

Special Leave Policy and Provisions

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1. Introduction

- 1.1.** Queen Mary (QMUL) recognises the personal and domestic commitments that many of our people balance in conjunction with their roles.
- 1.2.** It is recognised that occasionally it will be necessary for an employee to take leave at short notice where an urgent and unforeseen home or personal need arises. While this policy does not provide an automatic right to special leave, we are committed to actively considering a range of needs within our community.

2. Purpose

- 2.1.** This policy outlines how the University will provide additional support to employees at extraordinary times, both for their own welfare and for the welfare and wellbeing of others.
- 2.2.** It sets out the circumstances where leave, with or without pay, is available for employees to deal with such commitments.
- 2.3.** All requests will be received sensitively, and Queen Mary will ensure that employees are supported respectfully, and that any impact on operational performance and delivery is mitigated where possible.

3. Scope and eligibility

- 3.1.** This policy is applicable to all employees of QMUL, whether full time, part time, permanent or Fixed Term Contracts.
- 3.2** The policy covers a wide range of support available to employees. They include:
 - Compassionate Leave
 - Parental Bereavement Leave - losing a child or miscarriage
 - Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave
 - Neo natal leave
 - Time Off for Medical Appointments
 - Severe Weather and Disruption to Travel
 - Time off for Family and Dependants (Carers Leave)
 - Emergencies at Home
 - Public Duties e.g. Jury Service
 - Military Reservists and Cadet Force Members
 - Unpaid Leave
- 3.3** It may not be possible to cover all types of leave. Additional information is available in our [annual, sick, and parental leave policies](#) and guides.
- 3.4** The University has a duty to permit employees who hold certain public positions reasonable time off to perform the duties associated with them.

4. Unauthorised Absence

- 4.1 Employees should ensure that they follow the correct process to request leave in accordance with this policy. It should be noted that if leave is taken without appropriate approval, this will be recorded as unauthorised absence. Pay will be suspended for the period of the unauthorised absence, and the matter may be formally investigated under the University's [Discipline Policy and Procedure](#).

5. Legislative context

- 5.1. While employees have the right to request special leave, the approval of the leave is sometimes at the discretion of their line manager
- 5.2. However certain legislation provides our employees with statutory and legislative entitlements for leave and pay. Particularly in parental leave scenarios, certain leave is a day one right for our employees. In some cases, our QMUL provisions will pay for further leave.
- 5.3. This policy recognises our legal duties under The Equality Act 2010. It also supports legislation including:
- Section 50 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 - Public Duties
 - Parental Bereavement Leave Regulations 2020
 - Carer's leave Act 2024
 - Neonatal Care Leave 2025
 - Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave Regulations 2026
 - Employment Rights Act 2025 - day one Paternity and Parental Leave

6. Arranging Special Leave

Different categories of Special Leave are outlined below. All forms of Special Leave require employees discussing in advance, where possible, the reason for taking leave and any planned time off.

6.1 Planned Special Leave

Employees should apply for special leave using the Special Leave Application Form (Appendix One) wherever possible. Applications should normally be submitted in advance and must include sufficient information to enable the line manager to make an informed decision, including:

- the reason for the request (in general terms only) and the date(s) and duration of leave requested.
- whether the leave is planned or unplanned, and any relevant supporting information, where appropriate.

Employees are not required to disclose sensitive personal details beyond what is necessary. Any refusal of special leave must be reasonable, proportionate, and clearly explained to the employee.

6.2 Unplanned Special Leave

Where circumstances are unforeseen and do not allow for advance application, employees must notify their line manager as soon as reasonably practicable. The Special Leave Application Form must be completed retrospectively at the earliest opportunity and leave recorded on MyHR.

Unplanned special leave requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, taking account of:

- the nature of the circumstances; and
- operational requirements.

In certain circumstances, such as child bereavement, leave taken within the first eight weeks may be taken immediately. Leave requested after this period will normally require at least one week's notice to the line manager, unless otherwise agreed.

6.3 Changes to Agreed Arrangements

Employees must inform their line manager promptly if there is any change to agreed special leave arrangements. This could include -changes to dates or duration; an early return to work; or the need for additional leave.

