

Unpaid Leave Policy

1. Introduction

This policy applies to all staff and covers short periods of unpaid leave where all contractual leave has been used, and unpaid leave of absence for approved purposes.

There are separate arrangements relating to career breaks for staff with caring responsibilities, parental leave, and dependants leave. References to the relevant policies can be found in section 7.

2. General Unpaid Leave

Where a member of staff has used all contractual leave and requests extra unpaid leave, the Head of Unit (or nominee) may authorise up to a maximum of ten days in any leave year.

Requests for unpaid leave of **ten days and under** should be added to SuccessFactors by the staff member for approval by their line manager.

Requests for unpaid leave **over ten days** are a matter for consideration by the line manager's manager. Line managers should send the request to the People Hub, attaching the approval email from the line manager's manager. The People Hub will add the request onto SuccessFactors.

3. Unpaid Leave of Absence for Approved Purposes (Including Sabbatical Leave)

Members of staff may be granted unpaid leave of absence for approved purposes for a period not normally exceeding one year. The requests will be considered in relation to University business requirements, including the impact on student experience and other colleagues and any financial considerations.

Exceptionally, the University Secretary may agree to maintain the employer's and, in special circumstances, the employee's pension contributions.

Requests for Sabbatical Leave for Academic staff are subject to the above conditions and will normally be unpaid. However, the University will consider granting leave on full or part salary in special cases where the work will further the interests of the University.

Further information on leave of absence for approved purposes can be found in the appropriate Terms and Conditions of Service.

4. Pension

Where the member of staff taking unpaid leave of absence is a member of the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS), their membership of USS will be suspended during this period. For further information, please see the Unpaid Leave Procedure listed in the Useful References section below.

5. Contractual Terms during Unpaid Leave

Return to work would normally be to the job occupied at the beginning of the period of unpaid leave.

Continuity of service will be maintained and the period of leave will count towards the employee's length of service with the University.

6. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Policies are inclusive of all Open University staff, regardless of age, care experience, caring status or dependency, civil status, disability, family status, gender, gender expression, gender identity, gender reassignment, marital status, marriage and civil partnership, membership of the Traveller community, political opinion, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic background or trades union membership status.

7. Useful References

Unpaid Leave Procedure
Terms and Conditions of Service
Unpaid Career Break Policy (for staff with caring responsibilities)
Unpaid Parental Leave Policy
Dependants Leave Policy