

Special Leave Policy Work Life Balance (WLB)	Cyngor Cyllido Addysg Uwch Cymru Higher Education Funding Council for Wales 
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Title	Special Leave Policy
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Version	Date	Description
0.1		Inherited Policy
1.0	October 06	Policy updated for HEFCW
1.1	June 07	Policy amended – administrative improvements
2.0	Feb 08	Policy amended in line with style guide, ISG and EIA
2.1	June 08	Policy amended to include voluntary leave
2.2	November 09	Policy amended to clarify time limit for Special Leave. Agreed by Policy Changes Group

Introduction

1. This policy sets out the circumstances in which employees may apply for special leave for periods of absence from work which are not covered by HEFCW's sick leave, annual leave, career break, maternity leave, parental leave, paternity leave, adoptive leave or foster leave policies. Special leave is not an entitlement, however, requests for special leave will be considered sympathetically in light of individual circumstances and may be granted at the entire discretion of HEFCW.

Authorisation for special leave

2. Requests for special leave must in the first instance be made to the line manager by means of completing a special leave form which is available on the intranet.

3. Any requests for special leave which are not included below must be discussed by the line manager with HR and a decision will be notified to the employee directly.
4. When the special leave has been discussed with the line manager, the completed special leave form must be returned to HR for authorisation and a copy held by the employee.
5. HR will confirm with the employee in writing the amount of paid or unpaid leave which has been authorised along with any other provisions applicable for the duration of special leave.
6. If the line manager feels that the request should be refused, this should be discussed beforehand with HR and HR will notify the employee in writing with the reasons for the refusal.
7. Should an employee wish to appeal against the decision this must be done formally to the appropriate Head of Team / Director Strategic Development / Director of Finance & Corporate Services / Chief Executive within five working days of receiving the notification detailed above.

Special leave provisions

Bereavement

8. HEFCW appreciates that the death of a partner, relative or close friend can be very distressing and all requests for special leave will be treated sympathetically.
9. The following are general guidelines as to the amount of special leave that can be expected but individual circumstances need to be considered which may affect the amount of special leave approved.
 - up to five days paid leave following the death of a spouse, partner, child, parent, or other close relative such as a brother or sister;
 - up to three days paid leave following the death of in-laws;
 - up to one day's paid leave to attend the funeral of a relative not mentioned above or a close friend;
 - If the employee has to act as an executor or take charge of the funeral arrangements for someone not included in the above the employee may apply for up to three days paid leave inclusive of any entitlement noted above;
 - When a funeral is delayed or there are unforeseen circumstances, such as post-mortem or inquest requirements a request for additional special leave needs to be made to HR who will review the request depending on individual circumstances;

- Exceptionally, one extra day's special leave with pay (normally within the maximum of five days for an employee who has responsibility for the funeral arrangements) may be allowed after the funeral when an employee has a particularly long journey home and where it would be unreasonable for them to travel home on the day of the funeral.

Leave for dependants

10. This is a statutory right allowing the employee to take a reasonable amount of time off work to deal with certain unexpected or sudden emergencies and to make necessary longer term arrangements. The circumstances under which time off can be taken under this statutory right are:
 - if a dependant falls ill, or has been injured or assaulted;
 - when a dependant is having a baby;
 - to make longer term care arrangements for a dependant who is ill or injured;
 - to deal with the death of a dependant;
 - to deal with an unexpected disruption or breakdown of care arrangements for a dependant;
 - to deal with an unexpected incident involving the employee's child during school hours.
11. The emergency must involve a dependant of the employee and time off can be paid or unpaid.
12. A dependant is a partner, child or parent of the employee or dependant who lives in the same household as the employee e.g. grandparent.
13. Circumstances under which special leave for dependants with or without pay may be taken within HEFCW are as follows:
 - a dependant is taken ill or has been injured or assaulted;
 - to make long term care arrangements;
 - to deal with unexpected disruptions or breakdown of care arrangements;
 - to deal with unexpected incidents involving the employee's child during school hours;
 - to take a dependant to a medical appointment where they are unable to do so themselves.
14. One day's paid leave will be granted to the employee in any of the above circumstances, however, unpaid leave may be granted if the employee needs to extend the leave, provided this extended leave has been discussed and authorised by the line manager and HR.
15. In the case of an illness of a close relative or dependant (as outlined above) where it is necessary for an employee to remain at home to care for that relative or dependant, special leave with pay for up to five days may be granted. This period may be extended if medical evidence is provided to confirm that it is essential for the employee to remain at home to care for that relative or dependant.

16. Any other exceptional request for dependant leave will be assessed on an individual case by case basis by the line manager and HR.
17. An employee who is unable to make arrangements for the care of his/her children during the school holidays may seek unpaid leave for part of the period, although there is no guarantee that such leave will be granted. Wherever possible the employee should use annual leave entitlement first. Alternatively, the possibility of changing working patterns in line with the Flexible Working Patterns policy or short-term, part-time working can be considered.

Public duties

18. Employees may be involved in certain public duties, which carry with them a statutory requirement for paid time off work. These are:-
 - Justice of the Peace – up to 18 days paid leave per annual leave year*;
 - local councillor – up to 18 days paid leave per annual leave year*;
 - Governor of a state school/HE Institution/FE Institution – up to six days paid leave per annual leave year*;
 - member of the Reserve Forces – up to six days paid leave per annual leave year*;
 - any statutory tribunal – up to six days paid leave per annual leave year*;
 - time off with pay will be given to those employees who are summoned for attendance at legal/criminal proceedings and jury service*.

*Employees will be required to submit evidence to support their request for special leave.

Religious/cultural observance

19. There may be employees who request time off as special leave, or a temporary change to their working hours for a particular religious or cultural occasion. Employees who need time off for religious or cultural observance will be entitled to request the following, subject to the needs of HEFCW:
 - a) general flexibility in arrangement of working hours, and/or;
 - b) annual leave, time off in lieu (flexi leave) or unpaid leave.
20. Line managers should be sympathetic to requests and should accommodate them wherever it is reasonably practicable to do so. Reasonable notice for such requests should be given by the employee and will be considered in line with the needs of the team and HEFCW.

Voluntary work

21. Employees are entitled to apply for up to two days leave per annual leave year paid time away from work (pro rata for part time staff) to carry out voluntary work under the following conditions:

- voluntary work must be for a recognised voluntary, community or religious group or agency, including charitable organisations. Employees may be expected to provide evidence of their involvement;
- time away from work must be agreed with the line manager with reasonable notice;
- if time away within a team is required, the business needs of HEFCW must be considered to ensure service is not unduly affected;
- the voluntary role should not be in conflict with your paid work (eg, if a contract is in place between HEFCW and the voluntary organisation);
- time away can be taken in a block or spread across the year;
- the two days relate only to the current year and cannot be carried over from previous years or into the following year.
- the activity should not bring HEFCW into disrepute.

Other

22. Special leave with pay may also be granted where severe damage or disruption to property necessitates the employee's presence at home.
23. Unpaid special leave will also be considered for employees seeking to take additional annual leave up to a period of three months, over this period of time the unpaid leave will be considered under the Career break policy.

Recording

24. HR will keep a record of any special leave that has been taken on the HR/Payroll database for future reference.
25. Annual leave year runs from 1 April to 31 March within any 12 month period.