



SPECIAL LEAVE POLICY

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1. About this policy

1.1. St George's, University of London 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, University of London 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, University of London. This policy outlines the special leave available at St George's, University of London.

1.2. The [Flexible Working Procedure](#) provides information on applying for flexible working, such as changing work pattern, location or hours.

1.3. This policy applies to all St George's, University of London employees.

2. Types of special leave

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

- Compassionate Leave
- Domestic Emergencies
- Family Emergencies
- Parental Leave

- Time Off for Public Duties
- Jury Service
- Leave for Members of the Reserved Armed Forces
- Study Leave
- Sabbatical Leave (applicable only to Academic members of staff)
- Other Unpaid Leave

2.2. Special leave is in addition to that covered by maternity leave, adoption, surrogacy, partners' leave relating to maternity and shared parental leave.

3. Applying for leave

3.1. 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 this may not be possible. In such cases the employee must notify their line manager as soon as possible.

3.2. Special leave should be applied for via [MyWorkplace](#) (the HR system). All categories are available under the "Add other absence" option, available via a dropdown list.

4. Time off for Special Leave

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

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

5. Compassionate Leave

5.1. Paid leave of up to 5 working days (pro-rata for part time employees) per occurrence may be given to an employee 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.

5.2. 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.

5.3. Under law, parents are entitled to bereavement leave if they lose a child who is under the age of 18 or if a baby is still born from 24 weeks of pregnancy. Parents may take up to two weeks bereavement leave within the first year following the loss, either as a single block of two weeks or as two separate blocks of one week. Parents employed for six months or longer at the time of the bereavement are also entitled to claim statutory pay for their bereavement leave period. However, in line with 5.1 above, St George's, University of London will offer full pay for the entire two weeks bereavement leave. For the avoidance of doubt, this two weeks' paid leave incorporates the statutory leave period and would replace the paid leave outlined in 5.1 and not be in addition to it.

6. Domestic Emergencies

6.1. An employee 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 leave categories outlined in this document.

6.2. 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 take either annual leave, unpaid leave or agree with their line manager to work off site.

7. Family Emergencies

7.1. An employee may take a reasonable period of time off work to deal with an emergency or unforeseen matter 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.

7.2. A dependant is defined as a spouse, partner, child, parent, or someone else who depends on the employee for care. This could include, for example, an elderly neighbour, aunt, or grandparent.

7.3. 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, eg child sent home from school.
- To care for a sick child, partner or other dependent.

8. Parental Leave

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

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

8.2. 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, University of London by the time they wish to take the leave.

8.3. 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 (ie the normal working week for the employee) subject to a maximum period of four weeks in any year for each child. In the case of disabled children parental leave can be taken in single days or multiples of days.

8.4. If an employee's working pattern varies from week to week, an average working week must be calculated as a fraction of the period for which the employee is required to work in a year.

8.5. An employee must give St George's, University of London 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.

8.6. 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.

8.7. In exceptional circumstances St George's, University of London 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.

8.8. The employee will normally return to the same post in which they were employed under the original contract of employment and on the same terms and conditions applicable to the employee as if they had not been absent.

9. Time Off for Public Duties

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

- Magistrate (also known as a justice of the peace).
- Local councillor.
- School governor.
- Member of any statutory tribunal (eg an employment tribunal).
- Member of the managing or governing body of an educational establishment.
- Member of a health authority.
- Member of the General Teaching Councils for England and Wales.
- Member of the Environment Agency or the Scottish Environment Protection agency.
- Member of the prison independent monitoring boards (England or Wales) or a member of the prison visiting committees (Scotland).

9.2. 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.
- Any impact on colleagues, the department and the wider university.

Time off may not be granted where a request is felt to be unreasonable.

10. Jury Service

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

10.2. Employees are expected to claim loss of earnings from the court, up to the maximum permissible. An employee 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 (HR). Once the employer's section is completed, the form will be returned to the employee.

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

10.4. An employee will continue to be paid their usual salary for the duration of their jury service. However, 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.

10.5. On return to work the employee should provide HR with a copy of the remittance. This sum will then be deducted from the employee's next salary payment, to offset their previous full salary payment so that they do not receive payment from both the court and St George's, University of London.

11. Members of the Reserved Armed Forces (Reservists)

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

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

11.3. 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.
- Any impact on colleagues, the department and the wider university.

Time off may not be granted where a request is felt to be unreasonable.

11.4. Reservists will be sent a call-out notice if they are needed for full-time service. This is known as mobilisation. Reservists are required to inform St George's, University of London as soon as possible when they know they are being mobilised.

11.5. 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, University of London as soon as possible when they are able to return.

12. Study Leave

12.1. Study leave is granted to assist employees in undertaking formal courses and examinations related to their work at St George's, University of London. Employees seeking study leave to prepare for formal courses or revise for examinations are allowed up to 5 days paid study leave in any 12 month period (pro rata for part time staff).

13. Sabbatical Leave (applicable only to Academic members of staff)

13.1. Sabbatical leave is a privilege that may, normally, be granted to members of the academic staff for the purpose of advancing their academic activities and St George's, University of London. During the period of sabbatical leave the employee will not be committed to St George's, University of London 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, University of London.

13.2. 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.

13.3. Sabbatical leave cannot be taken whilst the individual is within their probation period however their service on probation is counted towards the qualifying period above. Qualifying periods will re-start following a period of sabbatical leave.

13.4. To apply, employees must complete a [Sabbatical Leave Request Form](#), 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.

13.5. Employees should discuss their leave with their manager and must submit their application form to their Institute Director at least 6 months in advance of the proposed leave start date.

13.6. The Institute Director must be satisfied that the request meets the following requirements:

- Purpose of the leave is in the interest of St George's, University of London.
- 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, University of London 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.

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

13.8. If an employee on sabbatical leave accepts a paid appointment, St George's, University of London 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, University of London.

14. Other Unpaid Leave

14.1. Employees may apply for periods of unpaid leave from St George's, University of London. 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 employee's 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, University of London.

14.2. The granting of unpaid leave is at the discretion of an employee's line manager, depending on the feasibility of covering operational duties. Employees should discuss their wish to take unpaid leave with their manager as soon as possible in advance of the leave and must also outline cover arrangements that are in place for the period of leave requested, including for any additional roles.

14.3. Longer periods of unpaid leave would be considered a career break. Career breaks are extended periods of unpaid leave, normally between 6 and 12 months. Employees taking a career break will have the right to return to employment with St George's, University of London. This may be to their previous post or to a similar post on the same grade.

14.4. Employees should contact the Payroll and Pension team 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.