

SPECIAL LEAVE POLICY

1. Introduction

The Policy outlines provisions available to employees of the College. It will not normally apply to casual workers or agency workers.

The College acknowledges that there will be occasions when employees will need to request official leave for domestic and personal matters, or are required to be absent from duty for essential civil and public duties. There will also be occasions where it will be in the interest of the College to grant a period of leave, for example, to enable members of staff to collaborate with colleagues in other institutions or industry, or to provide for a period of academic refreshment and to pursue research interests or other activities related to their work within the College.

This Policy applies to requests for leave from work for the following reasons:

- [Compassionate Leave](#)
- [Domestic Emergencies](#)
- [Family Emergencies](#)
- [Parental Leave](#)
- [Public Duties](#)
- [Jury Service](#)
- [Witness Duty](#)
- [Service in the Volunteer Reserve Forces](#)
- [Study Leave](#)
- [Leave of Absence](#)
- [Sabbatical Leave for Academic Refreshment](#)
- [Sabbatical Leave for Personal Refreshment](#)
- [Unpaid Leave](#)
- [Table of leave entitlements](#)

The leave provisions outlined above are in addition to those contained within the 'Family Friendly' provisions, for example, Maternity Leave, Adoption, Surrogacy, Paternity/Maternity Support Leave, Parental Leave and Time off for Fertility Treatment. Further details can be accessed at the following link to the Family Friendly Policies: www.imperial.ac.uk/hr/procedures/family

Please note that none of the leave provisions outlined below form part of a contractual entitlement and may be withdrawn/varied at the College's discretion.

Where possible, members of staff are encouraged to discuss special leave requests with their line manager/supervisor. When considering special leave requests, managers should be mindful that individual circumstances vary. Previous decisions will not set a precedent for future decisions. All applications for special leave will be considered sensitively and with the

appropriate levels of confidentiality. However, in deciding whether or not to grant requests, managers will take operational circumstances into account, and, while every effort will be made to accommodate leave requests wherever possible, there may be occasions when requests will be declined.

Special leave will be available to employees working less than full-time hours on a pro-rata basis based on their contractual hours.

2. Equality and Diversity:

The College treats equality of opportunity seriously and has an equality framework that is applicable to staff in order to promote and ensure equality of opportunity. Implementation of this procedure must be clear and transparent and not subject to any unfair discriminatory practices.

The College's [Values](#) are at the very centre of our work and guide our behaviour as a community, across all levels of the College. This policy aims to protect and promote our Values of Respect, Collaboration, Excellence, Integrity and Innovation.

Line managers and supervisors are required to familiarise and understand this procedure.

3. Compassionate Leave:

3.1 Compassionate leave arrangements:

Paid leave of up to 5 working days (pro-rata for part time staff) within a 12 month period, which commences on the first day leave is taken, may be given to a member of staff upon the death of a close relative, for example, partner, parent, son or daughter, or where the member of staff is solely responsible for making the funeral arrangements if the relationship is more distant.

Should the need for time off continue after the initial agreed period of compassionate leave, there is no automatic right to extend this to the full five days. Other options may be considered and discussed with the employee. This may include, for example, annual leave or unpaid leave (see section 14 below).

3.2 Other circumstances:

Time off to attend a funeral may be agreed at the line manager's discretion based on operational arrangements and the closeness of the relationship with the deceased.

3.3 Applying for Compassionate Leave:

The member of staff must notify their line manager as soon as is reasonably practicable as to the reason for their absence, and how long they expect to be away. Departmental TeamSeer administrators will update staff's TeamSeer absence management records accordingly.

4. Domestic Emergencies:

A member of staff can take a reasonable period of time off work to deal with a genuine domestic emergency which is not covered by any of the other policies in this document.

4.1 What will be considered a 'domestic emergency'?

Examples of situations which may be considered an 'emergency' are:

- Burglary
- Vehicle theft
- Vehicle accident
- Emergency repairs to home or services arising from or to avoid flooding or fire

- Other similar circumstances

Separate provision is made in respect of leave to deal with emergencies involving dependants (see Family Emergency section 5).

4.2 Leave arrangements:

The number of days' leave which may be approved will depend on the circumstances. There is no statutory right to paid leave to deal with domestic emergencies, and it is anticipated that any period of paid leave will be limited to a maximum of 1 working day (pro-rata for part time staff) in any 12 month period which commences on the first day leave is taken.

If an employee requires time off in addition to that above, then alternative leave arrangements should be agreed with their line manager. This may include, for example, annual leave or unpaid leave (see section 14 below).

4.3 Applying for leave:

The member of staff must notify their line manager as soon as is reasonably practicable as to the reason for their absence and how long they expect to be away. Departmental TeamSeer administrators will update staff's TeamSeer absence management records accordingly.

5. Family Emergency

A member of staff can take a reasonable period of time off work to deal with an emergency involving a dependant. This leave is to allow employees to deal with unexpected or sudden problems and to make longer term arrangements as necessary. There is no qualifying period necessary for this leave. Paid leave of up to 3 working days (pro rata for part time staff) in any 12 month period, which commences on the first day leave is taken, will be given in such circumstances. Dependent on the situation, a reasonable amount of unpaid time off to deal with the emergency will also be permitted.

5.1 Who counts as a dependent?

A dependant is a partner, child or parent, or someone who lives with the member of staff as part of their family. This could be, for example, an elderly aunt or grandparent. It does not include tenants or boarders who may be living in the family home.

In cases of illness or injury, or where care arrangements break down, a dependant may also be someone who reasonably relies on the member of staff for assistance or where they are the primary carer.

