

## 1. Scope.

1.2 This policy applies to all employees of the University who wish to apply for a period of unpaid leave of up to three months duration and who meet the eligibility criteria below:

- Completion of probation
- If the post is externally funded then written permission will need to be obtained from the funding body

## 2. Unpaid Leave.

2.1 An employee who wishes to take unpaid leave should complete and submit the Request for Unpaid Leave form to their Faculty PVC, Head of Department in the first instance. This request must then be forwarded onto the appropriate Human Resources Operational Team along with the Faculty PVC/Head of Department comments. An employee wishing to apply for unpaid leave must give notice twice as long as the leave request. An example is illustrated below:

Example 1	Notice Period
Employee wishes to take 1 week unpaid leave (5 working days)	2 weeks (10 working days)
Employee wishes to take 1 calendar month unpaid leave	3 calendar months

2.2 Leave will be granted subject to normal operational requirements.

This will include:

- Consideration of additional costs;
- Detrimental effect on the ability to meet customer needs;
- Ability to re-organise work amongst existing staff;
- Ability to recruit additional staff;
- Impact on quality within the Professional Services Department/Institute;
- Impact on performance;
- Levels of workload;
- Planned structural changes.

2.3 If the period of leave requested is greater than 3 months, the employee should apply for time off using the University's **Career Break Policy**.

2.4 In some circumstances unpaid leave may not be the most appropriate arrangement for the employee. In such instances alternative arrangements more appropriate to the individual case may be agreed between the employee and their Head of Department. Alternative arrangements could include leave in accordance with the university's policies for Maternity Leave, Adoption Leave, Paternity Leave, Shared Parental Leave, Parental Leave, Compassionate, Emergency Time Off, Career Break or Flexible Working. This policy does not apply to requests from academic staff for leave of absence and overseas leave. Such requests should be submitted in accordance with the Leave of Absence and Overseas Leave Procedure for Academic staff which can be found at <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hr/tandc/overseasleave/> The suitability of any of the above arrangements should be considered as a possible alternative where appropriate. If there

is any doubt as to the most appropriate policy framework then advice can be sought from the HR Department.

### **3. Conditions of service during a period of unpaid leave.**

3.1 The period of the unpaid leave will count as continuous service.

3.2 During a period of unpaid leave an employee will not accrue contractual annual leave but will accrue the statutory minimum leave entitlement.

3.3 Incremental salary progression will continue during a period of unpaid leave.

### **4. Pension Implications.**

4.1 Unpaid leave is not counted as pensionable service. If an employee chooses to make pension contributions during the period of unpaid leave the payment mechanism will depend on the pension scheme to which they belong.

4.2 Members of the Local Government Pension Scheme must pay pension contributions for the first 30 days of unpaid leave. Employees can pay contributions during further periods of unpaid leave, up to a maximum period of 36 months. The employee pays only their contribution, the employer continues to pay the employer contribution. An application to pay contributions on any period of more than 30 days leave must be made within 30 days of the end of the period of unpaid leave. The relevant paperwork will be sent to the employee by the Payroll Department.

4.3 During a period of unpaid leave taken by a member of the Aberystwyth University Pensions Plan (AUPP), all contributions will cease. The member can make arrangements with the provider to pay any contributions that employees would have paid had they not been absent.

4.4 Members of the USS Pension Scheme will need to follow the guidance set out on the HR website.

### **5. Employees who do not return to work following a period of unpaid leave.**

5.1 If the employee does not return to work at the end of the period of approved unpaid leave, and no communication has been received from the employee to explain the reason for this, then the employee may be treated as having resigned. The HR Department will, in all instances, write to the employee concerned to ascertain the position before confirming that employment has ended.

### **6. Returning to work following a period of approved unpaid leave.**

6.1 Employees who take unpaid leave will be entitled to return to the same position. Where this is not possible, alternative employment, on similar (no less favourable) terms and conditions, may be offered except in the situation that their post is made redundant whilst they are on leave. The Redeployment Policy and Procedure will be applied in such situations.

## **7. Paid work for other organisations whilst on unpaid leave.**

7.1 To avoid potential conflicts of interest, employees must not undertake paid or unpaid work for another organisation during their unpaid leave without the prior approval of the university. Details of such activities must be disclosed on the request form. If the purpose of the unpaid leave is to carry out work for another organisation, a secondment rather than unpaid leave may be more appropriate. Information on the University's secondment policy is available at <http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hr/policyand-procedure/secondment/>

7.2 During their unpaid leave, employees are expected to comply with any university requirements with regards to confidentiality, financial regulations and intellectual property.

## **8. Policy Review.**

8.1 Human Resources will co-ordinate a review of this policy in order to maintain compliance with legislation and good practice. The review will be undertaken in liaison with the recognised trade unions and any proposed amendments will be submitted to the appropriate relevant committee, University Executive and Council if required.

## **9. Equality Impact Assessment.**

9.1 The University is committed to embedding the Equality Scheme into its policies, procedures and practices. This policy has been equality impact assessed in accordance with this scheme.

## **10. Welsh Language – Employee Rights**

In accordance with the Welsh Language Standards that came into effect on 1 April 2018 employees have the right to use the Welsh language to

- (a) make a complaint
- (b) respond to a complaint or allegation

and employees also have the right to use the Welsh language in meetings where they are the subject of

- (c) complaints and allegations (or have made the complaint)
- (d) disciplinary proceedings
- (e) effective contribution scheme discussions
- (f) individual consultation meetings

A simultaneous translation service from Welsh to English will be provided at the meeting when the meeting cannot be conducted solely in Welsh.

The university has, in conjunction with its recognised trade unions, incorporated the above requirements into all relevant HR policy and procedural documents