



University of
St Andrews

Annual leave

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2.5	Fix broken link to holiday request form, link to new HR policy webpages, and migrate onto new policy template.	Published	Lisa Stewart	12/11/2025

- British Sign Language (BSL) users can contact us via the online BSL Video Relay Interpreting Service: <https://contactscotland-bsl.org>
- This document and forms associated with this document are available in an alternative format upon request.
- We encourage employees to access the [Annual leave webpage](#) and the [Statutory leave webpage](#).

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1. Statement

- 1.1 The University is committed to supporting employees to achieve a healthy work-life balance. This policy aims to ensure employees take regular breaks from work in the form of paid annual leave.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 This policy sets out the procedure and expectations for employees requesting and taking annual leave. The policy also outlines information in relation to statutory and University closure days.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all employees of the University.
- 3.2 Flexible workers should refer to the [Engaging Flexible Workers](#) webpage for information on leave accrual and taking leave under the terms of their flexible worker assignment.

4. General principles

- 4.1 The annual leave year runs from 1 August to 31 July inclusive.
- 4.2 In line with the Working Time Regulations 1998, annual leave should be taken regularly throughout the year.
- 4.3 Annual leave requests will be considered fairly, promptly and consistently.
- 4.4 Annual leave must be requested with appropriate and reasonable notice. [Refer to 9.1: How to request annual leave.](#)
- 4.5 Any annual leave carried forward from the previous annual leave year not used by the 31 December will be lost. For further information refer to [9.2: Carry forward untaken annual leave.](#)
- 4.6 Every effort will be made to approve leave requests, subject to reasonable notice and operational need.
- 4.7 Line managers should ensure that they encourage employees to request and take their annual leave regularly, and to support employees in managing their workload during periods of absence.
- 4.8 All employees will be expected to take any outstanding annual leave before leaving the University. Refer to [9.7: Leaving the University.](#)

4.9 Annual leave is managed in [HR Self-Service](#). For employees who do not use HR Self-Service it is encouraged that they use the [holiday request form](#) to record their leave.

5. Annual leave

5.1 Key principles regarding annual leave:

- 5.1.1 Annual leave hours are not inclusive of statutory days. [Section 6](#) outlines details of statutory days.
- 5.1.2 Annual leave is calculated in hours for most employees.
- 5.1.3 Annual leave entitlement will increase after 4 years and 6 years of continuous service with the University (for Grades 1- 4). Increases will take effect from 1 August following the anniversary.
- 5.1.4 The table below represents the annual leave entitlement for a full annual leave year, for a full-time employee (36.25 hours per week/1 FTE working a standard work pattern of 5-days per week) in days and hours:

Grade and/or continuous service	Annual leave entitlement	
	Days	Hours
1 – 4 inclusive with: < 4 years' service	30	217.50
1 – 4 inclusive with: > 4 years' service but < 6 years' service	32	232.00
1 – 4 inclusive with > 6 years' service	34	246.50
Grades 5 – 9 inclusive	34	246.50

- 5.1.5 Employees who work compressed hours (full time hours but over less than 5-days), will receive the same annual leave entitlement as above; however, it will be expressed in hours only to reflect the fact that the employee will work fewer days than those on standard work patterns and that some working days may be longer than others.

6. Statutory days

- 6.1 The University recognises five statutory days (1 and 2 January, May Day and 25 and 26 December).
- 6.2 Employees can request annual leave from their annual entitlement, in the normal way to cover other statutory days or religion/belief festivals/observances.

- 6.3 Statutory entitlements are managed out with HR Self-Service.
- 6.4 Should a statutory day fall on a weekend, normally, the following working day will be confirmed as this day. There may be exceptions to this rule and therefore local arrangements will apply in these circumstances.
- 6.5 To meet operational/business requirements, there are some departments that are required to remain open during a statutory day. The line managers of impacted employees will notify them in advance if they are required to work. Employees who are required to work on a statutory day should refer to the [Overtime policy](#) for guidance on payment.
- 6.6 Statutory entitlement for part-time employees is outlined in section [7.4](#).
- 6.7 Employees should refer to the [statutory leave webpage](#) for information on statutory dates.

7. Pro-rated entitlements

7.1 New starters and leavers

- 7.1.1 Employees accrue annual and statutory leave from their first day of employment with the University.
- 7.1.2 Employees who join or leave the University part way through the annual leave year will have their entitlement adjusted to reflect their start/end date.
- 7.1.3 Employees on a fixed-term contract are entitled to annual and statutory leave, pro-rated to the length of their contract of employment.

