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**MANAGING TIME AND LEAVE POLICY**

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**Managing Time**

The following policy is designed to provide guidance to employees, managers and Family Practices (hereafter referred to as Practice) in the management of leave and time spent away from the office/Practice for a variety of reasons. The aim is to encourage communication between the interested parties and ensure consistency of approach. This policy primarily deals with requesting annual leave, managing TOIL, and managing time for training (mandatory and developmental) and academic qualifications.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the FSU Annual Leave Policy, and the FSU Training Policy. For those engaged in training as a core part of their role (e.g. Trainee Advanced Nurse Practitioners), time off for that purpose will be covered in the job role, and this policy will then apply for the purposes of taking annual leave, managing lieu time, and other training not covered in the job role.

# **Responsibilities**

**FSU**

The FSU, through its Human Resources function, will provide guidance on managing time and leave in the form of this policy, and monitor it on a periodic basis to ensure it is fit for purpose, taking the needs of the staff, Federations, and Practices (where appropriate) into account.

**Managers**

Managers have the responsibility to ensure that this policy is applied appropriately and consistently. They will also ensure that effective communication exists between Federations and Practices when planning and approving leave and training.

**Employees**

Employees have a responsibility to ensure that they request and agree time for leave and training with their manager in the appropriate and timely way, and that the Practices are kept informed in good time to allow planning to take place.

**Practices**

There is an expectation that Practices (where appropriate), will maintain effective lines of communication with Federation staff and managers when suggesting specific training which would require time away from the Practice.

# **Managing Annual Leave**

Effective annual leave management starts with good communication and timely notice. Annual leave should only be taken with the agreement of a line manager, and all interested parties should be notified to assist with work planning. For professional staff (i.e. Pharmacists and Nurses), working in Family Practices, the following procedure must be followed:

1. Agree leave with Practice(s)
2. Apply for Annual Leave via Cascade for managers approval
3. Await response from line manager **before** making arrangements

For administrative staff, for example, employed by the Federation Support Unit, the following procedure should be followed:

1. Apply for Annual Leave via Cascade for managers approval
2. Await response from line manager **before** making arrangements

Annual leave should be booked as far in advance as possible particularly if leave is required at popular holiday times. Requests for annual leave of 1 week or more should normally be made at least 4 weeks in advance.

Before going on leave:

* Please inform Practice staff (if applicable);
* Please ensure that your ‘out of office’ message provides details of the date of your return and an alternative point of contact for urgent messages;
* Ensure that your ‘leave card’ has been updated and approved.

# **Managing Lieu Time (TOIL)**

From time to time it may be necessary for employees to work in excess of contracted hours. This additional time worked is classed as lieu time and can be taken back at another time. While this flexible approach to working can be useful to the individual member of staff as well as the Federation, it is important that lieu time is managed to ensure that the work/life balance is appropriately maintained.

Therefore, the following points should be considered:

* Each member of staff is contracted to work a specified number of hours per week and, where possible, this should be adhered to. Accumulation of lieu time should be considered an exception. If the demands of the job require additional hours to be worked on a regular basis this should be addressed through discussions with your line manager;
* If the number of hours worked exceeds the number of hours in a normal working day or week then this additional time can be classed as lieu time. Travel time above that normally incurred should also be considered;
* Lieu time accumulated and taken should be recorded on the spreadsheet provided and made available for review by your line manager monthly;
* Staff should not allow more than the equivalent of one working week of lieu time to accumulate at any one time unless agreed in advance with your line manager;
* For health and safety reasons, it is essential that lunch and tea breaks are taken and should not be worked to accrue lieu time except in exceptional circumstances;
* Lieu time should not be carried from one financial year to the next unless agreed in advance with your line manager and discussed with Human Resources;
* If, for example, a training event or meeting starts after your normal start time or ends before your normal finishing time then every effort should be made to work a full day by either working from base or home. However, this will not always be practical or possible particularly in the case of unplanned early finishes. Staff are not expected to take lieu time to cover this situation;
* When staff swap a normal working day to an alternative day to accommodate a meeting or training, lieu arrangements do not apply;
* TOIL will not be paid for under any circumstances. Time accrued in excess of normal working hours must be taken within a reasonable timeframe and with the agreement of your line manager.
* Any request to work in excess of normal contracted hours on a longer term basis, may be paid if agreed as overtime or a temporary increase in hours for a specific reason. In these circumstances, managers must ensure that appropriate funding exists to accommodate such an arrangement; and should be processed as a contract change. This will result in a change to the funded establishment on a temporary or permanent basis.
* Lieu time records should be recorded on Cascade for managers approval.