Where plans change, the line manager will review the request and confirm any amendments. Further approval may be required where additional time off is requested.

6.4 Manager considerations

The line manager is responsible for authorising special leave and may request further clarification where required. Decisions must be reasonable, proportionate, and applied consistently in line with organisational policy and relevant legislation. Managers may choose to check with HR. Where special leave is not appropriate or does not fully meet the employee's needs, the following options may also be considered:

- temporary or permanent flexible working arrangements.
- statutory or contractual parental leave options.
- annual leave.
- time off in lieu (TOIL); and
- unpaid leave.

If longer-term unpaid leave is agreed, employees and managers must consider and confirm the impact on pension contributions and annual leave entitlement. Extended periods of leave may also include arrangements for keeping-in-touch days and consultation on any organisational or contractual changes.

7. Compassionate Leave

7.1 Bereavement

In the event of the death of a close relative, QMUL is committed to supporting our employees by offering compassionate leave to take the time they need away from work. A close relative is defined as a child, parent or next of kin, spouse /partner or sibling. It also includes grandparent

or Parent-In-law, and someone who is a relative or friend of the employee who is most important to them but does not fall into one of the categories above (chosen family).

7.2 Paid leave

Paid leave of up to 5 working days or 35 hours (pro-rata for part-time employees), may be granted following the death of a close relative. Special provisions are in place for the death of a child or primary parent and are set out below. The time off does not need to be taken consecutively. Individual circumstances need to be taken into account. Once compassionate leave is exhausted, annual leave or, if the annual leave entitlement is exhausted, unpaid leave may be granted.

7.3 Time off for Funerals

Where employee requests leave to attend the funeral of a close relative (as defined above), paid leave should normally be granted for the day of the funeral. This will be in addition to the provisions made for compassionate leave as set out above.

Paid time off to attend the funeral of a close friend or a work colleague, as a representative of the University, may be given where possible, and subject to service delivery and standards being maintained.

Line managers should take into the account the following when dealing with requests for compassionate leave:

- Impact on the individual and their wellbeing
- The relationship of the employee to the deceased
- Responsibilities that the employee e.g. making funeral arrangements
- The support the employee may need to provide to other family members
- The amount of travelling involved e.g. if the employee needs to go abroad
- Consider and agree how much information the employee wishes their colleagues to have about the death and to be mindful that this information is sensitive and to keep strictly to the facts.

8. Parental Bereavement Leave - death of a child

The University recognises that, while dealing with any bereavement is difficult, the death of a child can be particularly distressing. The University is committed to providing this leave as paid time off, in excess of the statutory minimum requirements.

8.1 Leave, pay and those affected

In the event of the loss of a child under the age of 18, employees can take 2 weeks paid Parental Bereavement Leave; this includes parents who have a pregnancy loss (including abortion) or stillbirth after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

For the loss of a child aged 18 and over employees are able to request compassionate leave.

All employees can take this type of leave if they are the parent of the child who has passed away, or the partner of the child's parent. Employees can take this type of leave if they have parental responsibility for the child, for example adoptive or foster parents and stepparents.

Employees can take two weeks of Parental Bereavement Leave as a single block of two weeks; or two separate blocks of one week at different times. It can be taken after any planned agreed parental leave. Additional unpaid leave will be available, and temporary flexible working arrangements. If it is more beneficial to the employee to take the leave as individual days, requests will be considered by line managers on a case-by-case basis, and every effort will be made to accommodate these requests.

Employees can take the leave within the 56 weeks following the bereavement.

Employees who want to take Parental Bereavement Leave within the first 56 days (8 weeks) following the bereavement, can take the leave straight away; they do not have to provide any notice.

To take leave more than 56 days (8 weeks) after the bereavement, employees should give their line manager at least one week's notice and a Special Leave Request form should be completed (Appendix 1).

It is expected that the employee and line manager will work together to agree the arrangements, and the line manager will actively support the employee, signposting to bereavement support where appropriate

8.2 Returning to work after Parental Bereavement Leave

When employees return to work after Parental Bereavement Leave, they have the right to return to the same job.

