TIME OFF FOR PUBLIC DUTIES POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose

1.1.1. The University supports and encourages staff to contribute their skills and knowledge to make a difference in our local community and wider society. This policy outlines the provision for time off to support staff engaged in public duties.

1.2. Scope

1.2.1. The policy covers time off for:

- **a)** Voluntary public service roles (Sections 2.1 – 2.4)
- **b)** Jury service (Section 2.5)
- **c)** Attendance at court as a witness (Section 2.6)
- **d)** Members of the UK Reserve Armed Forces (Section 2.7)

1.2.2. The policy applies to all University employees regardless of length of service.

1.2.3. Please note that in exceptional circumstances leave for other types of public duties may be granted following agreement from the Head of School/Department.

1.2.4. Employees considering taking on a public service role should discuss this with their line manager initially and should provide an estimate of time off required per year. The employee should complete a Conflicts of Interest Disclosure Form (CoI1) available in Employee Self Service to ensure due consideration is given to potential conflicts of interest.

1.2.5. Employees may be required to produce relevant documentation verifying their public duty appointment.

1.2.6. The University reserves the right to refuse time off for public duties if it is unreasonable and would adversely affect service provision. The legislation does not specify a set amount of time off for public duties and therefore each decision must be made depending on the individual circumstance. In deciding whether time off can be granted consideration may be given to the following:

- **a)** what duties are to be carried out
- **b)** the time that is needed to carry out the duties
- **c)** the impact on the service provision of the University
- **d)** how much time the employee has already taken for public duties.

1.2.7. Time off to attend meetings in relation to the public sector role or carry out public service duties will generally be unpaid. However, staff may choose to take the time required as annual leave or with joint agreement from the individual and line manager, it may be possible under local arrangements to make up lost hours at another time.

1.2.8. Time off will normally be taken in full or half day blocks.

1.2.9. Expenses relating to travel and/or subsistence incurred while carrying out public duties will not be reimbursed by the University.

1.2.10. Managers must record any periods of time off for public duties on Keele People (paid or unpaid as set out below). Where it is agreed that the member of staff can make the time back the manager should record the time taken locally.

2. POLICY

2.1. TIME OFF FOR PUBLIC DUTIES

2.1.1. Employees have a statutory right to reasonable time off to carry out certain public duties. An employee is entitled to a reasonable amount of time off if they are a:

- **a)** a magistrate (also known as a justice of the peace) (please see section 2.2 below)
- **b)** a local councillor
- **c)** a school governor (please see section 2.3 below)
- **d)** a member of any statutory tribunal (for example an employment tribunal)
- **e)** a member of the managing or governing body of an educational establishment
- **f)** a member of a health authority
- **g)** a member of a school council or board in Scotland
- **h)** a member of the Environment Agency or the Scottish Environment Protection agency
- **i)** a member of the prison independent monitoring boards (England or Wales) or a member of the prison visiting committees (Scotland)
- **j)** a member of Scottish Water or a Water Customer Consultation Panel
- **k)** a trade union member acting in the capacity of a representative (for trade union duties) (please see section 2.4 below)

2.2. TIME OFF FOR MAGISTRATE DUTIES

2.2.1. Employees who are magistrates have a statutory right to reasonable time off work to carry out their duties.

2.2.2. Magistrates will have to be in court at least 13 days, or 26 half-days per year and will therefore be entitled to this amount of time off. Additional time off in excess of 13 days per year must be agreed in advance with the individual's line manager.

2.2.3. Employees must notify their line manager of their magistrate rota as soon as possible for planning purposes.

2.2.4. Time off for magistrate duties will be unpaid, however, employees may claim an allowance from the court for loss of earnings.

2.3. TIME OFF TO BE A SCHOOL GOVERNOR

2.3.1. Employees who are school governors have a statutory right to reasonable time off work to carry out their duties.

2.3.2. The University will provide a reasonable amount of paid time off work during normal working hours, where necessary, for the purpose of undertaking core duties essential to the role of a School Governor. Time off would not normally exceed four days per year as a maximum (pro rata for part-time members of staff). However, for more experienced School Governors it is envisaged that in most cases this would be less.

2.4. TIME OFF FOR TRADE UNION DUTIES

2.4.1. Employees who are union representatives of an independent trade union recognised by the University are permitted reasonable paid time off during working hours to carry out certain trade union duties.

2.5. TIME OFF FOR JURY SERVICE

2.5.1. Employees who are summoned to attend jury service must inform their line manager as soon as possible for planning purposes.

2.5.2. Jury service usually lasts up to 10 working days, but can be longer.

2.5.3. Employees will continue to be paid at their normal rate of pay while on jury service.

2.5.4. If on any day, or any part of the day, attendance is not required at Court, staff are expected to attend work as normal.

2.5.5. Exceptionally staff may have a personal reason to defer their jury service. Postponements are not granted lightly by the Courts (an example might be scheduled surgery/treatment or an exam). Staff must be able to demonstrate that they are unable to attend and be able to provide full evidence to allow the Court to make a decision.