5.2 When is emergency family leave appropriate?

Situations where emergency family leave is appropriate include:

- To deal with unexpected disruption or breakdown in care arrangements
- To deal with an unexpected incident during a child's school hours, e.g. child sent home from school.
- To deal with the death of a dependant, for example to deal with funeral arrangements.*
A dependant falling ill or being in an accident or being assaulted.*

** These occurrences may be dealt with under the Compassionate Leave policy and some or all of the leave may be paid (see section 3 above). Staff should discuss such matters with their manager in the first instance.*

If staff know in advance that time off to deal with family matters will be needed, and this is not covered under the Emergency Family Leave rules, staff should discuss with their manager the options of using annual leave entitlement or Parental Leave/Maternity Support Leave, if appropriate.

5.3 How much time off is reasonable?

In most circumstances, the amount of leave will be 1-2 days at the most. This will, however, depend on individual circumstances. For example, if a child falls ill, the leave should be enough to cope with the immediate problem i.e. visiting the doctor and arranging longer term care. Under the provisions for emergency family leave, it is not reasonable to take 2 weeks off to care for a sick child. Where circumstances require a longer absence it may be more appropriate to do so under the Parental Leave scheme.

5.4 Applying for leave

Staff who need to be absent must tell their manager as soon as practicable and inform them of the reason for the absence and estimate the length of time away from work. Departmental TeamSeer administrators will update staff's TeamSeer absence management records accordingly.

In exceptional circumstances, staff may have returned to work before it is possible to contact their manager. Staff should still inform their manager of the reason for their absence when they return.

6 Parental Leave

Parental leave is available to enable parents to take time off work to look after a child or to make arrangements for the child's welfare. Parents can use it to spend more time with their children and strike a better balance between their work and family commitments. Parental leave is unpaid and is available in addition to maternity and maternity support/paternity leave.

6.1 Qualifying for Parental Leave

Parental leave is available to members of staff, both men and women, who meet the following conditions:

- they are named on the child's birth or adoption certificate or have or expect to have parental responsibility for a child
- they have completed one full year's service with the College by the time they wish to take the leave
- they are not a foster parent (unless they have secured parental responsibility through the courts)

The member of staff does not have to be living with the child in order to be eligible for Parental Leave.

6.2 How much leave is available?

Members of staff who qualify are entitled to a total of 18 weeks' leave for each child under age 18.

Normally a maximum of 4 weeks can be taken in any year in respect of each child. This can be extended at the discretion of the Head of Department/Division where there are exceptional circumstances.

One week's parental leave is equal to the length of time that an employee is normally required to work in a week. If an employee's working pattern varies from week to week, you must calculate an average working week as a fraction of the period for which the employee is required to work in a year.

Leave must be taken in blocks or multiples of one week except in the case of disabled children when leave can be taken in single days or multiples of days.

The leave can be taken up until the child's 18th birthday.

There may be circumstances where there is no date of placement, for example if the child is already in a family when a step-parent formally adopts the child. In such circumstances, the period in which leave can be taken starts when the step-parent acquires a reasonable expectation of gaining parental responsibility and ends on the child's 18th birthday.

6.3 Applying for leave

Immediately after the birth or adoption of a child

Members of staff who wish to support their partner immediately following the birth of a baby or placement of a child should submit their request to take leave to their manager at least 21 days prior to the expected week of childbirth, or in cases of adoption, 21 days prior to the expected week of placement. If this is not possible, an adoptive parent should give the notice as soon as is reasonably possible. Once the request is submitted it is automatically approved and cannot be postponed.

At the end of a period of maternity leave

If a member of staff intends to take a period of Parental Leave immediately following the end of their maternity leave, they should submit their request at the same time as they provide notification of their arrangements for returning to work (see Maternity Policy section 1.10 – 'Do I need to provide notice of when I intend to return to work?')

Once the line manager has approved an application for parental leave, they should forward a copy of the request, along with confirmation of the parental leave dates, to their HR team. HR will then liaise with payroll to ensure the correct salary payment is made for this period and update the individual's TeamSeer absence management record accordingly.

At any other time

A request for leave must be submitted in writing by the member of staff to their line manager, at least 28 days in advance of the start of the intended leave. At the first request for parental leave by a member of staff, the line manager is required to obtain a copy of the child's birth certificate which should then be retained on file to verify eligibility for any future parental leave applications. Once the line manager has approved an application for parental leave, they should forward a copy of the request, along with confirmation of the parental leave dates, to their HR team. HR will then liaise with payroll to ensure the correct salary payment is made for this period and update the individual's TeamSeer absence management record accordingly.

Postponing a Request for Leave

Other than where Parental Leave is requested immediately following the birth or adoption of a child, a department or division may postpone a request for leave where it considers that granting the leave at that time would severely disrupt normal operation. This could include, for example, where work is at a seasonal peak, where the absence of the member of staff would undermine operational effectiveness or where other members of staff have requested parental leave at the same time and it would be very difficult to accommodate further leave. Leave cannot be postponed for any longer than 6 months from the date on which the parental leave originally requested was intended to start.

If a request for leave is to be postponed, the department or division should discuss the reasons with the member of staff immediately upon receiving the request. A note confirming this discussion, including the reason for the postponement and revised dates for leave, must be sent to the member of staff within 7 days of receiving the request.

6.4 Is there a right to return to the same job after parental leave?

At the end of a period of parental leave of 4 weeks or less, staff have the right to return to the same job which they had before the period of leave unless a redundancy situation arises.

If an exceptional period of leave (in excess of 4 weeks) has been taken, and if it is not reasonably practicable for a member of staff to return to the same job, then they have the right to return to a similar job which has terms and conditions which are not less favourable than the old job, unless a redundancy situation arises.

Where parental leave of 4 weeks or less follows directly the first 26 weeks of maternity leave; a woman is entitled to return to the same job as she had before the leave unless a redundancy situation arises.

However, if parental leave is taken from weeks 27 onwards or more than 4 weeks' parental leave is taken at the end of the first 26 weeks and it is not reasonably practicable for a member of staff to return to the same job, then they have a right to return to a similar job which has terms and conditions which are not less favourable than the old job, unless a redundancy situation arises.

