



UNIVERSITY  
OF SUSSEX

Human Resources

## **Appendix A      Disability Leave Procedure (proposed June 2025)**

### **1.      OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE**

- 1.1. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that the employment opportunities of employees who are or become disabled is positively managed.
- 1.2. The procedure provides a framework to help balance the individual needs of the disabled employee, with the operational requirements of the University.
- 1.3. Disabled colleagues may take planned appointments related to their disability where requested and **approved in advance by their line manager**. Normally, the amount of leave that may be approved is a **maximum of 20 days** a year (1 October to 30 September), **pro rata for part time colleagues** depending on individual need (i.e. requests considered by the line manager on a case-by-case basis in the context of a reasonable adjustment). However, in exceptional circumstances any application for more disability leave over the year may be considered. In these instances, the line manager should consult their HR Business Partner.

### **2.      CONTEXT: LEGISLATION**

- 2.1. It should be noted that throughout this document the phrase disabled colleague is used, informed by the [social model of disability](#). However it is important to note that this term covers any colleague who falls within the relevant definition as included in the [Equality Act 2010](#).
- 2.2. Disability is defined by the Equality Act (2010) as individuals with a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.
- 2.3. 'Substantial' is more than minor or trivial, e.g. it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed.
- 2.4. 'Long-term' means 12 months or more.

### **3.      SCOPE OF PROCEDURE**

- 3.1. This procedure applies to all employees of the University of Sussex who are disabled under the definition contained within the Equality Act 2010 (see section 5).
- 3.2. Disability leave is a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act. The [Workplace Adjustment Toolkit](#) sets out the University responsibilities and approach to reasonable adjustments (also known as workplace adjustments).
- 3.3. This procedure covers the provision of paid time away from work for disabled employees who have pre-arranged treatment, rehabilitation or assessments related to their disability.

#### 4. **RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 4.1. To be eligible for consideration under this procedure employees must inform their manager of the reason related to their disability or long-term health condition which they believe brings the appointment within the scope of time off for disability leave. Following the [Workplace Adjustments Toolkit](#) guidance, managers should work proactively and collaboratively with staff to put in place and review reasonable adjustments that may be appropriate to support the disabled colleague.
- 4.2. Disabled employees who wish to request disability leave as a reasonable adjustment will require the approval of their line manager in advance of taking any disability leave [see 5.5].
- 4.3. Requests for this leave will be sensitively considered. If an adjustment is not considered 'reasonable' by the manager, advice must be sought from the HR Business Partner.

#### 5. **PROCEDURE**

- 5.1. Disability leave is approved paid time away from work for disabled employees who need treatment, rehabilitation or assessments related to their disability. This can be a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act.
- 5.2. Disability leave is distinct from sick leave.
- 5.3. Disability leave does not apply to absence through sickness, whether it is related to a disability or not, which is determined by either self or medical certification. As a separate matter, in certain cases, reasonable adjustments may be made in relation to the sickness absence of a disabled employee. Line managers may wish to contact their HR Business Partner for guidance on this point if required.
- 5.4. To qualify for disability leave, the colleague making the request must be in work (i.e. not on sick leave) at the time of making the request and at the time of taking the disability leave.
- 5.5. Disabled employees who wish to request disability leave as a reasonable adjustment must email\* their line manager giving reasonable time to gain this approval [\*note: use of email applies until the HR system 'MyView,' can be updated, at which stage 'MyView' must be used for requests].
- 5.6. The following are some examples of disability related reasons, but it is not an exhaustive list. All of these must be related directly to the employee's disability or long-term health condition, as shared with the relevant manager:
  - hospital appointments, hospital treatment as an outpatient or specialist check-ups including monitoring of related equipment;
  - assessment for conditions;
  - specific training, for example with a guide or hearing dog, or in the use of specialist equipment where the training cannot be provided outside normal working hours;
  - specific counselling or therapeutic treatment (including physiotherapy) related to the proactive management of their disability.

<b>Review / Contacts / References</b>	
Policy title:	Disability Leave Procedure
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Approving body:	n/a
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Revision history:	n/a
Next review date:	n/a
Related internal policies, procedures, guidance:	n/a [Link to location where documents can be found on University website - will be placed on <a href="#">HR Policies Web Page</a> ]
Division:	Human Resources
Policy Owner:	Colin Shipp, Executive Director of HR
Point of Contacts:	Isobel Pearce, Assistant Director of HR Culture, Equality and Inclusion and Sarah Cox, Head of Employee Policy and Relations