 2025: Undertake an Equality Analysis, including engagement with staff networks
3. 19 June -18 July 2025: Also provide a draft to staff and leaders (via a suitable webpage) for any feedback via a dedicated feedback form
4. 21 July- 8 August 2025: based on feedback, HR to review/refine proposals to UEB
5. 19 August 2025: *pending 1-4*, seek endorsement by UEB (meeting 19 Aug.) for implementation
6. Implement from 1 September 2025, communicate outcome to staff and unions.

Relevant Links

[Leave and Absence From Work](#); [University HR policy pages](#); [Terms and conditions: Main Page](#)