Special Leave Policy

1. Introduction

The University recognises that on occasion members of staff may encounter domestic crises which demand their attention and that in such circumstances it is reasonable to make provision for special leave (either paid or unpaid) in addition to normal holiday entitlement. The University will act sympathetically in these circumstances and recognises the benefits to both the University and employees of applying this policy in a fair and reasonable manner.

2. Circumstances in which Special Leave may apply

Paid Special Leave will be granted at the discretion of Heads of organisational unit but generally could apply in the following circumstances: the serious illness of a domestic partner (including same sex partners), child or other person whether related or not who plays a significant part in the life of the member of staff; the unforeseen breakdown of care arrangements for a person for whom the member of staff has primary responsibility; etc. Special Leave with pay will only be granted for child care in an emergency or where care arrangements break down. Employees will be expected to use some of their own annual leave provision for childcare in these circumstances, as with any domestic emergencies.

3. Compassionate leave

Compassionate leave is a form of paid special leave that falls within this policy. In the event of the death of a close relative, which would include spouse or significant partner (including same sex partners), child, parent, brother and sister, grandparent or grandchild. The University will allow between one to five days paid special leave depending on their responsibilities, and the amount of paid special leave will be at the discretion of Heads of Organisational Units. If further leave is required outside these parameters, then further unpaid leave may be considered in line with paragraph five below.

4. Special Leave Provision

Members of staff may ask to be considered for up to five days paid Special Leave and between one and five days in total will form the basic provision. The University recognises that each case must be judged on its merits and organisational units will have discretion in determining whether leave will be granted. Whilst organisational units will wish to take account of operational needs and individual performance and/ or attendance; Special Leave with pay will not be withheld unreasonably. The provision of Special Leave on an unpaid basis in addition to five days may be considered in conjunction with Human Resources. Staff who make use of Special Leave arrangements will not be disadvantaged in relation to opportunities for promotion, training or other benefits or facilities.

Members of staff will not be entitled to payment in lieu of Special Leave.
5. Additional unpaid special leave

In certain circumstances the University may grant additional unpaid Special Leave where this is the most appropriate course of action. Staff wishing to request additional unpaid leave should contact their line manager and HR representative to discuss this option.

6. Disputes

Any member of staff who disagrees with a decision made in respect of his/her request for Special Leave may seek redress through existing grievance procedures; however, it should be the objective of all parties to settle the matter via informal channels wherever possible.

7. Review

The arrangements for Special Leave will be kept under review to ensure that it effectively meets the needs of the University and those of staff. The University will make changes to this policy from time to time in consultation with campus Trade Unions.

* Where reference is made to Head of School/organisational unit this should be deemed to include “or nominated representative”.

** Throughout this policy the words ‘organisational unit’ should be understood as referring to the relevant School/Faculty/Directorate or other equivalent organisational unit in the University.