



Overview

The Annual Leave Purchase Scheme forms part of the University's benefits package and aims to give staff additional flexibility to take time off for reasons not normally covered by other time off policies to help achieve a better work-life balance.

- The scheme allows staff members to purchase up to an additional one week annual leave (pro-rata for part-time staff). Time purchased will be worked out in **hours** to support different work patterns.
- There will be an open enrolment period in August/September each year each year to allow staff to enrol. Enrolment will be online via the [Employee Hub](#) and should be approved if the set eligibility criteria is met.
- All staff members are eligible except for those on fractional, term-time only contracts. There is specific guidance around treatment for staff on fixed-term contracts; staff who change roles within the annual leave period and staff who go on a leave of absence such as maternity leave within the scheme guidelines and frequently asked questions (FAQ's) on the [Employee Hub](#).
- Purchase amounts will be deducted as salary sacrifice in line with holiday years, so that both employee and the University can benefit from additional tax and NI savings where annual leave is purchased.
- It is expected any purchased annual leave is used within the holiday year that it is purchased within ie within the leave year the salary sacrifice payments are deducted. If, having bought additional holiday, the employee fails to take it before the end of the relevant holiday year, the leave will be lost altogether. In these circumstances, no compensatory payment will be made. Carry-over of leave will be considered in line with the existing annual leave policy ie a maximum of five days (pro-rata) in exceptional circumstances, only with agreement of the Head of School/Department or designated person.
- Applications must be reviewed by the employee's line manager and either approved or rejected within the dates of the enrolment window. The University reserves the right to refuse an employee's application to buy annual leave in exceptional circumstances when an application would cause significant business or operational detriment. Only requests that meet the eligibility criteria and do not require colleagues to unreasonably cover the work and do not incur additional costs more than the salary deduction amount through backfill or cover for roles that purchase additional leave are to be approved. Prior to declining an application, managers should speak to their HR Business Partner about any exceptional circumstances. Please note that if the application is declined, you will need to speak to the staff member to ensure they are aware of the reasons for the decision.

The full scheme guidelines are available on the HR web site at:

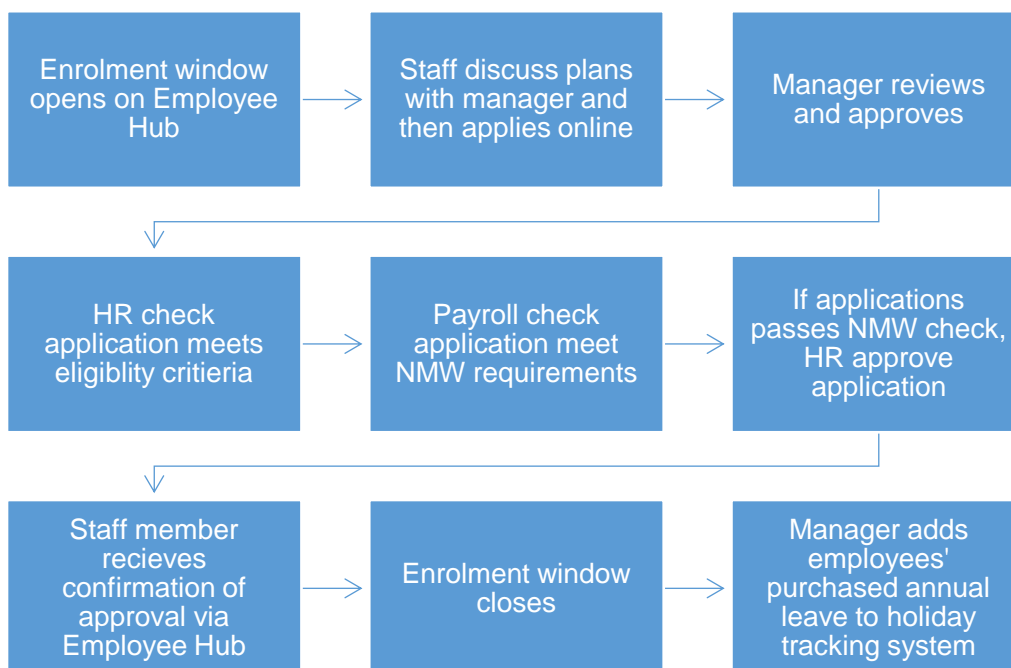
<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/hr/guidesandsupport/absenceandannualleave/annualleave/index.aspx>.

Eligibility

Note: Staff must **not** be on a fractional, term-time only contract

In exceptional circumstances, whereby the additional annual leave will have significant organisational/operational detriment, managers should speak to their HR Business Partner (<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/hr/aboutus/hr-business-partnering.aspx>) prior to declining the enrolment, in most cases it is expected that the request will be approved.