Also, if the employee returns from extended bereavement leave that follows on immediately from maternity, adoption, paternity leave or shared parental leave (taken in relation to the child who has passed away), the employee has the right to return to the same job.

QMUL have a duty to consult with employees who are on extended leave in times of reorganisation where a role could be at risk.

9. Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave

9.1 Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave allows some fathers and partners time off work, if their partner dies as set out in the Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave Regulations 2026. It is for the partner of someone who has died and can be used when someone dies within the first year of their child's life or adoption.

The person who's died must be the mother or parent who gave birth, the primary adopter or an intended parent having a baby through surrogacy.

The father or partner must have responsibility for bringing up the child and could be the child's father, married to, the civil partner or partner of the mother or parent who gave birth. They may also be married to, the civil partner or partner of the primary adopter. This includes same-sex partners.

Someone who separated from their partner can still take this leave. They must have ongoing responsibility for bringing up the child.

9.2 Available Leave

The father or partner can take up to 52 weeks' unpaid leave to care for their child. They can choose the amount of time. They must take it in one block. In most cases, they must take the leave within 52 weeks of either:

- the child's birth – including intended parents in a surrogacy
- the child's adoption placement
- the child's entry to Great Britain for overseas adoptions

There's an exception, if the death happens less than 14 days before the end of the 52 weeks. The father or partner can still take 14 days' leave. This is a 'day one right'. This means someone can take leave from the first day of employment. It does not matter how long they've been in their job.

9.3 Pay

Two weeks paid leave is available for bereavement in addition to two weeks of Paternity Leave/ adoption leave and pay. Additional unpaid leave is available for another 48 weeks. Any agreement that had been planned for Shared Parental Leave will be explored.

9.4 Giving notice, details and starting leave

The person taking the leave should tell their employer as soon as they can, Line managers and HR should be flexible and compassionate.

If it's less than 8 weeks since their partner died the leave can start straight away. Employees can tell their manager verbally or in writing, for example a letter or email before due starting time. If it's more than 8 weeks since their partner died, they must give at least 1 weeks' notice in writing.

The employee must tell their employer the date their partner died and the date they will start bereaved partner's paternity leave. For birth and surrogacy – the date of the child's birth and for UK adoptions – the date the adoption placement started need to be provided. For overseas adoptions – the date the child entered Great Britain

If it's less than 8 weeks since the death, they must also say how much leave they're taking. They do not need to do this straight away. They must confirm this in writing within 8 weeks and at least a week before the return date. If it's more than 8 weeks since the death, they must also confirm in writing:

- their relationship with the child
- that they have cared for or intend to care for the child
- the date they plan to return to work

9.5 Adding to other types of leave

If an employee is entitled to other types of leave, they could add this leave to it. This might give them more time off to care for their child. They can add it before or after the other leave.

For example, Ali's partner dies when their child is 6 months old. At the time, Ali is taking some shared parental leave. Ali decides to take another 3 months off work, using bereaved partner's paternity leave.

9.6 Changing or cancelling leave

If it is more than 8 weeks after the death – then the employee must tell their employer in writing and give at least 1 week's notice before the new start date. To change the return date, they must give enough notice. [Find out more about returning to work.](#)

To cancel the leave, they must tell their employer in writing before the leave is due to start. For example, in a letter or email. They must give at least 1 week's notice if the agreed start date is more than 8 weeks after the death.

9.7 Bereavement Support

The University has an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) [Workplace Options](#); the username is queenmary and the password is employee. They can also be contacted by phone on 0800 243458, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

External sources of help and support for bereaved employees include:

- The [NHS](#) which offers advice and support as well as information on specialist bereavement support groups.
- [Cruse Bereavement Care](#), which offers support to bereaved people, for example via a telephone helpline;
- [Child Bereavement UK](#), which offers support to families when a child passes away, for example via a telephone helpline.
- [Age UK](#), which has a website that includes [guidance and support](#) on coping with bereavement.
- [WAY Widowed and Young](#), which specialises in supporting people aged 50 or under whose partner has passed away; and
- [Marie Curie](#), which supports families living with a terminal illness.