Any exceptional circumstances that do not fit with the above working arrangement should be discussed with your line manager as soon as possible, who will discuss with Human Resources.

# **Study Leave, Exam Leave and Managing Time for Training**

Time off to attend classes

* Time off for academic or educational courses or programmes will not exceed the equivalent of one whole working day per week during the period of study, unless otherwise agreed as part of a trainee job role.
* Attendance at taught courses outside of normal working hours may not attract time off in lieu, overtime or other financial reimbursement **unless attendance at the course is mandatory.** Trainees cannot avail of time off in lieu for such courses.
* Self-directed study outside of normal working hours does not count as working time, and thus does not attract time off in lieu, overtime or other financial reimbursement.

Federation Approved Study and Exam Leave

* Exam Leave must be taken only for a half-day in which the exam is to be taken.
* Employees, who are not employed as part of a training position, will be entitled to a day’s study leave per exam. Study Leave should be for a full day in the preceding working day to which an exam is to be taken except in special circumstances. A maximum of 3 study days may be taken in any one academic year. Study Leave is not granted for coursework/dissertation submissions.
* No Study Leave is eligible for resit exams.
* No Time Off or Study Leave is eligible for work on written assignments. Annual Leave or Flexi-Leave should be used instead.
* Special arrangements can be made in respect of OU type programmes requiring summer schools etc. This should be discussed with line managers, who will in turn, seek advice from Human Resources.

# **General Practice Pharmacists (GPP’s)**

PBL

General Practice Pharmacists should be invited to PBL sessions and encouraged to participate in shared learning with colleagues from the multi-disciplinary team.

In addition there are many additional education opportunities for Practice Pharmacists which are being offered from various sources. The content, quality and relevance of these should be agreed with Lead Practice Pharmacist in advance of attendance at training during work time.

Time out of the Practice or working environment should be considered when approving such attendance. Managers should be involved in agreeing attendance as part of an overall training plan, and Practices should be informed in order that clinics and other work can be planned.

CPD

It is recognised that each GPP has different learning needs to fulfil the requirements of their post and also has a requirement to complete their own continuing professional development (CPD) annually. Whilst there is likely to be intense induction for a number of GPPs, this will be for a relatively short period and training needs will evolve with time (reference below). The Federations are not required to provide time for pharmacists to complete their own CPD but should support relevant training that meets agreed Practice, Federation and personal objectives. It has been agreed that the Federation Lead GPPs will consider each request on a case by case basis in consultation with the GPPs. This should be structured by developing individual training and Personal Development Plans to help meet statutory and expected performance objectives.

Time away from practice will be agreed only where the training is relevant, appropriate and of high quality. GPPs must ensure any planned time away from practice is communicated at the earliest opportunity.

New GPP’s

Newly appointed GPP’s may be required to participate in up to 25 days training within the first year of appointment. This will include 20 days to complete the Independent Prescribing (IP) Course, and up to 5 days initial induction. Participation in the IP course will not be required for those who have previously completed the course.

Other

There may be times when an individual Practice requests that a GPP completes a course, which will require time away from the Practice. In such circumstances, the Practice should discuss the training request with the Lead or manager, to ensure that the completion of the course fits with the needs of the Federation and the Personal Development Plan of the Pharmacist.

There may be occasions when GPP’s are required to attend monthly meetings, 1-1 meetings with a Lead GPP, meetings related to performance management or events related to revalidation of professional registration. These meetings will be necessary and may inevitably require time away from Practice based duties. They will be a requirement of the Federation’s performance management procedure, communication strategy / policy or validation of professional registration process. In these circumstances, GPP’s and Leads should seek to plan meetings and events as far in advance as possible, do as to not adversely impact Practice work

# **Lunch / Rest Break**

The Working Time Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 requires employers to allow their employees to take an unpaid break of at least 20 minutes break for every shift lasting for more than 6 hours. The Federations require all employees, who work a standard working day of 7½ hours, to take a 30 minute break. This should normally be facilitated at lunchtime, and shouldn’t take place at the beginning or end of a shift. Disabled employees may have different needs, and where this is the case, the circumstances should be discussed with Human Resources.