Line managers and supervisors are required to familiarise and understand this procedure.

7 Leave for Public Duties:

Under the Employment Rights Act 1996 members of staff who hold certain public positions have a right to reasonable unpaid leave during working hours to carry out certain public duties.

While the College is under no obligation to grant paid leave for public duties, it recognises the valuable skills gained from members of staff holding such positions and will grant either paid or unpaid leave or a combination of both (see section 7.4 below for further details) during working hours to those members of staff wishing to carry out such duties.

7.1 Eligibility for Leave:

Members of staff who are members of the following bodies are eligible for leave:

- Magistrates;
- Independent prison monitors in Scotland;
- Members of a local authority;
- Members of any statutory tribunal;
- Members of a relevant health body;* (see below)

- Members of a relevant education body;** (see below)
- Members of the Environment Agency or the Scottish Environment Protection Agency;
- Members of an independent monitoring board for a prison or a prison visiting committee;
- Members of Scottish Water;
- Lay observers of conditions in court custody and under escort;
- Members of visiting committees of immigration removal centres; and
- Members of visiting committees of immigration short-term holding facilities.

* A relevant health body is:

- The National Health Service Commissioning Board;
- A clinical commissioning group established under section 14D of the National Health Service Act 2006;
- A National Health Service trust established under section 25 of the National Health Service Act 2006, section 18 of the National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006 or the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978;
- An NHS foundation trust;
- The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence;
- The Health and Social Care Information Centre;
- A Local Health Board established under section 11 of the National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006, a Special Health Authority established under section 28 of the National Health Service Act 2006 or section 22 of the National Health Service (Wales) Act 2006; or
- A Health Board constituted under section 2 of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978.

** A relevant education body is:

- A managing or governing body of an educational establishment maintained by a local authority (as defined in section 579(1) of the Education Act 1996);
- A further education corporation, sixth form college corporation or higher education corporation;
- A school council appointed under section 125(1) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973;
- A parent council within the meaning of section 5(2) of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006;
- A board of management of a self-governing school within the meaning of section 135(1) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980;
- A board of management of a college of further education within the meaning of section 36(1) of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992;
- A governing body of a central institution within the meaning of section 135(1) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980;
- A governing body of a designated institution within the meaning of Part II of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992; or
- The General Teaching Council for Wales.

Groups who are NOT covered under the Employment Rights Act 1996 are:

- Anyone who is not an member of staff, e.g. an independent contractor or freelance agent
- Members of staff working on offshore oil and gas installations

7.2 Notification of membership of a relevant body:

New starters who already hold a position within a relevant public body, or members of staff who take up such a position, should provide written notification to their line manager and the HR Staff Hub upon doing so. They must also notify their line manager in advance of any public duties for which they may wish to take leave.

7.3 Relevant' public duties:

In line with the provisions of the Employment Rights Act 1996, reasonable time off will be provided to members of staff undertaking the following 'relevant' public duties:

- Attendance at meetings of the body or any of its committees or sub-committees
- Performance of duties approved by the body for the purpose of discharging its functions or those of any of its committees or sub-committees

In the case of local authorities operating executive arrangements:

- Attendance at meetings of the executive or its committees
- Performance by a member of the executive of duties for the purpose of discharging the functions of an executive

7.4 Leave arrangements:

Staff who perform the duties outlined above are entitled to the following number of days' paid leave, in addition to annual leave, to undertake these duties.

- Magistrates - up to 10 days' paid leave (pro-rata for part time staff) within a 12 month period, which commences on the first day leave is taken.
- Other public bodies - up to 5 days' paid leave (pro-rata for part time staff) within a 12 month period, which commences on the first day leave is taken.

Any reasonable leave requested in excess of these days, may be granted, subject to the line manager's approval, and should be either taken from the member of staff's annual leave entitlement or be unpaid (see section 14 below).

Reasonable leave should be assessed by the line manager of the member of staff requesting it using the following criteria:

- How much time off is required overall to perform the duties and how much time off is required to perform the particular duty in question?
- How much time off has the member of staff already been allowed for such activities?
- The operational requirements of the department and the effect of the member of staff's absence upon it.

7.5 Applying for leave:

Members of staff should give their line manager and HR adequate notice (a minimum of one week) of any duties/training for which they wish to take leave. Leave requested at short notice (less than one week) may be granted but at the discretion of the line manager.

To submit a request for leave, the member of staff should complete an [Application for Leave for Public Duties/Service in the Volunteer Reserve Forces Form](#). Departmental TeamSeer administrators will enter approved leave onto the individual's TeamSeer absence management record.

8 Jury Service:

Members of staff who are called for Jury Service will be entitled to paid leave to attend court for periods of up to four weeks unless they are granted exemption from attendance. As they

will be paid their full salary there will be no requirement for members of staff to claim loss of earnings from the Court.

Members of staff allocated to cases which are expected to extend beyond four weeks, should claim for loss of earnings up to the daily permitted maximum amount (see section 8.1. below).

As soon as a member of staff receives notification that they are required to attend court they should inform their line manager. This will also ensure that, where necessary, arrangements can be made to cover their absence. Departmental TeamSeer administrators will update staff's TeamSeer absence management records to reflect jury service period.

8.1 Pay arrangements during Jury Service of four weeks or more:

The Jurors' Allowance Regulations provide for individuals serving as jurors to claim an allowance for loss of earnings, up to a maximum daily amount. Prior to commencing Jury Service, the Court Service will provide the individual with a 'Loss of Earnings' form. If allocated to a case which is expected to extend beyond four weeks the member of staff should pass this form to their line manager, who will check the daily pay of the individual with the Payroll Team, and complete the 'Loss of Earnings' form for the appropriate amount.