10. Time off for Family and Dependants (Carer's Leave)

10.1 Paid Carer's Leave is paid time off which may be granted in urgent or emergency situations, involving dependants, when normal care arrangements have broken down or cannot be immediately put into place.

Queen Mary expects that employees will have robust arrangements in place to ensure that dependants are cared for during their working hours. Where possible, back up arrangements should also be in place should circumstances change. Paid Carer's Leave is solely intended to deal with an **initial** emergency related to carer responsibilities. It is normally only granted for one or two days at a time to deal with instances such as:

- unexpected illness or injury of children/dependants
- unexpected breakdown of normal caring arrangements
- if a dependant is unwell, either mentally or physically, or has been involved in an accident or assaulted, including where the dependant is distressed rather than injured physically
- to deal with an incident involving a child of the employee that occurs unexpectedly during a period when the child would normally be at school or attending childcare.

Employees do not need to have exhausted their annual leave entitlement before requesting Paid Carer's Leave. However, it will not be granted to cover known/planned carer commitments, examples include:

- Child-minder's holiday commitments
- School inset days

Employees are able to request annual leave or use any accrued time off in lieu (TOIL) for any absences covered in the two cases above. It is expected that the employee and line manager will work together to agree the decision and will actively support each other in doing so.

10.2 A dependant - definition

A dependant for the purpose of this policy is defined as someone wholly or mainly dependent upon an employee for support, maintenance or assistance, who is usually (although not exclusively) a member of the employee's immediate family or a close personal relative:

- Spouse
- Partner
- Child
- Parent
- Sibling

Friend or family member who lives in the same household but is not a tenant or a lodger

Any other person who would reasonably rely on the employee for assistance if they were unwell or are injured or assaulted, or who would rely on the employee to make arrangements for the provision of care in the event of illness or injury (chosen family).

10.3 Leave available

The amount of paid time off which may be given for carers leave is up to 5 working days or 35 hours (pro rata for part time employees), in any rolling 12-month period (which commences on the first day carers leave is taken).

It is anticipated that any single instance of paid carers leave will not last for more than one or two days and as agreed by the line manager.

Line managers must keep records of all requests for carers leave, along with:

Evidence of the reason for the leave request (the request form in Appendix 1)

The decision to approve leave and whether the leave is paid or unpaid

The reason for any refusal to grant leave (including type of leave requested e.g. paid, unpaid or annual leave), for example due to other employees being absent and/or that service provision may be affected as a result. Before refusing a request, line managers should seek advice from their [ER Advisor](#).

Advising their HR Administrator by e-mail of any dates when employees are on unpaid leave, so that appropriate adjustments can be made to an employee's salary and, where relevant, pension contributions.

10.4 Planned time off

Paid Carer's leave is intended to cover unforeseen emergency circumstances.

If the employee knows in advance that time off will be required, this should be requested as annual leave, Unpaid Carer's Leave or TOIL. Unpaid Carer's and Parental Leave is a statutory

right for up to one week per year to provide planned care (or make arrangements for such care) for a dependent (as defined above) with a long-term care need.

If the reason for the leave relates to caring for a child in a non-emergency situation, the employee may also be entitled to unpaid ordinary parental leave.

10.5 Requesting Paid Carer's leave and Unpaid Carer's leave

As the nature of Paid Carer's leave is unplanned (as it relates to an emergency), it will not be possible to apply within a set timeframe. In the event of a need to leave work unexpectedly or being unable to start work at their normal time, the employee should contact their line manager prior to their start time or as soon as possible thereafter to seek permission for their absence. The employee must state the reasons for their absence and how long they may require to be off work.

The employee must speak directly to their line manager or in their absence their nominated deputy or their line manager's manager. If they are unable to speak to an appropriate manager, the employee should leave a message and contact details so that the manager may get in contact with the employee. It is a reasonable expectation that the employee should try to make contact again at a later time/date.

It may not always be possible for the manager to ascertain immediately whether carers leave is applicable. In some circumstances a further discussion will take place on the employee's return to work as to whether carers leave is approved or whether annual leave, TOIL or unpaid leave is more appropriate.

It is the employee's responsibility to keep in touch with their line manager and let them know when they are likely to return to work. On return to work a Special Leave Request form should be completed (Appendix 1).

