



Public Service Leave Policy
Human Resources Department

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Contents

1. Introduction.....	4
2. Scope.....	4
3. Principles	4
4. Types of Public Duty.....	5
5. Provisions relating to Military Reservists	6
6. Procedure and Recording.....	7
7. Jury Service.....	7
8. Volunteering.....	8
9. Further information	8

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University recognises that those carrying out public duties provide an invaluable service to their local community, and society as a whole. The University is committed to supporting employees who are engaged in public duties and enabling them appropriate flexibility to fulfil their commitments, including by allowing reasonable time off. The following sets out the University policy on time off and pay for members of staff undertaking UK-based public duties, and the process for members of staff who wish to access these provisions.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all members of staff at the University carrying out an external public service role, regardless of length of service.

3. Principles

- 3.1 Where a member of staff wishes to take on an external public service role, they should discuss this with their line manager ahead of making the commitment. This will allow the member of staff and their manager to jointly consider the potential wider implications of taking on the role, including in respect of the operational considerations, the member of staff's work-life balance, and any potential [Conflicts of Interest](#). For the avoidance of doubt, members of staff do not need permission from the University to take on an external public service role in their own time (so long as the role is not incompatible with any contractual provisions on external professional activity), but will need permission to take time off work should this be required, and managers are able to refuse permission where the impact on work time is at a level that cannot be managed (although permission will not be withheld unreasonably). Accordingly, it will be expected that the member of staff will discuss with their manager details of the likely time commitment, including the likely requirement for time off work, ahead of taking on the role. Where an individual already holds an external role at the time they commence University employment, line managers will be expected to make all reasonable efforts to accommodate time off associated with this, subject to the principles expressed in this document and in 3.2 in particular.
- 3.2 In general, it will be expected that activities in connection with an agreed external public service role should, wherever possible, be arranged at such times as to minimise the impact on work time (e.g. outside of work time, or at the start or end of the working day, with an expectation that the member of staff would attend work in advance of and/or return to work after the external commitment where reasonably possible). However, it is recognised that some roles will involve commitments which necessarily take place in work time, and the University wishes to be supportive of such commitments.
- 3.3 Although there is no statutory entitlement to paid time off work to undertake public service roles, the University recognises the value of such activities and will allow reasonable paid time off (in addition to normal annual leave).
- 3.4 It is recognised that different types of external roles will have different minimum time commitments. The level of paid time off will need to be agreed between the individual and their line manager based on the specific circumstances of the case, but in general,

the University will where possible seek to offer paid time off to cover the minimum time commitments of the particular duty held, up to a maximum of 15 occasions (of up to one day each) per year. Anything beyond the minimum time commitment of the particular role held would generally be unpaid leave, or could be taken as annual leave.

- 3.5 Instances of leave need to be agreed in advance between the member of staff and their University line manager, ahead of confirming the external commitment, and any leave granted will be on condition that it is not possible for the specific activity to be arranged outside of work time, and that the time away from work on a given 'occasion' is kept to the minimum level necessary to fulfil the task (an 'occasion' is no more than a day). As with other leave requests, requests will be balanced against the operational demands and priorities of the department, although requests for leave will not be unreasonably refused.
- 3.7 Where possible, time off for public duties should be spread out evenly across the year. Where this is not possible, staff members will be expected to plan the use of their annual leave entitlement accordingly to avoid prolonged or concentrated periods of absence, to mitigate the potential operational impact.
- 3.8 Time off will only be granted for attendance at and travel to and from meetings, not for any preparatory work that needs to be undertaken.
- 3.9 For the avoidance of doubt, staff members will not ordinarily be expected to hold more than one external public role. In the event that more than one such role is held, paid time off would usually only be available to one of the roles.
- 3.10 Staff members who wish to stand for election are expected to take any time spent campaigning leading up to an election as unpaid leave or annual leave.
- 3.11 Leave entitlements will be pro rata for part-time staff.

4. Types of Public Duty

- 4.1 The above provisions are applicable to members of staff undertaking the following public service roles:
- a magistrate (also known as a justice of the peace)
 - a local councillor
 - a school governor
 - a member of any statutory tribunal (for example an employment tribunal)
 - a member of the managing or governing body of an educational establishment
 - a member of a health authority
 - a member of a school council or board in Scotland
 - a member of the Environment Agency or the Scottish Environment Protection agency
 - a member of the prison independent monitoring boards (England or Wales) or a member of the prison visiting committees (Scotland)
 - a member of Scottish Water or a Water Customer Consultation Panel

- 4.2 Trade union officials will receive a dedicated facilities time allocation that is agreed between the University and their trade union. Provision for time off for trade union duties is therefore not covered by this policy. If you have any queries in relation to this, then please contact your Trade Union or your area HR Business Partner.
- 4.3 Specific additional provisions for Military Reservists are set out in section 5.
- 4.4 Jury Service is outside of the scope of the above and specific provisions are set in section 7.
- 4.4 Managers can obtain advice from their area HR Business Partner if they have any queries in relation to eligibility for paid public duties leave.