Whilst serving as a juror the member of staff will continue to be paid as normal. Once they have completed Jury Service, the line manager will ask the individual to provide the remittance advice they received from the Court Service as confirmation of the sum received in respect of loss of earnings. This remittance advice should be forwarded to the Payroll Team, in order that they can make the necessary salary adjustment.

As set out in the College's [Core Terms and Conditions of Service](#) for staff, College will make up any shortfall between the permitted loss of earnings maximum amount and the member of staff's full salary. In order to do this, the individual's contractual pay will be reduced by the entire gross amount for the days they served as a juror, but a (taxable) addition with description "ex gratia payment" will simultaneously be made to their pay to compensate to the extent that the Court Service's "loss of earnings" re-imbusement falls short of your normal pay.

8.2 Attending work during Jury Service:

During the period in which a member of staff is attending court as a juror, they will be expected to attend work on any full day when they are not required in court.

Where a member of staff is not required in court for part of a day, they will be expected to attend work if it is reasonably practicable for them to do so (for example, taking into consideration travel from the court to work or vice versa).

8.3 Further Information:

Additional information is available in the accompanying [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document and from the Directgov website:

www.direct.gov.uk/en/CrimeJusticeAndTheLaw/Juryservice

Should a member of staff or line manager have additional queries not covered in the above, they should contact the HR Staff Hub.

9 Leave for Witness Duty:

Members of staff who receive a summons to attend court as a witness will be entitled to paid leave to attend court unless they are granted exemption from attendance. As they will be paid their full salary, there will be no requirement for members of staff to claim loss of earnings from

the Court. However, in the unlikely event that the witness duty extends to four weeks or more, the individual will be required to claim for loss of earnings, in this instance the instructions set out at point 8.1 above should be followed.

As soon as a member of staff receives notification that they are required to attend court, they should inform their line manager. This will also ensure that, where necessary, arrangements can be made to cover their absence. Departmental TeamSeer administrators will update staff's TeamSeer absence management records to reflect jury service period.

9.1 Attending work during Witness Duty:

During the period in which a member of staff is carrying out Witness Duty, they will be expected to attend work on any full day when they are not required in court.

Where a member of staff is not required in court for part of a day, they will be expected to attend work if it is reasonably practicable for them to do so (for example, taking into consideration travel from the court to work or vice versa).

10 Leave for Service in the Volunteer Reserve Forces:

The College is not legally obliged to make payments to members of staff for time off for completing duties as members of the Volunteer Reserve Forces however it values the transferable skills gained by members of staff who are reservists and will grant either paid or unpaid leave or a combination of both (see section 10.2 below for further details).

10.1 Notification of membership of the Reserve Forces:

Under the Employer Notification procedure (established April 2004) anyone who joins the Reserve Forces, or seeks to renew their commitment, must permit the Ministry of Defence to contact the College directly to confirm this.

New starters should provide written notification to their line manager and HR Staff Hub that they are members of the Reserve Forces. Existing members of staff who wish to become reservists should provide similar notification.

10.2 Leave arrangements:

Up to 10 days' paid leave (pro-rata for part time staff) within any 12 month period, commencing on the first day of leave, is available in addition to annual leave for undertaking reservist duties.

Any reasonable leave requested in excess of these days, may be granted, subject to the line manager's approval, and should be either taken from the member of staff's annual leave entitlement or be unpaid (see section 16 below).

10.3 Applying for leave:

Members of staff should give their line manager and HR adequate notice (a minimum of one week) of any duties/training for which they wish to take leave. Leave requested at short notice (less than one week) may be granted but at the discretion of the line manager.

To submit a request, the member of staff should complete an [Application for Leave for Public Duties/Service in the Volunteer Reserve Forces](#). HR will update staff's TeamSeer absence management records to reflect jury service period.

10.4 Arrangements in the event of Mobilisation:

Mobilisation is the process of calling Reservists into full-time service with the Regular Forces to play an essential part in military operations. Under the provisions of the Reserve Forces Act 1996 all Reservists are committed to this possibility if required. Although there is no statutory requirement for a warning period prior to mobilisation, the Services aim to give employers and their Reservist member of staff a full 28 days' notice of the date when they must report for duty. However, in the event of short-notice operational mobilisation, as little as 7 days' notice may be given.

The total period of mobilisation can range from 3 months or less up to a maximum of 12 months.

10.5 Deferral of mobilisation:

There are certain grounds upon which an employer may apply for a deferral to the member of staff's mobilisation. The regulations state that the employer must show that the absence will cause serious harm to the business or related business. Applications must be made within 7 calendar days of the reservist being served with a mobilisation notice. Details of acceptable grounds for appeal can be found on the [SABRE website: http://www.sabre.mod.uk/](http://www.sabre.mod.uk/).

10.6 Employment protection in the event of mobilisation:

The Reserve Forces (Safeguard of Employment) Act 1985 provides two types of protection: protection of employment for those liable to be mobilised, and reinstatement for those who have been mobilised. In certain circumstances, it also provides compensation.

As part of this it is an offence to terminate a member of staff's employment without their consent because of their liability to be mobilised for military service and a court could order the College to pay compensation as well as levying a fine.

Termination of employment after a member of staff has been mobilised is permitted. However, once a member of staff makes an application for reinstatement of employment, the College has a duty to reinstate the member of staff to their former job or to offer the most favourable alternative employment.

A decision should be made at the time of mobilisation, whether to terminate the contract or place the individual on unpaid leave. The assessment of which course of action to implement will need to take into account any information on the likely length of the mobilisation and departmental requirements for cover for the post. The member of staff should therefore inform their line manager of how long the mobilisation period is likely to last before going if this is known. If this information is not available, the maximum period of twelve months should be considered.