7.2 Part-time employees

- 7.2.1 Part-time employees (anyone who works less than 36.25 hours per week) are entitled to the same annual and statutory leave pro-rated to their contracted hours of work (e.g. if an employee works 50% time (18.125 hours per week), they are entitled to 50% of the full-time holiday and statutory allowance).
- 7.2.2 The below guidance provides examples of pro-rated entitlements for part-time staff.
- 7.2.3 [Calculating annual leave](#)
- 7.2.4 [Calculating statutory leave for part-time employees](#)

7.2.5 The annual statutory entitlement calculator can be used to calculate pro-rated entitlement for staff who do not work a standard 36.25 work pattern. This can be downloaded from the [statutory leave webpage](#).

7.3 When working arrangements change during the year

- 7.3.1 If an employee changes their working arrangements (working hours/days), their annual and statutory leave will be adjusted to reflect the new working pattern.
- 7.3.2 If an employee moves roles during an annual leave year, it is not expected that the employee uses all their accrued holiday entitlement prior to moving into the new post however, reasonable efforts should be made to take some annual leave before moving into the new role, particularly when the employee has significant accrued but untaken leave.
- 7.3.3 Where possible, the line manager should honour any approved annual leave commitments made before the employee moves into their new post.
- 7.3.4 The line manager will be responsible for calculating the new statutory entitlement based on the new working arrangement. Line managers can use the guidance [Calculating statutory leave for part-time staff](#) to support with this calculation.
- 7.3.5 Human Resources will calculate the new annual leave entitlement and update HR Self-Service.

7.4 Statutory leave for part-time employees

- 7.4.1 As statutory hours are managed out with HR self-service, the line manager will be responsible for calculating the new entitlement each year acknowledging the below points.
 - a. If a statutory day falls on a scheduled workday, the employee should take this time-off (unless they are required to work due to operational reasons), and the hours will be deducted from their statutory entitlement.
 - b. If a statutory day falls on a non-working day, then these hours will not be deducted from the employee's statutory entitlement.
 - c. There will be some years where the pro-rated entitlement will be enough to cover all the statutory days that fall within the employee's working pattern, and other years it won't. This is because statutory days do not always fall on the same days each year so this will impact entitlements.

- d. If the entitlement does not cover all the working days when the statutory days fall, then the employee must use annual leave to cover the remaining statutory days.
- e. Where the entitlement is more than the number of statutory days that fall within the employee's working pattern, then the additional hours should be added to the employee's annual leave entitlement.
- f. As statutory days fluctuate each year, this entitlement will need to be worked out for part-time staff based on the actual days that the statutory days fall, against the working pattern, to determine if there will be a surplus or minus entitlement each year.
- g. The [Calculating statutory leave for part-time employees' guidance](#) provides worked examples and the annual statutory entitlement calculator can be used to work out statutory entitlement. Refer to the [statutory leave webpage](#).

8. University closure days

8.1 December closure

- 8.1.1 The University has an annual closure period between 25 December and 2 January (or as published) during which only some services operate. Those employees who are not required to work during this closure period must use annual leave to cover this period. The specific dates and number of closure days will be agreed centrally within the University each year and communicated as far in advance as possible. Employees should check with their line manager regarding local arrangements during the December closure period.
- 8.1.2 To meet operational/business requirements, there are some departments that may be required to remain open during the December closure days. The line managers of impacted employees will notify them in advance if they are required to work on a closure day. Employees will be able to take the equivalent time off at another time subject to the carry over rules outlined in [9.2](#).
- 8.1.3 No pro-rata entitlement will arise for employees who are not contracted/scheduled to work on a December closure day.

8.2 Ad-hoc closure days

- 8.2.1 The University may decide to close for other reasons if there is a legitimate business reason for doing so. Circumstances may vary and therefore the University will communicate leave arrangements

and conditions to employees at the time. In these circumstances, there will be no requirement for employees to take annual leave to cover these days.