Employees should provide as much notice as they can in requesting planned Unpaid Carer's Leave by completing a Special Leave Request form (Appendix 1), noting that the minimum statutory notice is the greater of 3 days or twice the length of the leave requested.

11. Neonatal Care Leave and Pay

Queen Mary Neonatal Care Leave ('QMNCL') is paid leave which is intended to support employees whose baby is receiving, or has received, neonatal care. QMNCL is additional to other family leave such as maternity, paternity, shared parental and adoption leave. The intention is that employees may use it to extend their time away from work to reflect the period of neonatal care that was required.

11.1 Eligibility

Employees may benefit from QMNCL from day one of their employment. At the birth of the baby, the employee must be one of the baby's parents/ intended parents (applicable to surrogacy). They may also be the partner to the baby's mother/birth parent (who are unrelated and living with them in an enduring family relationship) with the expectation they will have responsibility for raising the child.

If adopting (or fostering to adopt) the same principles as set out above will apply.

In the very sad circumstances where the baby dies after QMNCL has been accrued, employees will still be entitled to take QMNCL and the requirement for providing care will be disapplied. Other family leave / bereavement leave may also apply in these

circumstances, subject to the conditions relating to this leave.

Neonatal care must normally have taken place or begun within the first 28 days of birth (counting from the day after the baby is born) and care must continue for a period of at least 7 continuous days (beginning on the day after neonatal care starts) but discretion may be applied in exceptional cases where this care starts shortly after the first 28 days. [Please note that it is the neonatal care that must start within the first 28 days, and QMNCL may be taken later (for example, by a mother who is on maternity leave while the baby is receiving neonatal care)].

11.2 Neonatal care is defined as:

- any medical care received in a hospital.
- medical care received elsewhere following discharge from hospital. Such care must be under the direction of a consultant and includes ongoing monitoring and visits to the child by healthcare professionals; or
- palliative or end of life care.

Evidence of the neonatal care may be requested, in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions and associated guidance.

11.3 Duration of QMNCL

The length of QMNCL will be dependent on how long the baby receives neonatal care but is capped at a maximum of 12 weeks. Parents will be able to take one week of leave in respect of each week the baby receives neonatal care without interruption. The week begins on the day after care started.

For parents of twins or other multiple births, QMNCL cannot be claimed separately for each baby, where they are receiving care at the same time. QMNCL will be based on the period of time over which neonatal care is required. For example, if both twins were to take care for a period of 6 weeks, the parents would only be entitled to 6 weeks of leave. The maximum amount of leave remains 12 weeks).

11.4 When it can be taken

QMNCL must be taken within 68 weeks of the baby's birth (or placement or entry to Great Britain in the event of adoption) and will normally be tagged onto the end of the employee's planned family leave. An employee's entitlement to QMNCL must be taken in blocks of one week (or several whole weeks) on one or two occasions and may not be taken at the same time as any other leave.

It is anticipated that in most cases the employee taking paternity leave (or equivalent) is likely to want to take their entitlement to QMNCL (as set out below) as soon as their paternity leave runs out. This will enable them to provide support during the period of neonatal care.

For the employee taking maternity leave (or equivalent), it is likely that they may have already started this leave when the baby is born. Noting that maternity leave is automatically triggered when the baby arrives, and maternity leave cannot be stopped and restarted again (for example, to take QMNCL or any other type of leave), it is anticipated that most employees will want to take their QMNCL at the end of the maternity leave period, before returning to work. The idea is that the period of maternity leave that was "used up" while the baby was receiving neonatal care is "compensated for" by (up to 12 weeks) QMNCL at a later time - such that the opportunity to connect and bond with the baby after neonatal care is similar to what it would have been if neonatal care had not been required.

[Please note that QMNCL is paid leave and the pay element cannot be separated from the leave and paid at some other time].

11.5 Pay during QMNCL

Employees are entitled to their full pay during QMNCL. It is not possible to receive the pay relating to QMNCL at a separate time to this leave. In the unlikely circumstances that an employee needs to provide neonatal care in a period in which they are receiving no (or significantly reduced) pay, and this is causing financial hardship, an employee may make a request for an advance of salary in accordance with the University's normal process. Employees should discuss any concerns in this regard with their line manager in the first instance.

