**SPECIAL LEAVE**

**POLICY AND PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES**

**INTRODUCTION AND POLICY AIM**

St George’s acknowledges that there will be occasions when employees will need to request 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 St George’s 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 St George’s.

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

* Compassionate Leave
* Domestic Emergencies
* Family Emergencies
* Parental Leave
* Special Leave for Public Duties
* Jury Service
* Leave for Members of the Reserved Armed Forces
* Study Leave
* Sabbatical Leave
* Unpaid Leave

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, and Shared Parental Leave. Further details can be accessed on the [Portal](https://portal.sgul.ac.uk/org/cs/hr/A-Z%20policies-and-procedures/Policies%20and%20Procedures)

Information relating to Travel Disruption can be found at

**SCOPE**

This procedure applies to all St George’s directly employed staff, with the exception of Sabbatical Leave which applies only to Academic members of staff.

**ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

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| **Role** | **Responsibilities** |
| Line Managers | To implement the policy and procedural guidelines where appropriate  To ensure that staff understand requirements of them under the policy  To consult the HR Team for advice as appropriate and prior to any formal meeting |
| Employees | To be aware of and understand the requirements of the policy  To seek clarity and support when appropriate to enable fulfilment of policy requirements  To co-operate fully where they are subject to the procedures under the policy |
| HR Team / HR Representative | To ensure clear information is available on the policy and procedural guidelines for managers and staff to “self-help”  To provide guidance, advice and training for managers implementing the policy  To review the policy and its implementation (e.g. in respect of equality statistics) |
| Any other individual(s) involved | To fulfil their role in line with the requirements of the policy and procedural guidelines  To respect confidentiality at all times |

**PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES**

The normal expectation is that the following procedural guidelines will apply. However, on occasions, and for exceptional reasons, there may be the need to vary the procedures to suit individual cases / circumstances, and accordingly the University reserves the right to amend the procedures. Where this is the case, all relevant parties will be informed including the reason why.

**Applying for leave**

Unless stated otherwise below, where the period of leave is known in advance, staff are required to give at least 1 weeks’ notice if they wish to take leave, however it is recognised that at times that this may not be possible, in such cases the employee must notify their line manager as soon as possible.

**Time off for Leave**

The amount of time off (paid or unpaid) is dependent on the type of leave taken, as outlined below.

If an employee requires time off in addition to the policy guidelines, then alternative leave arrangements should be agreed with their line manager. This may include, for example, annual leave or unpaid leave.

**LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS**

**Compassionate Leave**

Paid leave of up to 5 working days (pro-rata for part time staff) may be given to a member of staff upon the death of a close relative, for example, partner, parent, child, or where the member of staff is responsible for making the funeral arrangements.

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.

**Family Emergencies**

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. Paid leave of up to 3 days in any 12 month period will be given in such circumstances.

A dependant is defined as 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.

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 care for a sick child

**Parental Leave**

Eligible employees can take unpaid parental leave to look after their child or to make arrangements for the good of their child, e.g.

* spend more time with their children
* look at new schools
* settle children into new childcare arrangements
* spend more time with family, such as visiting grandparents

Parental leave is available to employees who meet the following conditions:

* they have or expect to have parental responsibility for a child
* they have completed one full year’s service with St George’s by the time they wish to take the leave.

Eligible employees are entitled to 18 weeks’ (unpaid) leave for each child and adopted child, up to their 18th birthday. Parental leave may be taken in blocks of one or more weeks upwards (i.e. the normal working week for the employee) except in the case of disabled children when leave can be taken in single days or multiples of days, subject to a maximum period of four weeks in any year for each child

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.

An employee must give St George’s at least 21 days’ notice, in writing, of the intention to take parental leave and the exact date on which it will start and end.

If the employee wishes to take parental leave immediately following the birth of a baby, or adoption placement it will not be necessary to specify the exact date on which the parental leave is to start. In these circumstances, the employee should give at least 21 days' notice, in writing, before the beginning of the expected week of childbirth or expected date of placement.

In exceptional circumstances St George’s may wish to postpone parental leave in order to meet the needs of the organisation, for example where the employee's absence at a particular time could cause undue disruption. Leave will be postponed to a mutually agreed date or to a suitable future period.

The employee will normally return to the same post in which he/she was employed under the original contract of employment and on the same terms and conditions applicable to him/her as if he/she had not been absent

**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.

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 staff will be take either annual leave, unpaid leave or agree with their line manager to work off site

**Jury Service**

Attendance for jury service is a legal obligation and members of staff who are called for jury service will be granted time off for the duration that they are required to serve.

A member of staff who is called for jury service will be provided with a Jury Service Certificate for Loss of Earnings form by the court. This form should be submitted to the Human Resources Department. Once the employer's section is completed, the form will be returned to the employee.

The employee must take the form to the court when attending for jury service.

On completion of jury service the employee will receive compensation from the court for loss of earnings, together with out of pocket expenses. This loss of earnings compensation is tax free.

