



Introduction

The Temporary Unpaid Leave Scheme has been introduced as one of a number of voluntary initiatives to support the financial sustainability of the University in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. It provides employees with the opportunity to apply for a temporary period of unpaid leave without this constituting a break in service. The Scheme will be available initially from 1 February 2021 until **30 September 2022**.

Eligibility and Criteria

To be eligible, employees must have a minimum of six months' service from when the unpaid leave would begin. The minimum length of unpaid leave that can be requested under this Scheme is one month and up to 12 months in duration. An extension to an initial period of unpaid leave can be requested and if approved, must not exceed a total of 12 months unpaid leave.

The circumstances under which a period of unpaid leave may be requested under this Scheme include, but may not be limited to:

- Further personal studies/development which may or may not be work related
- Undertake caring responsibilities (please note employees may wish to access the Special Leave and/or Carers Leave Policy for leave under one month in duration)
- Personal wellbeing following illness or significant event
- Take part in an altruistic event
- Other reasons considered on an exceptional basis

The normal expectation would be that employees would return to work following the period of unpaid leave for at least three months.

The period of unpaid leave cannot exceed the length of the contract of employment.

Employees must not undertake any paid employment (which in any way relates to their University employment) with another employer during the period of the unpaid leave without the prior approval of the University.

Should employees wish to apply for a longer period of leave, they may wish to apply for a career break if the conditions of the Career Break Policy are met (<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/hr/guidesandsupport/worklifebalance/careerbreaKs/documents/careerbreaKpolicy.pdf>).

Impact on Terms and Conditions

During the period of unpaid leave, pay will cease for the duration of the leave.

During the period of unpaid leave, continuous service is retained, with the unpaid leave period counting towards any contractual benefits such as redundancy pay, maternity pay, sickness pay etc where relevant. In the case of the substantive post being made compulsorily redundant whilst the employee is on a period of unpaid leave approved under this Scheme (and assuming this does not exceed 12 months), any redundancy payment would be calculated on the salary as if the staff member had continued working (ie any increment/pay award applicable during that period would be included as if the employee had been working).

Annual leave entitlement would reduce by the period of unpaid leave, ie by 1/12th of full allowance per month of unpaid leave. There will be no entitlement to annual leave or accrual of entitlement to annual leave during the period of unpaid leave. This also applies to any University Closure Days and Bank Holidays, which fall in the unpaid leave period.

Any pro rata annual leave untaken should be taken before the commencement of the unpaid leave where practical to do so, and particularly where a period of unpaid leave of over six months is being requested.

There will be no entitlement to sick pay whilst on unpaid leave.

Employer pension contributions will cease during the period of unpaid leave. Employees may wish to continue to make employee pension contributions where enabled by the relevant pension scheme. Employees are advised to speak to the University Pensions Team (email: pensions@nottingham.ac.uk) prior to taking unpaid leave, to discuss the options available during the unpaid leave to ensure that any implications for their pension membership and benefits are understood.

Where an employee becomes pregnant during unpaid leave the normal accrued statutory/occupational maternity leave and pay entitlements will apply. Where appropriate, the unpaid leave will be superseded by maternity leave, but the maternity leave will not extend the period of unpaid leave.

Application and Approval Process

Applications will be considered in light of the purpose of the Scheme and the compatibility of the request with the operational needs of the University, including the implications of workload for colleagues.

- Employees should discuss unpaid leave with their relevant manager, complete the Temporary Unpaid Leave Application Form (<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/hr/guidesandsupport/coronavirus/voluntary-savings-initiatives.aspx>) and submit this to their relevant manager to review and consider
- The appropriate senior manager (ie Head of School/Department) will then consider the request

The duration of the unpaid leave will be clearly specified and agreed before it commences, and an employee will not be entitled to return to work before the expected end of the unpaid leave unless agreed. The Human Resources Department will confirm the unpaid leave dates via a letter.

In the event of an application being unsuccessful, reasons why will be given to the employee. There is no right to appeal against the decision.

Employees have the right, under certain circumstances, to request flexible working. The Flexible Working Guidelines (should the employee wish to apply for a permanent change to their hours/working pattern) and an application form are available on the HR web site at: <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/hr/guidesandsupport/worklifebalance/flexibleworking/index.aspx>.

Further Information

For further advice and support please refer to your manager or contact the HR Employment Relations team (email: hrrer@nottingham.ac.uk).