11.6 Notice requirements for QMNCL

In line with other parental leave, employees are expected to provide reasonable notice of their intention to take QMNCL and the start date or dates of neonatal care. They will need to inform of the date neonatal care ended (where applicable, e.g. when QMNCL is to be taken at the end of maternity leave) and when they want to start QMNCL. Employees should inform of the number of weeks of QMNCL the notice is being given for, that the leave relates to time off that was taken to provide care for the baby and their eligibility.

Where QMNCL is to be taken some time after the neonatal care was required, e.g. at the end of maternity leave, this notice should normally be (at least) four weeks before QMNCL commences. Where QMNCL is to be taken during the period of neonatal care, e.g. at the end of paternity leave, the employee should notify as soon as it is reasonably practicable to do so.

11.7 Relationship between QMNCL and pay and statutory neonatal care leave and pay

QMNCL and pay are deemed to include any statutory rights to neonatal care leave and pay. Should any right to statutory neonatal care pay be exercised outside of the provisions for QMNCL, the University reserves the right to deduct a corresponding sum from the full pay entitlement during QMNCL.

12. Time Off for Medical Appointments

12.1 Employees are encouraged to make medical, dental, or other health-related appointments outside of working hours where possible. Where this is not feasible, paid time off may be permitted for essential appointments, subject to line manager approval.

Employees should give reasonable notice of any medical appointments and, where requested, provide evidence of the appointment. Time off will normally be limited to the duration of the appointment plus reasonable travel time.

Where appointments are frequent or ongoing, managers may discuss flexible working arrangements or alternative options with the employee.

The organization is committed to supporting employee health and wellbeing and will make reasonable adjustments where required.

If absence is less than 4 hours, it can be paid. If it is for more than 4 hours, it may require TOIL or annual leave.

12.2 Elective surgery

Elective surgery is defined as a non-emergency, planned medical procedure. Employees requiring time off for elective surgery should discuss this with their line manager as early as possible and provide reasonable notice of the expected dates and likely duration of absence. Wherever appropriate, annual leave, flexi-leave, or unpaid leave may be used.

Paid sickness absence will normally apply only from the date of the procedure and during the required recovery period, subject to the organisation's sickness absence policy and receipt of appropriate medical certification.

12.3 Additional support and temporary / reasonable adjustments

Managers will consider requests sensitively and may discuss temporary adjustments, phased return, or flexible working where appropriate to support recovery. Cases will be treated on an individual basis and can be influenced by elements such as the amount of time off for appointments already taken and whether the employee has a disability or long-term physical or mental health condition. Managers should seek advice from their HR Adviser in these circumstances.

In some circumstances (e.g. if many and/or frequent appointments are requested), the line manager may discuss with the employee whether they require any additional support from the University (e.g. through [reasonable adjustments](#), flexible working, Employee Assistance Programme). Employees may also be asked, by exception, to show evidence of their appointments (e.g. hospital letter, appointment card) to allow managers to make an informed decision about leave requests. However, employees will not be required to disclose any private details of the specific procedure or treatments they are undergoing if they do not wish to do so.

Antenatal appointments are not covered by this policy on time off for medical appointments. For information on antenatal appointments please refer to the University's [Maternity Leave Policy and Procedure](#).

Fertility treatment appointments and procedures are also included in paid leave.

12.4 Time off for transitioning

The University is developing guidance for employees who are transitioning at work which sets out the support available. Paid leave will be given to employees to attend transition-related appointments and treatment as outlined in paragraphs 7.1 to 7.6 above. Time taken for surgery and to recover from surgery will be recorded as sickness absence but will not be counted in relation to absence monitoring.

13. Severe Weather and Disruption to Travel

13.1 During periods of severe weather or travel disruption, employees are expected to:

- Prioritise personal safety: Employees should not attempt to travel where conditions are unsafe or where official guidance advises against non-essential travel.
- Notify their manager promptly: Employees who expect to be delayed, unable to attend their normal workplace, or unable to work as planned must inform their manager at the earliest opportunity and keep them informed.
- Consider alternative working arrangements: Many roles can now be undertaken in a hybrid fashion using remote communications e.g. Teams. This could include working

from home, remote working, or adjusted working hours with their manager. Time off in lieu using hours already worked or taking annual leave are other options.

