



Sabbatical Leave Policy

1. INTRODUCTION:

1.1 This policy outlines the Company's process for managing sabbatical leave requests.

All staff employed on a permanent contract of employment with continuous **qualifying service of five years or more** may make a written request for an unpaid **sabbatical leave of a maximum three months**.

1.2 The Company recognises that employees make a substantial commitment to its success. In return, the Company recognises the need for employees to take an extended period of time away from work to undertake study, to provide care for a dependant, to go on the holiday of a lifetime or pursue other interests such as family, charitable or public service.

1.3 The above reasons are not exhaustive and requests for sabbatical leave for other reasons will be considered carefully in line with service needs.

2. ELIGIBILITY:

2.1 The employee must have completed **five years' continuous qualifying service** with the Company, counted from the start of the calendar year in which the request is made.

2.2 There may be some exceptions to the continuous service requirement and line managers should contact Human Resources for guidance if the request relates to an employee's caring responsibilities, religion etc.

2.3 Employees will not be permitted to take sabbatical leave in order to undertake a trial in another job/profession.

3. REQUEST PROCESS:

3.1 Request should be made **six months before the leave would start**. Employees should make a written request to their line manager outlining the following details:

- job title
- start date

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- preferred sabbatical leave start date
- likely duration (no more than 3 months)
- reason for request
- including details on how he/she thinks the Company will be affected by the absence and how he/she thinks those potential problems may be overcome.

3.2 The line manager in collaboration with the Director of Services will review the request and make a decision on whether the request can be accommodated. Employees should be aware that their line manager may authorise or decline the request, or attempt to come to a different, but mutually agreeable arrangement. Written reasons will be provided for any declined requests.

4. CONSIDERATION OF REQUESTS:

4.1 The following will be taken into consideration when dealing with a request which may make an employee ineligible to take sabbatical leave:

- action taken in relation to the individual's performance, conduct or attendance
- the needs of the business, or anticipated needs of the business, dictate that a period of sabbatical leave would not be tenable for the period of time requested e.g. too many employees are on leave
- difficulty in covering the function of an employee's role and responsibilities.

5. Appeal Process:

5.1 An employee may appeal against the decision to refuse the application within **14 days** of the decision. The notice of appeal must be in writing to the Managing Director, setting out the grounds for appeal.

5.2 In collaboration with the Head of People (HR), the Managing Director will arrange a meeting with the employee within **14 days** after receipt of the written appeal letter, unless the Managing Director upholds the grounds of appeal through paper assessment and notifies the employee in writing of the decision to overturn the refusal and confirms that their request has been agreed.

5.3 If an appeal meeting is to be held, the employee will have the right to be accompanied or representation at the appeal meeting. The Managing Director will be supported by the Head of People (HR).

5.4 The Managing Director will confirm the decision in writing within **14 days** of the date of the appeal meeting. Where the Managing Director upholds the appeal, the notice will summarise the agreed sabbatical leave and state the date on which it is to take effect.

5.5 Where the decision is to dismiss the appeal, the notice will state the grounds for the decision and contain an explanations as to why those grounds apply. The notice will also state that there is no further right of appeal.

6. PAY AND BENEFITS DURING SABBATICAL LEAVE:

Generally, contractual entitlements will be suspended for the duration of the sabbatical leave. More details are given below:

- wages will not be paid during sabbatical leave
- eligibility for a bonus or incentive will continue, however, this will be on a pro rata basis according to individual performance and service completed during the performance year
- pension scheme membership will not be affected
- start date of continuous service will not be affected and the period spent on sabbatical leave will count towards continuous service
- annual leave accrual will be suspended during sabbatical leave. Employees will receive a pro rata entitlement of annual leave corresponding to the amount of time worked during the leave year in which the sabbatical leave is taken
- employees may choose to pay their individual pension contributions during the period of sabbatical leave. Staff are advised to liaise directly with the pension provider for this.

7. RETURNING TO WORK:

Upon return from sabbatical leave, an employee will normally re-take up the role he/she was performing prior to the commencement of leave. However, this may be affected by any redundancy or reorganisation that takes place during the employee's sabbatical leave. The Company will ensure that the employee is fully consulted about any changes at the earliest available opportunity, given that the nature of the sabbatical can mean that the employee is not contactable due to overseas travel.