9. Procedures

9.1 How to request annual leave

- 9.1.1 Employees must ensure that all annual leave is booked in advance with their line manager via the University's [Self-Service](#) portal. A [user guide](#) has been developed to explain how to request annual leave, edit or cancel any pre-existing bookings and view annual leave history.
- 9.1.2 Employees who do not currently use Self-Service should refer to the document: [Guidance on booking and requesting annual leave \(out with HR Self-Service\)](#) and use the recommended [holiday request form](#) to record their annual leave hours.
- 9.1.3 Normally, employees should give their line manager notice of at least twice the length of the period of leave to be taken (e.g. if the employee is requesting 1 week's annual leave, they should submit their request at least 2 weeks in advance).
- 9.1.4 Employees should not make any firm annual leave plans such as travel arrangements until they have received confirmation that their request for annual leave has been approved. In considering requests, line managers will consider the requirements of the employee and the needs of the School/Unit. There may be situations where the line manager may have to refuse a request for annual leave due to operational demands. Where requests for annual leave are declined, the line manager should ensure that employees are given appropriate opportunity to take leave at the earliest mutually convenient time and confirm to the employee the reason for declining the request.
- 9.1.5 Annual leave may be restricted during peak periods or where specific deadlines occur i.e. during Graduation, Orientation week or term-time e.g. where student teaching and examination/assessment is required. Local arrangements may stipulate that employees must take a specific amount of annual leave at certain periods of the year because of operational requirements within the School or Unit. These will be managed within each School/Unit based on their requirements and communicated to all staff at the start of the annual leave year.

9.1.6 Certain periods of the year, such as school holidays are popular for taking annual leave. It is important therefore that the line manager is given sufficient notice to consider these requests in a timely manner. The line manager should consider discussing annual leave as a team and developing a team calendar/rota, particularly in Schools/Units where there is a high demand for time-off during certain periods in the year, so that annual leave requests can be managed and distributed fairly across the department.

9.1.7 Any employee who takes unauthorised annual leave i.e. any employee who takes leave without prior authorisation, may be investigated and this may lead to action taken under the [Disciplinary policy](#).

9.2 Untaken annual leave carry over

9.2.1 In the interests of a healthy, work/life balance, employees are encouraged to use their annual leave entitlement in full, prior to, or by the end of the leave year (31 July). Where this is not possible, employees are permitted to carry leave over, **to be used by 31 December**, as follows:

- a. carry over up to a maximum of 7 days/50.75 hours of **unallocated** annual leave into the next holiday year (pro-rated for part-time employees). Any carried forward leave not taken by this date will be lost, other than in the exceptional circumstances mentioned in 9.2.2.
- b. carry over a block of pre-approved **allocated** leave to be taken between 1 August and 31 December. This leave must be approved, by the line manager, in advance of the end of the leave year (31 July). This would allow, for example, an employee in June, to request 2 weeks annual leave in September, without it impacting on a) above. Any pre-booked leave must be used as planned and cannot be added to the 7-day carry over i.e. if your vacation plans change, the leave must still be taken.

9.2.2 In exceptional circumstances, and with the agreement of the line manager and the [HR Business Partner](#), employees may be able to carry forward more than 7 days/50.75 hours of annual leave/carry over (pro-rated for part-time employees), beyond 31 December, if, for instance:

- a. the employee has been absent long term due to sickness and therefore could not take their accrued annual leave.

- b. the employee has been on long-term leave (e.g. maternity or shared parental) and therefore has not been able to take their accrued annual leave.
- c. there have been extenuating circumstances at work that have prevented the employee taking their accrued annual leave that year (e.g. the coronavirus outbreak).
- d. a significant/special event e.g. involving lengthy travel.

9.3 Sickness during annual leave

- 9.3.1 Annual leave will continue to accrue during periods of sickness absence provided the normal reporting procedures are followed in accordance with the [Sickness Absence Policy](#).
- 9.3.2 If an employee is sick during their annual leave, they should contact their line manager in the usual manner and will be regarded as being on sick leave from the date that they report their sickness absence; however, only annual leave covered by a fit note/medical certificate issued by a GP (or equivalent other) can be reclaimed, excluding statutory holidays recognised by the University. The line manager must notify HR [Pay and Pensions](#) to make this adjustment on HR Self-Service.
- 9.3.3 If an employee is already on a period of certified sick leave and has pre-approved annual leave booked, the employee can reclaim the untaken annual leave. **Note:** This is not an automatic process, and the employee will be required to cancel their annual leave on HR Self-Service on their return to work (or, if using an off-line system, make the appropriate adjustments to their holiday entitlement). If the employee wishes to take the annual leave, as planned, they should discuss this with their line manager. The line manager must discuss this with their [HRBP](#) in the first instance, and then notify [Pay and Pensions](#), to ensure that sick pay is not processed during this period of leave.
- 9.3.4 For employees who do not use HR Self-Service, the line manager will be responsible for updating their annual leave records accordingly (to cover any period of sick leave).

9.4 Annual leave during family-friendly leave

- 9.4.1 Employees will continue to accrue annual leave during any period of family-friendly leave (e.g. adoption, maternity, paternity, parental, shared parental leave). Further information regarding family-friendly leave can be read in the relevant policy.

