



# **Leave of Absence Policy**

## Introduction

Dublin City University (DCU) is committed to providing an equal, inclusive and diverse environment in which all members of the University community should expect to be able to thrive and be respected and valued for their unique perspectives and contributions. This policy specifies the arrangements in place at DCU for the administration and monitoring of the University's Leave of Absence Policy.

## Purpose

To define the University's policy in regard to unpaid Leave of Absence. This policy provides employees with information when considering applying for unpaid Leave of Absence for a specific period for personal or development reasons such as family reasons, full-time study, or travel. Unpaid Leave of Absence should not impose undue burdens on students, employees or the activities of the University.

## Scope

This policy applies normally to all full-time, part-time, or fixed term temporary employees of the University who have three years' service and have successfully completed their probationary period.

Eligible part time employees may be granted unpaid leave on a pro rata basis.

## Policy Statement

The University will consider in a positive manner applications from employees for a Leave of Absence where there is no adverse effect to operations/service as a result of the leave and no additional costs to the University arise.

Leave of Absence can be taken in block form ranging between a minimum period of four weeks and a maximum period of twelve months in any single application.

### Conditions of a Leave of Absence (LOA)

- The period of LOA is unpaid.
- Each application for LOA will be examined on its own merits.
- While the University will endeavour to facilitate employees, refusal of some applications may be necessary.
- Pension service does not accrue during an unpaid LOA.
- Membership to the DCU Group Income Continuation Plan is suspended during LOA.

- It is the responsibility of the employee availing of LOA to make arrangements to ensure that any voluntary contributions (e.g., health insurance, AVCs, etc) normally deducted from salary continue to be paid.
- A LOA cannot be taken concurrently with any other form of leave.
- In the event that an employee falls ill during their unpaid LOA, they will not be eligible for sick pay from the University or disability benefit under the DCU Group Income Continuance Plan.
- In cases where a weekly paid employee takes LOA for a period greater than 12 months, the employee will move onto monthly payroll when they return from leave.
- An employee granted LOA is not automatically entitled to return to the role vacated but will return to a position on terms and conditions no less favourable to the one vacated.

### **Recruitment and Selection**

Employees on a LOA will continue to be eligible to apply for posts within the University, subject to the usual eligibility criteria. An offer of a new post during the period of Leave of Absence, in certain circumstances, may be conditional on the person resuming duty in the new post with immediate effect.

### **Granting of Applications**

- The University endeavours to accommodate as many applications as is reasonably possible, whilst meeting the operational needs of a particular School/Unit. It may not always be possible to grant leave to all applicants at the same time.
- The approval of applications may also be determined by the School/Unit's ability to put in place suitable and affordable temporary cover arrangements. The relevant Head of School/Director of Unit will determine such requirements.
- The HR Director will have final approval or otherwise of the application having regard to all information relating to the application.

### **Return to Work**

- Employees who are granted LOA are expected to return to the University for a period at least equal to the duration of the LOA.
- It will not be possible for employees to return to work prior to the original date agreed unless by mutual agreement between the employee, their Head of School/Unit and the Director of HR.

## **PRSI rules**

Under current PRSI rules, a person availing of Leave of Absence is not earning during the period of leave and is not therefore making PRSI contributions. It is the responsibility of the applicant to establish with the Department of Social Protection the effect that unpaid leave may have on any entitlement to social insurance benefits.

## **Application Process**

- Employees should provide as much notice as possible of their intention to apply for LOA. It is expected that such notice would be preferably 6 months and not less than 3 months' notice.
- Employees may discuss their LOA application with the Director of HR / their nominee prior to submitting an application to the Head of School / Unit.
- The LOA Form, available from the HR webpage, must be used when making an application for sabbatical.
- The draft application must be submitted to the Head of School/Unit for consideration in the first instance.
- The Head of School/Director of Unit will then forward the application to the Executive Dean of the Faculty, where appropriate, for their consideration.
- The Executive Dean/Director of Unit will forward the application to the Director of HR for final decision/approval.
- HR will advise the employee and their Head of School/Unit of the outcome of the application.
- HR will also notify the Finance Office of the LOA arrangement so adjustments to pay can be made.

## **Extensions**

Extensions may be considered having regard to the overall operational and resource needs of the department and with the approval of the Faculty Dean/Director of Management Unit, Head of School/Unit and the Director of HR.

## **Roles & Responsibilities**

### **The Employee**

- Read this policy and be aware of their entitlements as well as their obligations.
- Discuss the request for LOA with their Line Manager in advance of submitting an application. Discussions may include how their workload may change and will be managed over their period of leave.
- Applications must be made using the LOA Form available from the HR website.
- Applications must be submitted at least 3 months before the leave is due to commence.
- Contact the HR pensions team on email at [pension@dcu.ie](mailto:pension@dcu.ie). for information on bridging the shortfall in pension if desired.

- Make arrangements to ensure that any voluntary contributions, standing orders, or direct debits (e.g. health insurance, savings plans, AVCs, etc) normally deducted from salary continue to be paid.
- In cases where the employee has deductions through a Health Insurance Provider, the onus is on the employee to contact the provider directly to notify them.

### **The Line Manager**

- Read this policy and be aware of employees' entitlements.
- Seek guidance and support from HR on the implementation of the policy.
- Consider and explore the employee's request for LOA including cover arrangements and impact on School/Unit's budget.
- Sign the LOA application form to indicate their support or otherwise of the application.
- Consult with the Executive Dean/Director and forward the application to the Executive Dean/Director for their consideration.
- Upon the employee's return from leave, ensure a discussion takes place with the employee in order to assist them with their return to work.

### **Executive Deans**

- Consider the LOA application and any impact on the School/Faculty including the availability of resources for cover arrangements.
- Sign the LOA application form to indicate their support or otherwise of the application.
- Forward the completed LOA application to the Director of HR for final decision.

### **Human Resources**

- Help ensure that employees are aware of the content of this policy.
- Oversee the implementation of the policy and provide advice to employees and managers on the application process.
- Maintain a record of all employees granted LOA.
- The HR Director will have final approval or otherwise of the application having regard to all information relating to the application.
- Provide written confirmation to the employee outlining the conditions under which the LOA has been granted.

## Sanctions

The University may take appropriate action in the case of misuse of LOA e.g. working elsewhere when the leave was approved on the basis of the employee undertaking full-time education. This may include formal disciplinary action.

## Contact

Any queries regarding this policy should be directed to:


E: [ask.hr@dcu.ie](mailto:ask.hr@dcu.ie).

Tel: 01 700 5149

## Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or as soon as practicable after there has been a substantial change in any matter to which this policy refers.

## Version Control

<b>Policy Name</b>	Leave of Absence Policy		 Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath Dublin City University
<b>Unit Owner</b>	Human Resources		
<b>Version Reference</b>	<b>Original Policy V1.0</b>	<b>Reviewed Policy V1.1</b>	
<b>Approved by</b>	University Executive	Director of Human Resources	
<b>Effective Date</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> May 2011	19 <sup>th</sup> August 2024	

End.