



# **University of Limerick**

## **Compassionate Leave Procedure**

**Approved by: Human Resources Division**

# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to provide for employee support and paid or unpaid compassionate leave in the event of the death of a member of an employee's immediate family.

The University acknowledges that the grief process may take significant time to work through and will be personal to each individual. Bereavement leave is intended to support employees in the immediate period following the death of a relative.

In exceptional circumstances paid compassionate leave may be provided in the event of a death outside the immediate family.

## **1.2 Scope**

### **1.2.1 To whom does the procedure apply?**

This procedure applies to all employees of the University of Limerick.

### **1.2.2 In what situations does the procedure apply?**

Employees are entitled to twenty days (pro rata) paid leave on the death of:

- Spouse (including a cohabiting partner)
- Child
- A person to whom the employee is in loco parentis
- Any person in a relationship of domestic dependency

Employees are entitled to five days (pro rata) paid leave on the death of an immediate relative:

- A Parent or Step Parent
- Brother/Sister
- Father in law/Mother in Law
- Son in Law/Daughter in Law
- Brother in law/Sister in law
- Grandparent
- Grandchild
- A dependent residing with the employee
- A similar immediate relative of a cohabiting partner

Employees are entitled to 10 days paid leave in the event of a stillbirth or prenatal death of a child after twenty-four weeks pregnancy and where the employee is one of the following:

- Father of the child
- Spouse or cohabitant as the case may be of the mother of the child or
- Parent of the child under Section 5 of the Children & Family Relationships Act 2015 where the child is a donor conceived child within the meaning of Part 2 of that Act.
- In the event of a stillbirth or prenatal death of a child after twenty-four weeks pregnancy, the mother of the child is entitled to access maternity leave in accordance with the provision of the maternity leave policy.

Employees are entitled to one day paid leave (pro rata) on the death of:

- Niece/Nephew
- Aunt/Uncle.

**1.2.3** In a case where an employee has to travel abroad to make funeral arrangements in respect of an immediate relative, an application for special leave with pay in excess of compassionate leave limits may be submitted to the Head of School/Head of Unit/Line Manager for consideration. The final approval of such applications will rest with the Human Resource division.

**1.2.4** There is no requirement for an employee to avail of the full amount of compassionate leave outlined above. In certain situations, an employee may wish to return to work sooner.

**1.2.5** Compassionate leave is granted only at the time of the bereavement. Compassionate leave cannot be substituted for other forms of leave, other than annual leave. If the bereavement occurs when an employee is on annual leave, the annual leave may be replaced by compassionate leave subject to the submission of an application and the annual leave restored.

**1.2.6** With regard to part-time employees, the granting of Compassionate Leave and the amount of leave granted will depend on whether, or not the employee was scheduled to work for the period in question. Where a bereavement occurs during days when the employee is not normally scheduled to work, Compassionate Leave may not be granted retrospectively.

**1.2.7 Who is responsible for ensuring that the procedure is implemented and monitored?**

It is the responsibility of the Director, Human Resources Division to ensure implementation of this procedure as approved. It is a matter for the relevant line manager to approve the leave in the first instance prior to a submission of an application to Compensation & Benefits in this regard.

An employee should request compassionate leave from their line manager on the first day of absence. Line managers have the right to exercise discretion in exceptional circumstances as outlined above.

Leave days must be taken consecutively around the time of the bereavement.

## **2 Context**

### **2.1 Legal and Regulatory Context**

This procedure is in conformance with employee entitlements to leave as provided for in related Irish legislation and their contracts of employment.

## **3 Procedure Statements**

### **3.1 Principles**

This procedure is to ensure the fair and consistent treatment of all employees who wish to avail of compassionate leave.

## **4 Related Procedures for Unpaid Leave**

### **4.1 Unpaid Leave**

Unpaid compassionate leave may also be granted for the purpose of coping with issues arising from the death of a relative. Any such unpaid compassionate leave must be approved by your line manager via a Leave Application Form and forwarded to HR immediately for processing.

## **5 Related Procedures for Employee Support**

### **5.1 Employee Support**

The University acknowledges that the workplace, along with family, friends and relatives can play an important role in helping employees come to terms with their loss. The University is committed to support and train its employees to deal with bereavement in a sensitive and caring manner.

- It is the responsibility of Line Managers to establish open communication with the bereaved employee, acknowledge their loss, and check what information to share, and inform colleagues appropriately.
- The Line Manager will also demonstrate flexibility and understanding in respect of work issues and the return to work by the bereaved employee.
- It is the responsibility of Human Resources to support line managers and to provide training in understanding bereavement.

- The resources of the Employee Support Service are available for all employees. Employees who require professional support in the event of a bereavement either directly or indirectly may avail of the Employee Support Service. This is a free and confidential service and can be accessed directly by calling the Freephone Helpline: 1800 201 346.
- Bereavement leave is intended to support employees on the death of a family member or relative. The grieving process is personal to each individual and may be protracted.
- Certain circumstances such as traumatic/sudden death may give rise to intense grief responses, which may require specialist support. In such situations, the University will provide critical incident support through the Employee Support Service.
- The Employee Support Service also provides useful information for dealing with bereavement which is available on: <https://www.ul.ie/hr/current-staff/employee-relations/employee-support-service>, or on 1800 201 346.

## **6 Related Documents**

Compassionate leave application form  
Employee Support Services

## 7 Document Control

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