



Procedures

Applying for Compassionate Leave

Part of Supporting Family Life Overarching Policy
(UK Campuses only)

October 2015

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1.	INTRODUCTION
	This Procedure, which applies is part of the Supporting Family Life suite of procedures, sets out guidelines on requesting and approving time off for bereavement and other similar occasions that are not covered in other Procedures.
2.	ELIGIBILITY
	<p>This policy applies to all categories of University staff and includes full-time, part-time, permanent and fixed-term employees on UK Campuses only.</p> <p>Compassionate Leave usually refers to time off following the death of a family member. However, it may also be appropriate for Compassionate Leave to be granted for a short time in other circumstances; for example, if a close family member, friend or former long-standing partner is involved in an accident or is diagnosed with a terminal illness and requires some immediate or initial support; or is in the final stages of a terminal illness and the employee wishes to spend time with him/her.</p> <p>If the request is for time off to deal with unexpected or sudden emergencies involving a dependant and to make any necessary longer term arrangements, the Emergency Dependant's Leave Procedures should be followed.</p>
3.	ENTITLEMENT
	<p>Granting of compassionate leave is at the discretion of the line manager, depending on the precise individual circumstances. You should feel able to discuss with your manager the situation that has occurred and the anticipated time required to deal with the situation.</p> <p>Some broad guidelines are set out below, however they are neither inclusive nor exclusive and a reasonable approach should be taken depending on the actual relationship and impact on the employee:</p> <p><u>Very close relative such as spouse, civil partner, parent or child (including "step" or "half" relatives); or close friend</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where there is no significant travel involved (for example no overnight stay for a funeral), three working days paid leave is normal • Where a longer journey has to be made, e.g. to arrange or to attend a funeral, (e.g. within the UK or within short-haul travel distance), five working days is reasonable • For longer-haul journeys, up to 7 days may be reasonable. <p><u>More distant relative (including "step" or "half" relatives); or immediate relative of a close friend</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid leave to attend the funeral should be the norm, the precise period varying with the amount of travel involved; however, it would not normally be expected to be the same amount of leave as for a very close relative. <p>In these times, where the concept of the "nuclear" family of 2 parents/4 grandparents has broadened to embrace the concept of an extended family, the lines between "close" and "distant" relative may be blurred. For example, you may have had a very close relationship with a grandparent, aunt or cousin throughout childhood or adolescence and despite not having been "close" in recent years, you are nevertheless affected by their death and/or required to deal with the affairs. In such situations, it would be appropriate to agree mutually a suitable period of leave in line with the "close relative" guidelines above.</p>

	<p>In situations where the time off required to complete, e.g. executor’s duties, may take longer to deal with, any additional time off required may be taken as either unpaid leave or annual leave (after discussion with your line manager).</p> <p>If you become ill as a result of the situation which led to the compassionate leave request, for example, stressed or depressed, it may be more appropriate to attend your GP to be signed off and receive sick pay. In these circumstances, the Maximising Attendance Policy and Procedure should be followed in respect of time off and pay; and the Mental Health and Stress Policies may also be helpful for both you and your manager in providing support.</p> <p><u>Attending the funeral of a current or former HWU colleague</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone should feel able to pay their respects to HWU colleagues with whom they have worked and therefore it is reasonable to allow paid time off to attend the funeral of a colleague or former colleague. If you attend on a non-working day, you would not be entitled to time off in lieu.
<p>4. PROCEDURE</p>	
	<p>Under normal circumstances, the specific event (e.g., a funeral) may be known (or may be anticipated) some time in advance and you should therefore speak to your manager at the earliest opportunity to discuss what time off you may require so that your manager can arrange suitable cover. This would also be an appropriate opportunity for your manager to discuss any particular support that s/he or the University may be able to offer you.</p> <p>There is no substitute for talking to each other!</p> <p>There may be situations when a sudden death or emergency requiring immediate action (a family member collapsing and being rushed to hospital) occurs before the start of the working day. In such situations, you should advise your line manager (or, if your own line manager is not available, another manager or more senior colleague) before 10:00 a.m. or two hours prior to the commencement of shift (in line with the normal procedures for notification of absence). You would then be expected to return to the workplace and discuss any further time off or support required with your manager.</p> <p>When you are faced with severe or terminal illness or the death of family or friend, it is likely that you will be in a heightened state of emotion, ranging from shock to extreme grief or even anger. It is possible that your behaviour may be different in such circumstances or concentration may be reduced. Managers should therefore make allowances and exercise sensitivity when discussing and agreeing the time and support required.</p> <p>This does not and should not mean that unlimited time off is a right or entitlement under the Compassionate Leave Policy, nor that you may take time off without notification and agreement. As outlined above, the guidelines are for certain specific situations and any further time off required may be dealt with by annual or unpaid leave.</p> <p>It would also be sensible and appropriate in some circumstances, particularly when an emergency has arisen, for managers to allow an initial day or two days leave and then follow up with further discussion and support, which may include further Compassionate Leave and/or additional annual or unpaid leave.</p>

4.1	<p>Recording the Absence</p> <p><u>If the leave is to be taken as paid leave</u> The manager should record the absence on iHR as “Paid Leave” with the absence category as “Compassionate Leave”.</p> <p><u>If annual leave entitlement is being used to supplement Compassionate Leave</u> The normal process for booking and approving annual leave should be followed.</p> <p><u>If the leave is to be taken as unpaid leave to supplement Compassionate Leave</u> The manager should record the absence on iHR as “Unpaid Leave” with the absence category as “Compassionate Leave”.</p> <p><u>If the employee is subsequently signed off sick</u> The manager should record the absence on iHR as Sickness, with the absence category according to the fit note presented.</p> <p>The University reserves the right to monitor the allocation of leave for each employee under the terms of this policy.</p>
4.2	<p>Abuse of this right</p> <p>An example of this may be where you claim a family bereavement or funeral but this turns out to be completely untrue. However, bearing in mind extended and step/second families are common, it may be that an individual has more than the “nuclear family” 2 parents/4 grandparents and therefore managers should not jump to conclusions if multiple requests are made. Only in very exceptional circumstances should managers request evidence to support the compassionate leave request.</p> <p>Common sense and sensitivity on the part of the line manager is required in dealing with multiple requests. Advice should always be sought from HR if a manager suspects potentially fraudulent claims are being made.</p> <p>If you are suspected to be deliberately abusing the right to take compassionate leave, including taking more time off than had been agreed or approved, you will be subject to an investigation which may lead to disciplinary action in line with the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures.</p>
5.	<p>WHERE TO FIND HELP AND ADVICE</p> <p>Human Resources – For queries: contact Human Resources For linked Procedures and others referred to: http://www.hw.ac.uk/services/human-resources-policies.htm</p> <p>Employee Counselling Service – the University offers a free counselling service for employees – please contact the HR Consultant for your area for details https://intranet.hw.ac.uk/ps/hrd/Pages/Who's-Who-in-HRD-.aspx</p> <p>iHR Sharepoint site – please login here for guidance on how to record absences</p>

6. POLICY VERSION AND HISTORY

Version No	Date of Approval	Approving Authority or responsible officer, as appropriate	Brief Description of Amendment

V. 1.3 for approval	07.12.2015	Director HRD	Converting standard guidance into written procedure
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