5. Provisions relating to Military Reservists

- 5.1 Members of staff who are members of the UK Reserve Forces will generally be expected to participate in training events, most of which take place in the evenings or at weekends, but they may also be expected to participate in a period of annual training. In order to support this, the University will adopt the same position as applied to other forms of public service role in respect of time off, by offering, where possible, paid time off to cover the minimum time commitments of the role. For military reservists, this will usually be 10 days per year (or less) in addition to normal annual leave, to meet the annual continuous training commitment (ACT). Documentation from the Reserve Unit confirming the training may be requested.
- 5.2 Should a member of staff who is a Reservist be mobilised (i.e. called up for active service) they should ordinarily receive 28 days' notice, and must give the University as much notice as possible. It is possible for the University to apply to delay or cancel mobilisation if it would seriously harm the business, but this would happen only in exceptional circumstances.
- 5.2 During a period of mobilisation, Reservists will be paid by and be given a period of annual leave by the MoD. They will therefore be on unpaid leave from the University and will not accrue annual leave or continuous service, although the period before and after the mobilisation will be joined together and treated as continuous.
- 5.3 After mobilisation, the member of staff must notify their manager in writing as soon as they know when they can return to work. This must be no later than the third Monday after their last day of service. The University must re-employ them as soon as it is able to.
- 5.4 The normal intention will be that the member of staff will return to their previous post, or, if this is not possible, to an alternative role on terms and conditions no less favourable than if they had not been absent.
- 5.5 The University will endeavour to offer a degree of flexibility in granting leave for Service spouses and partners before, during and after a partner's deployment, subject to normal operational considerations.

6. Procedure and Recording

- 6.1 Ahead of committing to take on the public service role, the member of staff must discuss this with their University line manager (see also 3.1, which also covers the position for staff members who already hold an external public service role at the point they commence University employment).
- 6.2 In respect of specific leave requests in connection with a public service role, ahead of committing to the activity, the individual should seek the agreement of their line manager, explaining what the time is needed for and why it is not possible for this activity to take place outside of work time (see also 3.2). Requests should be submitted on the CoreHR portal in the same way as other leave requests, using the category 'Public Duties Leave', with the comments box used to specify what the public duty is.
- 6.3 It is expected that staff should provide their manager with as much notice as reasonably possible ahead of taking leave to enable operational cover arrangements to be made.
- 6.4 Staff may be required to produce relevant documentation verifying their public duty appointment.
- 6.5 Managers will consider requests with reference to normal operational considerations. Requests will not be unreasonably refused (see also 3.5 and 3.6). Should a request for leave in connection with a public service role be denied, the reasons will be explained to the member of staff. Should the member of staff be dissatisfied, they may wish to request a further discussion with the relevant manager, or may contact their area HR Business Partner or Trade Union for advice. Whilst it is envisaged that it will be possible to grant the majority of requests, or that the manager's explanation will be satisfactory where this is not possible, individuals who believe the explanation given is not satisfactory and their request has not been given fair consideration are able to seek redress via the [University Grievance Procedure](#).

7. Jury Service

- 7.1 Jury Service is considered separate to public service leave, as it is not voluntary and is not an activity where the employee or the employer can limit the amount of time taken to fulfil the duty, unless there are exceptional reasons acceptable to the Court.
- 7.2 Employees who are required to undertake jury service will be notified in writing by the Courts, with all relevant details and instructions provided. Individuals must notify their line manager as soon as possible and must contact Payroll to arrange for any necessary paperwork to be completed.
- 7.3 The University policy is that members of staff who are called for jury service will not suffer financial detriment as a result of this in respect of their normal take-home salary. Leave will be granted, and staff will be paid as normal by the University. Any payment received by the member of staff directly from the Courts in respect of loss of earnings must then be notified to Payroll, who will make the equivalent deduction

from salary to ensure the member of staff's take-home pay remains the same during their period of jury service.

8. Volunteering

- 8.1 The University has a separate [Volunteering Policy](#), catering for staff who wish to volunteer within the community and for charitable organisations.
- 8.2 Where time off for activities linked to a recognised public service role is granted under the Public Service Leave Policy, it will not normally be permitted for additional time off to be granted for the same role under the Volunteering Policy.
- 8.2 If you have any queries in relation to whether an activity should be considered as falling under the Public Service Leave Policy or the Volunteering Policy, please contact your area HR Business Partner.

9. Further information

- 9.1 If you have any queries in relation to public duties leave please contact your area HR team.