2.5.6. Where absence from work due to jury service will have a substantial impact on service provision the University will ask the employee to apply for excusal from or deferral to their jury service and the University will provide a letter detailing the reasons for the application.

2.5.7. Where an employee's application to be excused from jury service/ defer jury service is granted, the member of staff will be issued with a new summons for jury service within the next 12 months and there will be no option for further deferral.

2.6. TIME OFF TO ATTEND COURT AS A WITNESS

2.6.1. Employees will be given reasonable time off to attend court as a witness to criminal proceedings.

2.6.2. The employee must inform their line manager of the time off required as soon as possible for planning purposes.

2.6.3. The time off to attend court will be unpaid. Employees may be entitled to claim an allowance for lost wages, meals, travel expenses and other financial loss (e.g. essential childcare) from the court system. However, staff may choose to take the time required as annual leave or with joint agreement from the individual and line manager, it may be possible under local arrangements to make up lost hours at another time.

2.6.4. Employees attending court as a witness in the course of their duties for the University will receive normal pay.

2.7. TIME OFF FOR MEMBERS OF THE UK RESERVE ARMED FORCES

2.7.1. The reserve forces include the Army Reserve, Royal Naval Reserve, Royal Marines Reserve and Royal Auxiliary Air Force.

2.7.2. The University recognises the importance of supporting the Reserve Armed Forces and will ensure that Reservists are not disadvantaged as a result of notifying the University of their Reserve status.

Time off for Training

2.7.3. The University understands that employees who are Reservists are expected to attend regular training and may be called up at any time to be deployed on full-time operations (mobilisation). Training for Reservists is usually made up of one evening per week, several weekends throughout the year and a 2 week annual training course.

2.7.4. In order to support employees who are Reservists to undertake the training the University will provide up to 10 days' (pro-rata if part-time) paid leave per year in addition to their normal annual leave entitlement. Employees must inform their line manager of dates for training as soon as possible for planning purposes and may be required to produce relevant documentation verifying their training dates. In exceptional circumstances, where the standard allowance does not cover a reservist's annual training requirements, and where operational/service requirements allow, consideration may be given to other means to enable the individual to attend, e.g. unpaid leave, re-arrangement of shifts, ability to make time up at a later point, annual leave, etc.

2.7.5. Employees who are considering joining the Reserve Forces should initially discuss this with their line manager

2.7.6. Reservists are required to provide their employer's details to their Commanding Officer who will write to the University within 5 weeks of the reservist signing up. Reservists must also notify their Commanding Officer if they leave Keele so the new employer can be informed. If a line manager receives notification from the Ministry of Defence (MoD) advising them that an employee is a reservist they should advise People and Organisational Development at people.support@keele.ac.uk who will retain a central record.

Mobilisation

2.7.7. If a reservist is needed for full-time service (mobilisation) they will be sent a call-out notice, normally giving 28 days' notice. Reservists should inform their line manager of their mobilisation as soon as possible for planning purposes and should provide the mobilisation paperwork to them. Mobilisation is typically no longer than 12 months.

2.7.8. Reservists can apply to delay or cancel mobilisation for personal reasons (e.g. if they are caring for someone) or if mobilisation would seriously harm their employer's business.

2.7.9. During any period of mobilisation Reservists will be paid by and be given annual leave by the MoD. They will therefore be treated as being on unpaid leave from the University during this period and will not accrue annual leave or continuous service, although the period before and after mobilisation will be joined together and treated as continuous.

2.7.10. During mobilisation employer pension contributions will be paid by the MoD and the employee's contributions will be deducted from the salary paid to the Reservist by the MoD.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1. For the avoidance of doubt, where a role title, department, faculty or professional service area is named and it is no longer in existence, it should be read as the equivalent role or department, faculty or professional service area. Should individuals remain uncertain, clarification can be sought from a senior member of staff within the management line.

3.2. This policy applies to all employees of the University who undertake or wish to undertake any of the voluntary public service roles specified within the policy.

3.3. Strategic oversight of the policy will be maintained by the Chief People Officer. The University Executive Committee will be responsible for overseeing the review and monitoring of the policy.

3.4. Queries regarding the policy should be directed to people.support@keele.ac.uk.

4. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Conflicts of Interest Policy
- Conflicts of Interest Procedure and Guidelines

5. REVIEW, APPROVAL & PUBLICATION

5.1. As a general principle, this policy will be reviewed by People and Organisational Development, in consultation with recognised Trade Unions after 3 years or where operational and/or legislative requirements change. Any revisions will be approved in accordance with UEC and Council procedures, where applicable.

5.2. This policy is not contractual and is not intended to be incorporated into individual terms and conditions of employment. It may be subject to review, amendment or withdrawal.

5.3. This policy will be published on the University policy zone web page and will also be accessible via People and Organisational Development web pages.

6. DOCUMENT CONTROL INFORMATION

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