Financial assistance covering the additional costs of recruiting a temporary replacement for the post may be available. When a Reservist member of staff is mobilised, they should submit a letter from the Ministry of Defence (MoD), which will provide application details for financial assistance. A claim form will normally be sent to the organisation.

If a member of staff wishes to return to their post following the end of the mobilisation period, they must write to their line manager and HR, within the period between the end of their service and the third Monday after that date, at their present or last known home address, asking for reinstatement to their former job. If, owing to sickness or any other reasonable cause, they are prevented from making the application until after the expiry of the third Monday, they must write as soon as possible.

If the member of staff has not applied for reinstatement within six months from the end of their service, the College is not obliged to reinstate their employment.

In the event that a post becomes redundant during a period of mobilisation, the standard College procedure for dealing with the redundancy will be followed. However, consideration must be given to the member of staff's ability to appeal against the redundancy decision whilst mobilised.

10.7 Mobilisation and pension contributions:

Mobilised Reservists are entitled to remain a member of their occupational pension scheme provided that they continue to pay their contributions to the scheme. In these circumstances the MoD will pay the employer contributions that would have been made by the College.

10.8 Additional information:

For more information on the process of mobilisation including claiming costs for recruiting a temporary replacement and applying for deferral, please refer to the [SABRE website](http://www.sabre.mod.uk): <http://www.sabre.mod.uk>.

11 Study Leave:

The College aims to support staff development wherever possible. Study leave can include time off for examinations and for examination preparation/study.

A member of staff studying for a course that is relevant to their existing job or future career within Imperial:

- May apply for flexibility in their work schedule to facilitate appropriate attendance;
- May apply for study leave for examinations, revision and the preparation of coursework.

Members of staff should discuss requests for study leave with their manager, and managers are encouraged to support requests for leave. Requests for study leave should ideally be discussed within the framework of the member of staff's "Performance Review and Development Plan" (PRDP), and well in advance of the commencement of the course. To assist such discussions, and when determining the amount of study leave to be given, the following factors should be taken into account:

- The length of the course;
- The length, type and frequency of exam(s), and the amount of associated revision required;
- The volume and type of coursework;
- Workload;
- Staffing levels and available cover;
- (Where the course of study is supported via the College's Sponsored Study Scheme) the expectations and contributions negotiated between the Department and the student when applying for sponsored study (for example agreements relating to fees vs time off).

In most circumstances, paid study leave will be subject to a maximum of 3 days for each year of study. However, discussions in relation to study leave arrangements may also include consideration of alternative leave arrangements such as annual leave or unpaid leave (see section 16 below). HR will update the individual's TeamSeer absence management record once study leave has been approved.

12 Leave of Absence:

12.1 Who is eligible for Leave of Absence?

Members of the Academic and Research Job Family may apply for Leave of Absence from the College. The request for leave should be in the interests of the College and may be, for example, to collaborate with colleagues in other institutions, industry or to attend conferences.

The granting of Leave of Absence is at the discretion of the College and is not an automatic right. When applications are considered, the implications of teaching and other Departmental/Divisional duties are taken into account.

12.2 Applying for Leave of Absence

An application for Leave of Absence should be submitted to allow sufficient time for processing and to enable arrangements to be made to cover a member of staff's teaching, Departmental/Divisional and College duties, if the application is successful.

All applications for Leave of Absence should be made on an [Application for Leave of Absence/Sabbatical Leave Form](#). The member of staff should complete Section 1 of the Leave of Absence form and the Head of Department/Division (HoD) will complete section 2. Any relevant supplementary information should be attached to the form including details of proposed arrangements for delegating their duties during their absence.

A HoD is authorised to approve Leave of Absence requests where the request relates to a period of leave either outside of term time, or a period of leave of one month or less during term-time. Requests for Leave of Absence in excess of one month during term-time will be sent initially to the HoD for consideration and recommendation and then to the Faculty Dean who will also need to approve the application.

Where a member of staff undertakes supplementary duties as part of their role, the implications in respect of these additional responsibilities will be considered by the HoD or Faculty Dean when making a decision following an application for Leave of Absence. Such supplementary duties/additional considerations will include:

- **Supervisors and extended absence:**

Where a supervisor is granted Leave of Absence from College, arrangements must be made with the Postgraduate Tutor or Director of Postgraduate Studies to provide supervision for that person's research students. Similar arrangements must be made with the Undergraduate Tutor or Director of Undergraduate Studies in relation to teaching and supervision of undergraduate students.

- **Staff with College duties:**

A member of staff with College (as opposed to Departmental/Divisional) duties, e.g. Chairmanship of a College Committee, must inform the Faculty Dean of any arrangements for Leave of Absence.

- **Wardens of Halls of Residence:**

A Warden of a Hall of Residence, in addition to making an application to their HoD, must also apply in writing to the Vice Provost (Education) with details of how their duties are to be covered for any period of absence involving more than three consecutive nights. Cumulative absence in excess of ten days in any one term is not normally acceptable. A special

arrangement must be made with the Vice Provost (Education) if a Warden wishes to exceed this limit. Details are given in the Terms of Reference of Wardens of Halls of Residence.

- **Heads of Departments/Divisions:**

Heads of Departments/Divisions requesting Leave of Absence should submit their form to the Faculty Dean for approval giving details of proposed arrangements for delegating their duties in their absence.

Where a request for Leave of Absence is supported by the HoD and Faculty Dean the form should be sent to HR so that arrangements can be confirmed in writing and the relevant parties notified of the Leave of Absence. HR will also update the individual's TeamSeer absence management record accordingly.

In circumstances where a HoD or Faculty Dean does not support such a request, they will forward the application form with a statement of their objections to the Senior HR Manager who will discuss this with the Director of HR.

12.3 Leave of Absence and Pay:

Leave of Absence will usually be unpaid. In exceptional circumstances however the period of Leave of Absence may be paid or part paid. In such circumstances, salary and any associated costs will be met by the Department/Division.