- Follow agreed arrangements-Any temporary changes to working arrangements must be agreed with the line manager and reviewed as conditions change.

13.2 Managers are responsible should assess requests for alternative working arrangements fairly and pragmatically and maintain regular communication with their teams during periods of disruption. They must ensure that decisions are aligned with organisational policy and operational needs, and record agreed arrangements where required.

13.3 Pay and Leave

Where severe weather prevents an employee from attending work or working remotely, the appropriate arrangements will be determined in line with organisational policy and on a case-by-case basis. Employees should discuss available options (for example, annual leave, time off in lieu, or other locally agreed arrangements) with their manager.

13. Emergencies at Home

The University recognises that there may be other occasions when an employee may need emergency leave to deal with unexpected situations at home and to make necessary longer-term arrangements. There is no statutory provision for time off in these circumstances however the University recognises the importance of supporting employees with unforeseen circumstances at home and therefore employees are able take one day's paid emergency at home leave at short notice to deal with emergency circumstances with approval from their line manager. Time off is intended for urgent situations that could not be foreseen. Examples of situations which may be considered as an emergency are:

- Burglary
- Vehicle theft
- Vehicle accident
- Emergency repairs to home e.g. due to flooding or fire
- Other similar circumstances

If longer than one day's leave is required, short notice annual leave or, if the annual leave entitlement is exhausted, unpaid leave may be granted to attend to such situations, or the line manager may agree that time off may be made up as time off in lieu (TOIL) for additional time off of less than half a day.

14. Leave for Public Duties

Employees may be granted reasonable time off to perform public duties subject to the needs of the service. The length of leave available will depend on:

- How much time off is required to perform the duties
- How much time off the employee has already been granted for public duties
- The impact of the absence on Queen Mary's ability to meet service needs and maintain service quality.

14.1. Jury Service

In the event of the employee being called for jury service, they should contact their line manager at the earliest opportunity to discuss the matter. Jury service normally lasts for 10 working days but may be longer. The employee should provide their line manager with a copy of the Court summons and any other relevant documentation.

Employees will be paid their normal salary during jury service and therefore there will be no requirement for them to claim loss of earnings from the Court.

During the period in which an employee is attending Court as a juror, they will be expected to attend work on any full day when they are not required in Court.

14.2. Military Reservists and Cadet Force Members

Although there is no statutory right to paid time off, Queen Mary employees who are members of the reserve or cadet forces are entitled to one week's additional paid leave per year in order to attend annual camp. Staff have the choice of their second week at camp being counted as either special leave without pay or being taken out of their annual leave entitlement. This provision is available to employees who advise the University of their intent to volunteer for service, or who declare the fact of their membership of a reserve force at the time of appointment to their Queen Mary role.

Employees must provide documents to their line manager evidencing their membership, confirmation of dates of the annual camp, and give adequate notice as outlined under the [annual leave process](#).

Compulsory mobilisation cannot be refused but an application may be made by the employee for an exemption, deferral or revocation if their absence is likely to have a serious impact on the service. The application must be made within 7 days of the employee's receipt of the mobilisation notice. Reservists will normally be given 28 days' notice of mobilisation and the maximum period for mobilisation is 12 months. An employee who volunteers for mobilisation must seek prior agreement from their line manager. The University is not obliged to give consent for voluntary mobilisation.

Mobilisation is unpaid and annual leave will not accrue during this period. Where applicable, the MOD will pay employer's contributions to the employee's University pension, subject to the employee continuing to pay their own pension contributions. The University may apply to the MOD for an employer's award in respect of replacement costs that exceed the employee's earnings, for any non-recurring costs such as agency fees and advertising costs, and for any training needed as a result of their absence when they return to work to carry out their duties (but excluding any training that would have been carried out anyway).