Process



Manager's role

Managers have until the end of the enrolment window to approve any applications for additional purchased annual leave.

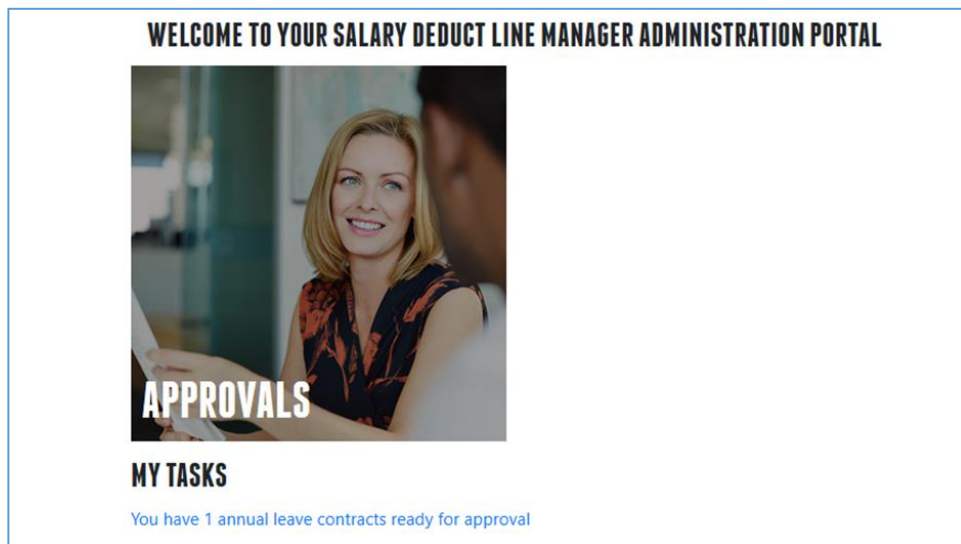
When an employee makes an application to purchase additional annual leave, as part of their application they will enter the name and email address of the person who is responsible for approving their annual leave requests, known as the 'Line Manager' on the application.

If you have previously registered on the Pluxee Salary Deduct platform, which administers the Annual Leave Purchase Scheme, as a line manager, the email address that you use to log in will appear in a dropdown list for your employee to select. To review and approve your employees' application, you must ensure you log on using the same email address they have selected in their application for the line manager email address. Otherwise, if you log in with a different email, you will not see any applications to review. If this happens please log in with an alternative email address (either firstname.lastname or your exmail address).

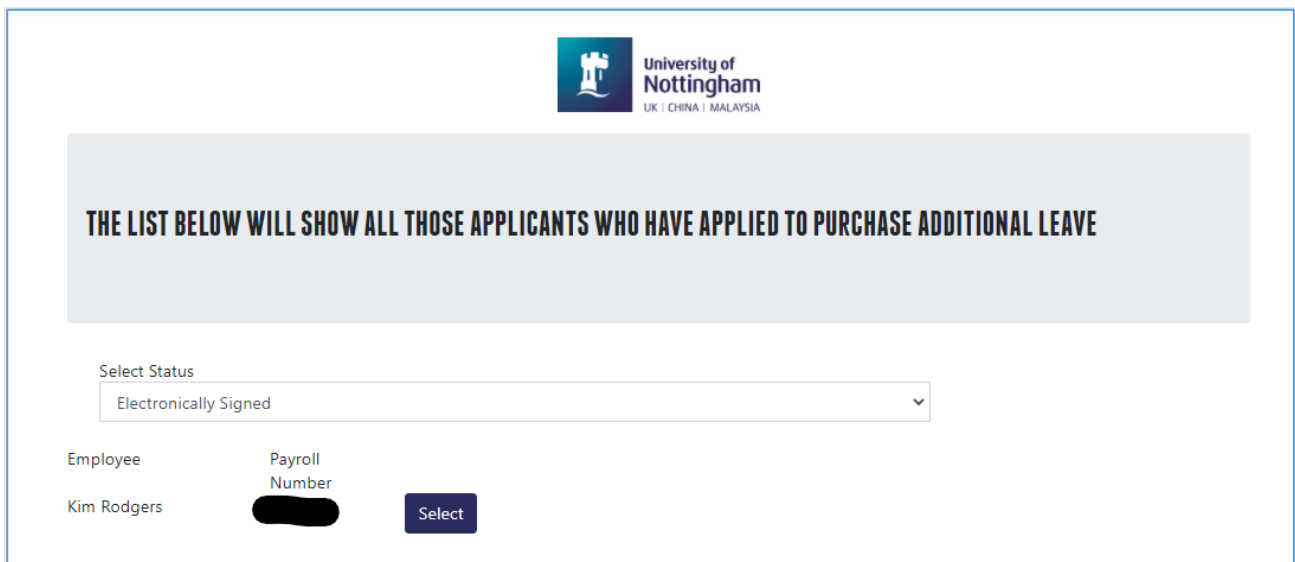
If you are a new line manager or a line manager who has not previously registered for the Salary Deduct platform and your email, therefore, does not appear for your employee to select, your employee must contact HR (HR@nottingham.ac.uk) in order for their line manager email address to be added.