In all cases, the period of leave must be financially neutral for the individual.

12.4 Leave of Absence and Annual Leave Entitlement

If the Leave of Absence is unpaid, the member of staff's HoD may, at their discretion, agree for the contractual annual leave entitlement to continue. Alternatively paid statutory holiday leave at the rate of 28 days per annum (pro rata for part time staff) will accrue, inclusive of 8 days for public holidays.

If Leave of Absence is paid or part paid, the contractual annual leave entitlement will continue.

12.4 Leave of Absence and Pensions Contributions:

If Leave of Absence is paid, pension contributions will continue to be paid.

If the Leave of Absence is unpaid, the member of staff's HoD may, at their discretion, agree to maintain pension (USS) contributions on behalf of the College and the employee (this will exclude any voluntary contributions).

If the Leave of Absence is part paid, the HoD may, at their discretion, agree to pay the full employer's contribution appropriate to normal salary and to supplement the employee's contribution to maintain it at the level appropriate to normal salary (this will exclude any voluntary contributions).

In circumstances where pension contributions are not maintained, the member of staff concerned should contact the HR Staff Hub to discuss pension implications.

12.5 Leave of Absence and National Insurance Contributions:

If the Leave of Absence is unpaid, no National Insurance contributions will be made in respect of the employee during the period of absence. It is recommended that the member of staff contact the HMRC - NI Contributions Section (tel no 0191 213 5000) to ascertain whether Voluntary or Class 3 Contributions should be made in order to maintain their eligibility for full State benefits. The link to the HMRC website is: <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk>.

If Leave of Absence is part paid, the appropriate National Insurance contributions will be deducted from the salary payable, provided the employee's earnings are above the Earning Threshold. No further action is required by the member of staff.

If the earnings are below the Earnings Threshold then it is recommended that the member of staff contact the HMRC – NI Contribution Section (details above) to ascertain whether Voluntary or Class 3 Contributions should be made in order to maintain their eligibility for full State benefits

12.6 Leave of Absence and Income Tax:

If the Leave of Absence is spent abroad and exceeds six months, some income tax relief may arise depending on the individual's circumstances. Further details are available from the HMRC (tel no 0845 300 0627; <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk>).

12.7 Leave of Absence and Insurance Cover:

A member of staff will be covered by the College's normal insurance arrangements during a period of Leave of Absence.

The College's travel insurance policy applies to College employees when travelling abroad on College business, for trips not exceeding 12 months in duration and details are available from: <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/finance/sections/insurance/overseastravelinsurance/travellingoncollegebusiness>. The policy includes cover for emergency medical treatment costs. Information on the policy terms, conditions and exclusions are available from the College Insurance Manager. If an individual wishes to obtain a comprehensive health insurance policy for the country they will be visiting, they will need to arrange and pay for this themselves.

A member of staff should inform the College Insurance Manager (insurance@imperial.ac.uk) if:

- their overseas visit is likely to exceed twelve months
- they are likely to engage in hazardous activities while overseas e.g. visiting a working mine or quarry
- they are likely to require treatment for a pre-existing medical condition while abroad.

13 Sabbatical Leave for Academic Refreshment:

13.1 Who is eligible for Sabbatical Leave for Academic Refreshment?

In the interests of staff development and improving the image of the College worldwide, academic staff (Professors, Readers, Clinical and Non-Clinical Senior Lecturers and Lecturers) should have the opportunity to take sabbatical leave for academic refreshment.

Where granted, Sabbatical Leave for Academic Refreshment will be for a defined period relating to the individual's length of service, but not exceeding one year at any one time. During the period of sabbatical leave, the member of staff will not be committed to College activities in order to allow them to pursue research interests and scholarship or other acceptable activities related to their primary employment by the College.

An individual's period of continuous service with the College will be protected during the period of Sabbatical Leave.

13.2 Conditions of Sabbatical Leave for Academic Refreshment:

Sabbatical Leave for Academic Refreshment is at the discretion of the College. Leave will only be considered after two years of qualifying service and will be as follows:

- Up to one term after two years of qualifying service
- Up to two terms after four years of qualifying service
- Up to a maximum of three terms after six years of qualifying service

Sabbatical leave cannot be taken whilst the individual is within their probation period however their service is counted towards the qualifying period above. Any period of 'Leave of Absence' will not count towards the qualifying period of service for Sabbatical Leave for Academic Refreshment.

Qualifying periods will re-start following a period of sabbatical leave.

13.3 Applying for Sabbatical Leave for Academic Refreshment:

The member of staff should complete an [Application for Leave of Absence/Sabbatical Leave Form](#), stating the purpose of their leave, and any activities that will be carried out. The member of staff must also outline cover arrangements that are in place for the period of leave requested, including for any additional Departmental/Divisional or College posts. Normally cover will be arranged in agreement with one or more of their colleagues.

The member of staff should forward the completed form to their Head of Department (HoD). In considering applications for Sabbatical Leave, the HoD must ensure that:

- Reasons for the request are satisfactory
- Purposes of leave are in the interest of the College
- Teaching, research and administrative functions of the Department/Division can be satisfactorily discharged and covered

Where the applicant's post is funded, or part-funded, by external monies, the relevant Research Services Team should also be consulted before any final approval is given.

Arrangements must be satisfactory to the Chief Executive of the NHS Trust for clinical staff, and such agreement must be secured by the HoD. Additional duties, such as Wardens of Halls of Residence, must be satisfactorily arranged with the appropriate authorities, for example Residences Manager.

Where the HoD supports the application, the form should be forwarded to the Faculty Dean for approval. Where approved by the Faculty Dean, the completed form should be forwarded to HR so that arrangements can be confirmed in writing, and the relevant parties notified of the Sabbatical Leave. HR will also update the individual's TeamSeer absence management record accordingly.