After mobilisation, employees have the right to be reinstated to their former job within 6 months of mobilisation on terms and conditions that are no less favourable. Where this is not possible, they will be offered an alternative position with the same terms and conditions. To preserve the right to reinstatement the employee must write to their line manager no later than the third Monday after demobilisation confirming their intention to return within 13 weeks. In exceptional circumstances this may be extended up to a maximum of a further 13 weeks. It is an offence to dismiss an employee because they have been, or are likely to be, called out for military service.

Mobilisation will not create a break in employment if the employee is reinstated within

6 months of demobilisation, and service at Queen Mary will be considered as continuous.

For further details please refer to <https://www.gov.uk/employee-reservist>.

14.3. Other Public Duties

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

Employees who are members of the following bodies are eligible for leave under the Act:

- 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
- Members of an independent monitoring board for a prison or a prison visiting committee
- 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 in England is:
 - The National Health Service Commissioning Board
 - A clinical commissioning group established under section 14D of the National Health Service Act 2006
 - An NHS Trust
 - The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence
 - The Health and Social Care Information Centre
- ** A relevant education body in England 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

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

14.4 Relevant' public duties

In line with the provisions of the Employment Rights Act 1996, reasonable time off will be provided to employees 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 making 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

14.5 Leave arrangements:

- Employees who perform the duties outlined above are entitled to the following paid leave, in addition to annual leave, to undertake these duties.
- Magistrates - up to 13 days' paid leave, pro-rata for part time employees, 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 employees, 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 employee's annual leave entitlement or will be unpaid.
- Reasonable leave should be assessed by the line manager of the employee 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 employee already been allowed for such activities
- The operational requirements of the department and the effect of the employee's absence upon it.

14.6 Applying for leave:

Employees should give their line manager and HR Adviser 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 employee should complete the Special Leave Request form (Appendix 1) and submit this to their line manager as soon as possible.

15. Unpaid Leave

Unpaid leave for other reasons may be granted to an employee only in exceptional circumstances and, normally, only when the employee's annual leave entitlement has been exhausted.

Periods of unpaid leave of less than one month will have no impact on annual leave accrual. Employees taking unpaid leave of one month or more will continue to accrue statutory annual leave (28 days including bank holidays) but not contractual annual leave (e.g. 30 days, plus University closure days). Contractual annual leave will be pro-rated to exclude any weeks where the employee was on unpaid leave.

Before taking unpaid leave, employees should ensure they understand any impact on their pension. Employees should refer to [USS](#), [SAUL](#) or the [NHS pension](#) information on absence from work/life changes.

16. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The University takes equality of opportunity seriously and has an [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Governance framework](#), supported by a range of Equality Policies that apply to all employees and help to promote and ensure equality of opportunity. Where employees have a disability and require reasonable adjustments to support their work, we have a duty to consider them. Information is available in the [Reasonable Adjustments for Staff Policy](#)

17. Review

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years. Minor updates to this policy that do not affect the rules, principles or intent of this policy may be approved by The Director of HR on behalf of Policy Scrutiny Group].

Appendix

- [Application form for Special Leave](#)

Policy information and document control

Policy title	<i>Special Leave Policy and Procedure</i>
Version number	<i>2.0.</i>
Related policies and procedures	<i>Adoption Leave Flexible Working Managing Fixed Term Contracts Maternity Leave Reasonable Adjustments Paternity Leave Shared Parental Leave</i>
Superseded policies	<i>Special Leave Policy 2022</i>
Approval level	<i>Legislative changes</i>
Approval date	<i>April 2026.</i>
Effective date	<i>April 2026</i>
Next review due	<i>April 2029 or before if legislation changes</i>
Policy owner	<i>Louise Lester</i>
Policy contact	<i>Lesley Haddow.</i>

Version control

Version	Date	Reason for updates/Summary of key changes
2.0	<i>2 April 2026</i>	<i>Employment Rights Act 2025 legal updates: Day one Paternity Leave and day one Parental leave rights (unpaid) April 2026 Bereaved Partner's Paternity Leave – additional day one support if a primary carer dies within a year of childbirth Bereavement support websites updated Reference to Reasonable Adjustments Policy 2026 Adverse weather update to use Hybrid Working (from home) Public duties – UK recognised bodies updated</i>