Once an application has been made, you will receive an email from the Employee Hub to notify you of any enrolments and asking you to review and approve the enrolment. To approve the enrolment, log into the Annual Leave Purchase Scheme system using the specific link sent to you within the email – **please note this link will expire after 7 days, therefore, it is important you review the application once received.** If this is the first time you have used the manager section of the Employee Hub, you will need to register when you log in. The link will take you to the page below, as you can see, there is one application awaiting approval, click on the link.

For any issues logging into the Employee Hub, please contact HR at HR@nottingham.ac.uk.



You can then see any applications which are waiting for approval under the status “Electronically Signed” – this means the employee has submitted the request and it is now awaiting line manager review.



Select the application and you will then be navigated to a page, which will give you more information on the application. Check the staff member’s eligibility by ensuring they are not on a fractional, term-time only contract. If everything is ok, click on “approve this application”.

You should only decline the application for the following reasons:

- 1) The staff member is on a fractional, term-time only contract.
- 2) You have spoken to your HR Business Partner to discuss a significant organisational/operational detriment that approving the enrolment would cause.

National Minimum Wage checks

The University has a legal and moral obligation to not pay employees below the National Minimum Wage (NMW). Applications to the annual leave purchase scheme will be checked by Payroll to ensure the salary deduction does not take the employee below the NMW rate. As a line manager it is important to know that if an employee's salary falls below the NMW because of the annual leave purchase, HR will decline the application and correspond with the employee to confirm the application was unable to be approved. This will be after you have reviewed and approved the application. Employees can contact Payroll to confirm how many days they are able to purchase instead that does not take them below NMW. Employees can then reapply with a lower number of days purchased that does not take them below the NMW threshold.

NNW guidance and a **salary calculator** have been created on the [Employee Hub](#) to help staff understand how much annual leave they can purchase based on their spine point and pension contributions.

Useful resources

- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)** – for line managers are below
- **Sample annual leave spreadsheet** - includes an option to add in the number of hours purchased through this scheme
(<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/hr/guidesandsupport/absenceandannualleave/annualleave/index.aspx>)
- **Pro-rata annual leave calculator** - can be used to help calculate holiday entitlement for leavers and has been updated to factor in the annual leave purchase scheme
(<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/hr/guidesandsupport/absenceandannualleave/annualleave/calculators.aspx>)

Frequently asked questions (FAQs)

Approving an application

How do I decide whether to approve an application?

See the guidance overview above for further information on whether to approve an application.

I have received a notification to review an application, what do I do now?

Please refer to the step-by-step guidance above on how to approve an application.

I have approved it, what do I do now?

Once you have approved an employee's application it will go to HR for final checks and Payroll for National Minimum Wage (NMW) checks. If the application meets the eligibility criteria, HR will confirm final approval. After final approval, please add the details of the holiday purchased to your local holiday departmental tracking system. We have also updated the sample annual leave spreadsheet

(<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/hr/guidesandsupport/absenceandannualleave/annualleave/index.aspx>) for managers to use if needed.

I approved my employee's application, but it has since been rejected by HR. Why?

All applications are subject to review by HR and Payroll to ensure that applications meet the eligibility criteria and pass NMW checks. If an application does not meet these checks, HR will reject the application and contact the employee to advise on next steps.

Is there manager discretion available to decline any requests?

The University reserves the right to refuse an employee's application to buy annual leave in exceptional circumstances when an application would cause significant business or operational detriment. It is worth noting the following:

- Managers have discretion around when the holiday is taken, and we are encouraging staff to speak to their managers prior to applying so that any concerns and planning can be discussed
- Managers have discretion over the carry-over of annual leave in line with the University Annual Leave Policy (ie up to 5 days pro-rata)
- If the request is going to cause significant business or operational detriment, you can discuss with your HR Business Partner around declining the request prior to doing so

I have received an approval request, but my staff member has also carried over holiday?