9.5 Cancelling annual leave

- 9.5.1 Under exceptional circumstances, line managers may ask employees to cancel a period of approved leave. These decisions would not be made lightly and would only be made in consultation with the Head of School/Unit and the Director of HR. Appropriate and reasonable notice would be provided in line with the Working Time Regulations which confirms that an employer must provide the employee notice of at least the same length as the period of leave to be cancelled. The line manager must provide a clear business reason for the cancellation.
- 9.5.2 These situations are expected to be very rare and will usually be in response to unplanned absences or unexpected operational requirements within the School/Unit which, when combined with annual leave requests, would severely affect the service provided by the School/Unit. If leave is cancelled, the University will reimburse the employee for any reasonable costs incurred as a result, less costs that can be recovered by the employee. If the decision is made to cancel the annual leave (in conjunction with HR), this decision will be final and there is no right to appeal.

9.6 Change in annual and statutory leave entitlement

- 9.6.1 Any changes in annual leave entitlement will be updated on Self-Service from the date of the change to the role/hours. If there is a change to an employee's working pattern or hours, the statutory leave entitlement must be re-calculated by the line manager. An example of the calculation can be found in the [Calculating statutory leave for part-time employees](#) guidance.

9.7 Leaving the University

- 9.7.1 In the case of retirement, resignation, forthcoming expiry of fixed-term contract, or other relevant termination, it is expected that accrued annual leave is used prior to the employee's last day of employment. Where this is not feasible, and in agreement with the Head of School/Unit, any accrued but untaken annual leave will be paid into the employee's final salary. Any annual leave that the employee has taken but not accrued will be deducted from the employee's final salary payment. Annual leave payments are subject to tax and national insurance.
- 9.7.2 There will be some contracts that may require the employee to take all their accrued annual leave prior to their last day of employment (e.g. some research funding posts). Employees must ensure that they adhere to the contract of employment as this will supersede this policy.

- 9.7.3 Annual leave to be taken during the notice period/prior to their last day of employment **must** be requested in Self-Service by the [HR cut-off date](#) to ensure that HR Pay and Pensions can terminate the leaver payroll accurately.
- 9.7.4 Employees who do not use HR Self-Service must discuss their annual leave accrual with their line manager and the line manager must notify [HR Pay and Pensions](#) by email of any annual leave to be added or deducted from the employee's final salary payment by the HR cut-off date.

10. Support

- 10.1 The University offers a confidential Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), which is available to all employees to support with personal problems that can affect work life, home life, and general wellbeing. The service also gives free access to a digital Health and Wellbeing App which gives support and guidance on a wide range of resources on physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, work and productivity, movement sleep, financial wellbeing, nutrition, hydration and energy. Contact details and how to register can be found on the [EAP website](#).
- 10.2 Employees have access to the [Staff Wellbeing webpage](#) which offers support on various matters.
- 10.3 Any questions employees have about matters raised in this policy should be raised with their [HRBP](#). Any work-related issues should be addressed directly with their line manager.
- 10.4 For internal support, [contact HR](#) or where an employee is a member of a [Trade Union](#), they can reach out to their representative for support and guidance.

11. Version control

- 11.1 This policy is non-contractual and may be amended at any time.
- 11.2 This policy may be reviewed in the light of operational experience, sector developments and changing organisational needs. As and when a full review is undertaken, trade union and representatives will be consulted in line with the [Policy Working Group Terms of Reference](#).
- 11.3 Any feedback on the policy content should be directed in the first instance to the [HR Policy Officer](#) or via the [HR Feedback Form](#).

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.0	Migration of policies to the Governance Zone.	Published	Lisa Stewart, HR	10/06/2019
2.0	Major review of annual leave policy and supporting documentation.	Published	Lisa Stewart HR	01/08/2021
2.1	Removal of Appendix A – instead statutory dates will be downloadable from a webpage; change reference from Salaries to Pay and Pensions.	Published	Lisa Stewart HR	23/01/2023
2.2	Update to 9.3.3 to reflect correct HR practice.	Published	Lisa Stewart HR	09/02/2023
2.3	Amend broken link to Self-Service and Sickness Policy only.	Published	Lisa Stewart HR	04/10/2023
2.4	Amending the expiry date only to coincide with policy review consultation dates.	Published	Lisa Stewart HR	04/07/2024
2.5	Fix broken link to holiday request form, link to new HR policy webpages, and migrate onto new policy template.	Published	Lisa Stewart	12/11/2025