13.4 Where an application for Sabbatical Leave for Academic Refreshment is not supported:

Where the HoD and/or Faculty Dean does not support the application, the details will be submitted to the Director of HR for review, in consultation with the Senior College Consul and Vice Provost (Education).

13.5 Sabbatical Leave for Academic Refreshment and Pay:

A period of Sabbatical Leave may be paid, part paid or unpaid. Where the period of leave is paid or part paid, salary and any associated costs will be met by the Department/Division

(unless alternative funding arrangements are confirmed following the review of the case by the Director of HR, Senior College Consul and Vice Provost (Education)).

Sabbatical leave arrangements should be financially neutral as far as the member of staff is concerned rather than an opportunity to make more money.

13.6 Sabbatical Leave for Academic Refreshment and Annual Leave entitlement

If Sabbatical Leave for Academic Refreshment is paid or part paid, the contractual annual leave entitlement will continue.

If the Sabbatical Leave for Academic Refreshment is unpaid, the member of staff's HoD may, at their discretion, agree for the contractual annual leave entitlement to continue. Alternatively paid statutory holiday leave at the rate of 28 days per annum (pro rata for part time staff) will accrue, inclusive of 8 days for public holidays.

13.7 Sabbatical Leave for Academic Refreshment and Pensions Contributions:

If Sabbatical Leave for Academic Refreshment is paid, pension contributions will continue to be paid.

If the period of Sabbatical Leave is unpaid, the member of staff's HoD may, at their discretion, agree to maintain pension (USS) contributions on behalf of the College and the employee (this will exclude any voluntary contributions).

If the Sabbatical Leave is part paid, the HoD may, at their discretion, agree to pay the full employer's contribution appropriate to normal salary and to supplement the employee's contribution to maintain it at the level appropriate to normal salary (this will exclude any voluntary contributions).

In circumstances where pension contributions are not maintained, the member of staff concerned should contact the HR Staff Hub to discuss pension implications.

13.8 Sabbatical Leave for Academic Refreshment and National Insurance Contributions:

Where Sabbatical Leave is unpaid, no National Insurance contributions will be made in respect of the employee during the period of absence. It is recommended that the member of staff contact the HMRC - NI Contributions Section (tel no 0191 213 5000) to ascertain whether Voluntary or Class 3 Contributions should be made in order to maintain their eligibility for full State benefits. Further details can be accessed at <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk>.

Where Sabbatical Leave is part paid, the appropriate National Insurance contributions will be deducted from the salary payable provided the employee's earnings are above the Earning Threshold. No further action is required by the member of staff.

If the earnings are below the Earnings Threshold then it is recommended that the member of staff contact the HMRC – NI Contribution Section (details above) to ascertain whether Voluntary or Class 3 Contributions should be made in order to maintain their eligibility for full State benefits

13.9 Sabbatical Leave for Academic Refreshment and Income Tax:

If the Sabbatical Leave is spent abroad and exceeds six months, some income tax relief may arise depending on the individual's circumstances. Further details are available from the HMRC (tel no 0845 300 0627; <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk>).

13.10 Sabbatical Leave for Academic Refreshment and Insurance Cover:

A member of staff will be covered by the College's normal insurance arrangements during Sabbatical Leave.

The College's travel insurance policy applies to College employees when travelling abroad on College business, for trips not exceeding 12 months in duration and details are available from: <http://www.imperial.ac.uk/finance/financial-services/insurance>. The policy includes cover for emergency medical treatment costs. Information on the policy terms, conditions and exclusions are available from the College Insurance Manager. If an individual wishes to obtain a comprehensive health insurance policy for the country they will be visiting, they will need to arrange and pay for this themselves.

A member of staff should inform the College Insurance Manager (insurance@imperial.ac.uk) if:

- their overseas visit is likely to exceed twelve months
- they are likely to engage in hazardous activities while overseas e.g. visiting a working mine or quarry
- they are likely to require treatment for a pre-existing medical condition while abroad.

14 Sabbatical Leave for Personal Refreshment:

14.1 Who may apply for Sabbatical Leave for Personal Refreshment?:

The College provides the opportunity for all staff who have completed their probation period to apply for a period of Sabbatical Leave for Personal Refreshment. Members of staff may use this leave, for example, to undertake an extended period of travel, to complete a period of charity work, or to undertake a course of study that is not related to the individual's role at the College.

An individual's period of continuous service with the College will be protected during the period of Sabbatical Leave for Personal Refreshment.

14.2 Duration of Sabbatical Leave for Personal Refreshment:

It is anticipated periods of Sabbatical Leave for Personal Refreshment will usually be granted for periods of not less than three months, and not more than twelve months.

The Sabbatical Leave provisions outlined above will not apply whilst an individual is within their probation period however their service is counted towards the qualifying period above.

14.3 Applying for Sabbatical Leave for Personal Refreshment:

Any member of staff who wishes to apply for a period of Sabbatical Leave for Personal Refreshment should complete a [Leave of Absence/Sabbatical Leave Form](#).

When completing the form, the member of staff should outline the purpose of their leave, and any activities that will be carried out. The member of staff must also include details of what effect, if any, their proposed period of leave would have on their department, and how, in their opinion, any such effect may be dealt with (e.g. how their duties may be covered during the period of leave).

The member of staff should forward their completed application to their line manager, who will consider the application in consultation with the appropriate Faculty Operating Officer/Head of Service. Where the applicant's post is funded or part-funded by external monies, the relevant Research Services Team should also be consulted before any final approval is given.

Where the line manager supports the application, the form should be forwarded to the appropriate Faculty Operating Officer/Head of Service for approval. Where approved, the completed form should be forwarded to the HR Staff Hub so that arrangements can be confirmed in writing. The Payroll team and Research Services will also be notified as appropriate. The HR Staff Hub will also update the individual's TeamSeer absence management record accordingly

14.4 Where an application for Sabbatical Leave for Personal Refreshment is not supported:

While all applications will be considered, based on operational factors it may not be possible to approve all requests. The decision of the line manager and Faculty Operating Officer/Head of Service will be final, and there is no right to appeal against the decision.

