



## Policy on compassionate leave

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### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. As part of its commitment to good employment practice, the University is keen to help its staff to balance the demands of work and family life wherever possible. The following leave arrangements have been developed to provide help and support to members of staff should they experience domestic crises.
- 1.2. Such leave is authorised by the member of staff's Head of School/Service who will have the discretion to determine the amount of leave to be granted within the framework of the policy, bearing in mind the circumstances and the needs of the department.
- 1.3. In support of a request for leave the member of staff may be required exceptionally to:
  - produce appropriate documentary evidence of the need for leave, such as a doctor's medical certificate to certify a dependant's illness or a hospital appointment card;
  - provide information about a partner's employment situation (on the basis that a partner may be expected to share caring/dealing with the emergency);
  - undertake work at home where this can be appropriately arranged.
- 1.4. It should be understood that leave of this kind is not intended to meet long term domestic or family needs.
- 1.5. In the following sections the different types of leave which may be granted are explained in more detail, with guidance provided in order to try to ensure fair and consistent access to such leave.
- 1.6. Advice and further guidance may be obtained from Human Resources.

### 2. Review of policy

This policy is intended to anticipate the provisions on 'Leave for Family and Domestic Reasons' in the new Employment Relations Bill (1999). The draft Bill specifies that

employees should be entitled to a “reasonable amount of time off during working hours”. When the details of this legislation are known, the policy will be reviewed.

It is University policy to view requests for leave sympathetically in the circumstances outlined in this booklet.

### **3. Compassionate leave**

The aim of such leave is to provide a compassionate response in cases of ‘urgent domestic distress’ as for example:

- when a member of staff suffers a bereavement due to the death of:
  - a partner;
  - a close relative;
  - a person with whom the member of staff had a close continuing relationship;
- when a member of staff suffers a domestic catastrophe, such as a household fire.

### **4. Time allowed**

4.1. Up to the equivalent of five working days may be granted as paid leave.

4.2. The amount of leave granted will be dependent on such factors as:

- the level of responsibility to be taken on by the member of staff for the funeral or for other tasks arising from the death of the partner or relative;
- the distance required to be travelled;
- the availability of other members of the family to contribute to relieving the effects of the domestic catastrophe.

4.3. In exceptional circumstances longer periods of leave may be granted as unpaid leave or taken from the member of staff’s annual leave entitlement.

### **5. Procedure for applying for leave**

5.1. Members of staff should inform their Head of School/Service as soon as possible of their need for compassionate leave, as the responsibility for agreeing the amount and type of leave lies with him/her.

5.2. On the first day of absence members of staff will be expected to follow the usual rules for the notification of any absence i.e. members of staff should contact their nominated departmental supervisor/manager.