Staff members can carry over and purchase annual leave. The Annual Leave Purchase Scheme is a benefit available to all staff and where possible we want to support participation. Any annual leave carryover should only occur in exceptional circumstances and should be agreed by Heads of School/Department in line with the [Annual Leave Policy](#). Staff must discuss plans with their line manager prior to the purchase. This will enable you to have a discussion around any local plans/policies around taking holiday and manage expectations.

An employee has told me they have put me as their line manager on their application, but I haven't received a notification?

This may be caused by your employee incorrectly typing the line manager email address on their application. To resolve this, please:

- a) Contact your company's scheme administrator via: hr@nottingham.ac.uk
- b) If you are already set up on the line manager portal, log into your account and check if the employee's application is showing under your 'Tasks'. If it is not showing here, contact HR via hr@nottingham.ac.uk

I want to approve an employee's application, but I need to make some changes to how can I do this?

You can't amend all the details of an employee's application within the line manager portal, you can amend the number of hours an employee purchases and 'Approve' or 'Reject' applications. If you cannot approve an employee's application based on the details they have entered, you will need to reject the employee's application, contact them and advise them of the changes they need to make to their application for it to be accepted. The employee will then be able to reapply. Once the employee has done this, it will appear again in the line manager approval portal for you to review and approve accordingly.

Using the salary deduct platform

I received an email notifying me I have an application to review, however when I log into the Salary Deduct portal, no applications appear for review?

This is because of the dual email addresses at the University – all employees have a firstname.lastname email address, and an exmail email address (eg brzabc@nottingham.ac.uk). If an employee puts a different line manager email address on their application to the one you use to log in with, you will not see any applications to review even if you have been notified. If an employee uses their line manager's exmail email address on their application. The line manager receives a notification advising they have an application to review, but they log in with their firstname.lastname email address. No applications will show as the application is linked to the line manager's exmail, not their firstname.lastname email address.

To resolve this issue as a line manager, please ensure you log in with the same email address your employee uses on their application. This may mean registering a new account under the different email address to the one you normally log in with. Please see [here](#) for further guidance on registering a new account on the salary deduct platform.

I have received an email telling me I have been registered on the line manager portal, but the link to complete registration has expired?

The registration link will expire 7 days after being issued. If the link has expired before you have had a chance to complete registration, simply go to linemanager.salarydeductplatform.com, click 'Forgotten Password?' and follow the instructions to set yourself a password, your username is your email address in the format that have been used by an employee on their application.

An employee has made an application to purchase additional leave and put me as their line manager, but has put the wrong email address for me, how can I access their application?

Please contact HR via hr@nottingham.ac.uk.

About the scheme

My staff member has a non-standard or January-December holiday year – how is this treated in the scheme?

Staff members with January-December holiday years are eligible to apply within the enrolment window. Deductions for the August window will be processed from January. Staff members with this holiday year have until the December of the holiday year they have purchased annual leave for to take their additional purchased leave.

How do I calculate annual leave if the staff member leaves?

Any remaining cost for the purchase holiday will be deducted from the staff member's final pay, therefore, at the time of leaving, the staff member will have purchased the full amount of holiday they applied for. As such, when calculating holiday upon leaving you must add on the full annual leave purchase amount to their entitlement. The pro-rata holiday calculator (<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/hr/guidesandsupport/absenceandannualleave/annualleave/calculators.aspx>) has been updated to support this.

What happens if the staff member moves teams/roles/manager/school etc?

The annual leave purchased will move with the staff member when they move, as the agreement and eligibility criteria were agreed during the application. If your staff member is changing manager, please ensure you notify the new manager of the annual leave purchase when discussing any holiday entitlement.

Can the holiday purchased be taken at any time?

No, the annual leave purchased must be taken within the holiday year and in line with local processes and policies. Carry-over must be considered in line with the existing annual leave policy.

What is the difference between this and unpaid leave?

Unpaid leave deductions are made as a lump sum from pay, whereas annual leave purchase amounts are spread over a period time, which helps with affordability. This does not replace unpaid leave and unpaid leave can still be granted as an alternative and in addition.

My employee has just joined the University – are they eligible?

Yes, so long as they are not a fractional worker and the enrolment window is open they are eligible to apply. There is no minimum length of service to be able to apply.

My staff member works variable hours ie 2 days one week and 3 days the next week – how will the two-week maximum purchase work in this situation?

In this situation, the maximum amount of annual leave an employee can purchase is an average of their working hours, ie in the example above, they can purchase up to 2.5 days annual leave.

An employee has put me as their line manager on their holiday buy application, but I am not the person responsible for approving their annual leave, what do I do?

You'll need to contact HR to help via hr@nottingham.ac.uk.