14.5 Sabbatical Leave for Personal Refreshment and Pay:

Where Sabbatical Leave is granted for a period of personal refreshment, the period of leave will be unpaid.

14.6 Sabbatical Leave for Personal Refreshment and Annual Leave Entitlement:

Where the period of unpaid leave extends beyond one month, the contractual annual leave entitlement will cease during this period and paid statutory holiday leave at the rate of 28 days per annum (pro rata for part time staff) will accrue, inclusive of 8 days for public holidays.

14.7 Sabbatical Leave for Personal Refreshment and Pensions Contributions:

Where Sabbatical Leave is granted for a period of personal refreshment, non-academic member of staff, as outlined above, the period of leave will be unpaid, and pension contributions will not be maintained. The member of staff concerned should contact the HR Staff Hub to discuss pension implications.

14.8 Sabbatical Leave for Personal Refreshment and National Insurance Contributions:

Where Sabbatical Leave is unpaid, no National Insurance contributions will be made in respect of the employee during the period of absence. It is recommended that the member of staff contact the HMRC - NI Contributions Section (tel no 0191 213 5000) to ascertain whether Voluntary or Class 3 Contributions should be made in order to maintain their eligibility for full State benefits. Further details can be accessed at <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk>.

14.9 Sabbatical Leave for Personal Refreshment and Income Tax:

If the Sabbatical Leave is spent abroad and exceeds six months, some income tax relief may arise depending on the individual's circumstances. Further details are available from the HMRC (tel no 0845 300 0627; <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk>).

14.10 Sabbatical Leave for Personal Refreshment and Insurance Cover:

Sabbatical Leave for Personal Refreshment is, in most cases, unlikely to satisfy the "travelling or College business" requirements of the College travel insurance policy. Employees taking advantage of this form of leave will therefore be responsible for arranging and paying for private insurance cover as they see fit.

Any queries concerning College insurance as it applies to Sabbatical Leave for Personal Refreshment are to be directed to the College Insurance Manager (insurance@imperial.ac.uk) **prior** to the commencement of such leave.

14.11 Voluntary Move to Part-time Working:

As an alternative to applying for a "one off" period of Sabbatical Leave, there may be circumstances where a member of staff wishes to apply to reduce their working hours. For example, such a reduction may enable them to undertake a weekly training course, or other weekly commitments which are not related to their work at the College. Such a reduction in

working hours may be sought on a short-term or permanent basis. Further details are contained within the Flexible Working Policy, available via the following link: <http://www3.imperial.ac.uk/hr/procedures/a-z>.

15 Unpaid Leave:

Any member of staff may apply for unpaid leave from the College regardless of job family and length of service. A member of staff's employment is continuous during a period of unpaid leave.

There may be circumstances where the number of days allocated to the special leave arrangements above, for example "Compassionate Leave" and "Leave for Domestic Emergencies", does not fully meet the member of staff's requirements. In that event, the member of staff may apply for additional unpaid leave. Similarly, unpaid leave may be used to cover longer, unexpected absences from the College.

15.1 Applying for unpaid leave:

A member of staff should make their request for unpaid leave to their line manager, using the [Unpaid Leave Request Form](#). When making their request, they should provide their manager with as much notice as possible.

The granting of unpaid leave is at the discretion of the line manager. Leave will be agreed, depending on the feasibility of covering operational duties.

Where leave is agreed, the approved form should be forwarded to the HR Staff Hub, who will write to the member of staff to confirm the unpaid leave arrangements, and request the member of staff to provide signed confirmation of their agreement for the salary deduction to take place for the period of unpaid leave. On receipt of the signed confirmation, HR will liaise with Payroll to ensure the appropriate salary deduction is made and update the individual's TeamSeer absence management record accordingly.

15.2 Unpaid leave and Annual Leave entitlement:

Where the period of unpaid leave extends beyond one month, the contractual annual leave entitlement will cease during the leave period and paid statutory holiday leave at the rate of 28 days per annum (pro rata for part time staff) will accrue, inclusive of 8 days for public holidays.

15.3 Unpaid leave and pension contributions:

Depending on the duration of the period of leave, there may be implications for the member of staff's pension contributions. To acknowledge this, a distinction is drawn between periods of unpaid leave for less than two weeks, and unpaid leave for longer periods. In circumstances where unpaid leave is granted for less than two weeks, there will be no implications for a member of staff's pension contributions. However, where unpaid leave is granted for a period over two weeks, pension contributions will not be maintained by the College. Where a member of staff is considering applying for a period of unpaid leave for a duration of over two weeks, they should contact the HR Staff Hub to discuss pension implications.

Where unpaid leave is granted for longer than two weeks, the HR Staff Hub will contact the individual to discuss their pension options, which include the opportunity to pay both employee and employer pension contributions, or suspending their membership of the pension scheme, for the duration of the period of leave.

Table of Leave Entitlements

Type of Leave	Maximum amount of leave for eligible staff (per year unless otherwise stated)
Compassionate	5 working days
Domestic emergencies	1 day
Family emergencies	3 working days
Parental	18 weeks per child (unpaid)
Public Duties	10 days - magistrates 5 days - other public bodies
Jury Service	Duration of the Jury Service
Witness Duty	As required by the Court Service
Volunteer Reserve Forces Service	10 days Up to 12 months if mobilised
Study leave	3 days
Leave of absence	Various and normally unpaid
Sabbatical leave for academic refreshment	Various, up to 3 terms maximum, and may be paid or unpaid
Sabbatical leave for personal refreshment	Between 3 and 12 months (unpaid)
Unpaid leave	Various (unpaid)