Ollscoil na Gaillimhe
University of Galway

Polasaí agus Nósanna Imeachta/Policies and Procedures

Code	QA075
Title	Medical Care Leave (unpaid) Policy
Policy Owner	Director of Human Resources
Date	November 2026
Approved By	University Management Team

Quick Reference Guide

Leave Scheme	Min. Duration	Max. Duration	Eligible	Service Requirement	Paid/ Unpaid	Application Deadline
Medical Care Leave (Unpaid)	1 day	5 days	All Staff	No minimum service required	Unpaid	As soon as reasonably practicable. Form provided

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of Medical Care Leave is to afford short-term unpaid leave to Employees in order that they may provide significant personal care or support to certain specified persons for a serious medical reason, in accordance with the Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023.

It should be noted that Medical Care Leave (unpaid) as described above, is different from and in addition to Force Majeure Leave.
Force Majeure is a type of limited (paid) leave for unexpected and urgent family emergencies where the Employee's presence is indispensable.

2.0 Description

Medical Care Leave (unpaid) shall comprise one or more full working days on which the Employee would otherwise be scheduled to work.
The entitlement applies where the Employee's presence is required at the location of a disabled, ill or injured person.
Medical Care Leave (unpaid) is limited to a maximum of 5 days in any consecutive 12-month period.
Leave shall not be taken in a period of less than one day.
Any part day taken will be treated as a full day for the purposes of calculating the Employee's entitlement.

3.0 Eligibility

All Employees with a University of Galway contract of employment are eligible to apply for this statutory leave.
There is no minimum service requirement for this leave.

An Employee is entitled to Medical Care Leave (unpaid) where one of the following persons is in need of significant care or support for a serious medical reason:

(i) A person of whom the Employee is the relevant parent. (Adoptive or Guardian)
(ii) The spouse or civil partner of the Employee.
(iii) The cohabitant of the Employee.
(iv) A parent or grandparent of the Employee.
(v) A brother or sister (sibling) of the Employee.
(vi) A person, other than one specified in any of subparagraphs (i) to (v), who resides in the same household as the Employee.

A person is considered to be in need of significant care or support for a serious medical reason where, owing to the person's disability, injury or illness, they require such care or support that includes the presence of the Employee at the place where the person is located.

4.0 Employment Rights during Medical Care Leave (unpaid)

All employment rights, except remuneration, are protected while an Employee is on Medical Care Leave (unpaid).

Medical Care Leave is a period of unpaid leave from work and is non-pensionable service; however, it will not be counted as a break in service.

An Employee cannot be dismissed and/or penalised for requesting to take Medical Care Leave (unpaid).

5.0 Payment during Medical Care Leave (unpaid)

Medical Care Leave is unpaid by the University.

6.0 Procedure for taking Medical Care Leave (unpaid)

Due to the nature of Medical Care Leave (unpaid) purposes, it may not be possible to apply for the leave in advance. However, where it is possible to provide advance notice of an intention to take leave for Medical Care purposes, Employees are requested to do so.

When an Employee takes or intends to take the leave, an Employee is required to inform their Line Manager and the Human Resources (HR) Office (leaveschemes@universityofgalway.ie) as soon as reasonably practicable.

An Employee must complete and sign a Confirmation to Employer of Medical Care Leave (unpaid) purposes document ,specifying :

- Date of the commencement of the leave for Medical Care purposes
- Duration of leave
- A statement of fact, outlining the facts entitling the Employee to the leave and their relationship to the specified person. (No details of medical condition are to be included)

This document must be submitted to the Employee's Line Manager and the HR Office (leaveschemes@universityofgalway.ie).

On receipt of a confirmation document, the HR office will retain same and provide written acknowledgement of the receipt of the confirmation.

In line with legislation, an Employee may be required to provide *relevant evidence (as may be reasonably required) in order to show that the person concerned is or was in need of significant care or support for a serious medical reason in line with Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023.
Prior to seeking relevant evidence, the Line Manager is required to consult with a HR Business Partner or HR Office.

*Relevant evidence may include:

- A medical certificate signed by a doctor : The medical certificate does not need to state the nature of the medical condition. It only needs to be a statement of fact that the person is, or was, in need of significant care or support for a serious medical reason.
- Other evidence the Employer may reasonably require.

7.0 Responsibilities

Name	Responsibility
Director of Human Resources	Policy Owner
All Staff	Inform Line Manager and HR Office of leave application as soon as practicable, giving advance notice, if possible, and submit the relevant Confirmation of Medical Care Leave (unpaid) purposes document to their Line manager and HR Office.
Line Manager	Read and comply with this leave policy. Review and approve leave applications and ensure the leave application is submitted to the HR Office promptly. Consult with HR office as appropriate.
Human Resources Office	Provide written acknowledgement of receipt of confirmation document. Record and monitor leave records. Provide guidance to Line Managers and Employees as necessary. Review Policy every 3 years or earlier where required to reflect legislative, organisational or operational changes, feedback or learning arising from implementation.

8.0 Related Documents

HR Policies & Forms
Remuneration & Payroll Policy QA321
Sick Leave Policy QA105
Force Majeure Leave Policy QA131
Carer's Leave Policy QA111