On return to work the employee should provide the HR Department with a copy of the remittance. This sum will then be deducted from the employee's next salary payment.

**Special Leave for Public Duties**

Staff who perform the duties outlined below are entitled to reasonable time off to undertake these duties.

* a magistrate (also known as a justice of the peace)
* a local councillor
* a school governor
* a member of any statutory tribunal (e.g. an employment tribunal)
* a member of the managing or governing body of an educational establishment
* a member of a health authority
* a member of the General Teaching Councils for England and Wales
* a member of the Environment Agency or the Scottish Environment Protection agency
* a member of the prison independent monitoring boards (England or Wales) or a member of the prison visiting committees (Scotland)

Requests for time off for public duties will be agreed by managers subject to; the amount of time required for performance of the particular duty on the particular occasion, how much time off has already been granted to the employee for public duties, the ability to accommodate the request taking into account the potential impact of the employee’s absence on the performance of their university role, and any impact on colleagues, the department and the wider university. Time off may not be granted where a request is felt to be unreasonable.

**Members of the Reserved Armed Forces (Reservists)**

Any employee who joins the Reserve Forces, or seeks to renew their commitment, must permit the Ministry of Defence to contact St George’s directly to confirm this.

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

Reasonable time off will be allowed for undertaking reservist duties. Requests for time off for reservist activities will be agreed by managers subject to; the amount of time required for performance of the particular duty on the particular occasion, how much time off has already been granted to the employee for reservist activities, the ability to accommodate the request taking into account the potential impact of the employee’s absence on the performance of their university role, and any impact on colleagues, the department and the wider university. Time off may not be granted where a request is felt to be unreasonable.

Reservists will be sent a ‘call-out notice’ if they’re needed for full-time service. This is known as ‘mobilisation’. Reservists are required to inform St George’s as soon as possible when they know they are being mobilised.

Reservists are entitled to return to the same type of job they were doing before they were mobilised, on the same terms and conditions. If the job no longer exists, they’re entitled to a reasonable alternative. Reservists must inform St George’s as soon as possible when they are able to return.

**Study Leave**

Employees seeking study leave to prepare for formal courses or revise for examinations areallowed up to 5 days paid study leave per year (pro rata for part time staff).

**Sabbatical Leave**

Sabbatical leave is a privilege that may normally, but not exclusively be granted members of the academic staff, for the purpose of advancing their academic activities and St George’s. During the period of sabbatical leave, the employee will not be committed to St George’s activities in order to allow them to pursue research interests and scholarship or other acceptable activities related to their primary employment with St George’s.

Leave will only be considered after two years of qualifying service and will be as follows:

• Up to 3 months after two years of qualifying service

• Up to 6 months after four years of qualifying service

• Up to a maximum of 12 months 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. Qualifying periods will re-start following a period of sabbatical leave.

To apply, employees must complete an [Application for Sabbatical Leave Form](https://portal.sgul.ac.uk/org/cs/hr/a), stating the purpose of their leave, and any activities that will be carried out. They must also outline cover arrangements that are in place for the period of leave requested, including for any additional roles. Normally cover will be arranged in agreement with one or more of their colleagues.

Employees must submit their application for to their Institute Director/ Director of service at least 6 months in advance of the proposed leave start date.

The Institute Director/ Director of Service must be satisfied that the request meets the following requirements;

* Purpose of the leave is in the interest of St George’s
* Adequate provision can be made for the performance of the applicant’s teaching duties, including undergraduate teaching and supervision of postgraduate work.
* No additional costs will be incurred by St George’s as a result of the granting of the application
* Approval of the relevant NHS authority to the proposed sabbatical leave arrangements has been sought for those employees holding appointments which carry honorary or substantive clinical responsibilities.

Where an application is not approved, the Institute Director will arrange for feedback to be provided to the employee.

If a member of staff on sabbatical leave accepts a paid appointment, St George’s may, after consultation with the person concerned make a deduction of all or part of salary. The amount shall, so far as possible, be determined to ensure that the member of staff shall not be worse off, nor substantially better off, than if they had continued in normal employment at St George’s.

**Unpaid Leave**

Employees may apply for periods of unpaid leave from St George’s. The times when unpaid leave may be appropriate include

* Where the number of days allocated to the special leave arrangements above do not fully meet the employees requirements
* extended period of travel
* to complete a period of charity work
* to undertake a course of study that is not related to the individual’s role at St George’s

To apply for unpaid leave, employees must complete an [Application for Unpaid Leave Form](https://portal.sgul.ac.uk/org/cs/hr/a), stating the purpose of their leave. They must also outline cover arrangements that are in place for the period of leave requested, including for any additional roles.

Employees must submit their application to their line manager as soon as possible in advance of the leave. The granting of unpaid leave is at the discretion of the line manager, depending on the feasibility of covering operational duties.

Employees should contact the Payroll and Pension scheme in advance of applying for unpaid leave to discuss any impact the period of unpaid leave may have on their National Insurance and Pension contributions.