

Addendum - Annual Leave During COVID-19 – UPDATED June 2021



Owner of Addendum UCD HR **Approval date and body** UMT 25 May 2021

While it is positive that we are moving into the next phase in response to Covid-19, we recognise that as a University we are still faced with challenges. These challenges are affecting everyone in different ways. Some are finding working from home while caring for children or dependents to be a challenge, some are finding working from home in general to be a challenge and others are missing the social nature of working on our campus. With all of these issues in mind, the addendum to the current annual leave policy has been updated (June 2021) to continue to demonstrate the support of the UMT in relation to taking annual leave and to provide clarity and support for Heads of School/Heads of Unit/Line Managers and employees.

Taking time away from our new way of working, whether that is on or off campus is important for the overall wellbeing and health and safety of all our employees. As a University, we want to ensure that everyone is supported to take a break away from their work and that there is not a need to feel like you “always on”.

The University recognises that not everyone will wish to take annual leave while there are restrictions still in place, however we continue to operate in extraordinary times and it is important that annual leave is taken to ensure adequate rest and recreation away from work.

Like last summer, the UMT is encouraging all employees to take **at least two weeks annual leave (at least 10 working days/pro rata for part time) during the summer months**. This can be taken in a block or over shorter periods of time.

Heads of School/Heads of Unit/Line Managers will play a pivotal role in facilitating and encouraging their teams to take annual leave during this time. It is important that Heads of School/Heads of Unit/Line Managers are flexible in the approach while also taking into account operational needs. As a first step, employees should be consulted with and asked;

- When are they planning to take annual leave, and
- What support do they need during annual leave, i.e. getting adequate cover or resources.

In some circumstances, Heads of School/Heads of Unit/Line Managers may wish to postpone annual leave due to the critical nature of the work. If this is the case, individual consultations should take place with employees working in pressure zones and agreement should be sought in relation to rescheduling annual leave. Any agreed postponement to annual leave should be short term and adequate resources should be put in place so that these employees can avail of their annual leave for rest and recreation purposes.

UCD has a strong commitment to supporting employees and their overall mental health and therefore the preferred approach would be that the full annual leave is taken within the leave year, however it is recognised that this may not be possible due to the current crisis. With this in mind, the UMT has agreed that a maximum of 10 days annual leave can be carried over into the next leave year, with the approval of the Head of School/Unit, provided there is mutual agreement that such leave will be taken by the end of August 2022. This 10 day carry over period has been approved for the purposes of responding to the Covid-19 crisis and will only be authorised for this relevant leave year. Following this, the normal exceptional circumstances will apply to carry over of leave.

All annual leave requests should be submitted in accordance with the policy.

This addendum is subject to change depending on directives circulated by the Department of Education and Skills.