

# **Special and Study Leave**

## **Leave Entitlement**

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## Overview

This section describes the entitlements and procedures for UK paid special and study leave for British Council staff.

## Audience

This policy applies to UK-appointed staff. It can provide good practice guidance for country/territory TACOS and/or English and Exams/ OAS staff contracts, subject to local law and conditions.

## Responsibilities

These procedures are carried out by:

- members of staff who want to apply for special or study leave
- their line managers.

## Policy

Staff may be granted paid leave, in addition to annual leave, to honour public service commitments, to study, and in some cases to cope with unforeseen emergencies.

## Procedures / Guidelines

### UK Paid Special Leave

#### Reasons for special leave

Heads of departments and UK regional offices have delegated authority to grant paid special leave in a number of circumstances which the flexible working hours system may not be able to handle (see Flexi-Time). Paid special leave is intended to enable staff to cope with, for example, unforeseen emergencies or to honour public service commitments, without eroding their entitlement to annual leave. See Entitlement below for full details of entitlement.

#### Guidelines for granting special paid leave

While it may be appropriate to grant special leave to a member of staff who has a sick child, all other options for dealing with the situation must first be pursued, for example, working from home or annual leave. Much depends on individual circumstances and personal judgement. It is not possible to try and classify types of illness as even some serious illnesses are treated at home.

As a line manager, if you decide to grant special leave in such circumstances, you should be able to demonstrate that you have taken a pragmatic approach and investigated all other options.

#### Entitlement

The following is a list of the circumstances in which line managers may authorise paid special leave:

Circumstances	Maximum number of days in one calendar year	Notes
Court attendance: jury service or as a witness	As required	Documentary evidence is necessary.
Domestic reasons	5	To cover crises such as the illness or death of a member of the family, dependant or partner.
Household emergencies, appointments with officials	1	When the member of staff must be at home and cannot arrange

		outside working hours or by flexible working hours.
Parliamentary candidates	1 month	At the time of the election the member of staff must be free to stand.
Reserve forces training	8	Working days spent on training which exceed this limit should be treated as special leave without pay unless annual leave is taken.
Sports events	1	For participants in Civil Service sports events.
Voluntary public service Magisterial duties Justice of the Peace	18	Reasonable travelling time is allowed in addition to the 18 days to permit up to 26 attendances.
Local government work: Elected member of a local authority, including mayors in their mayoral year and chairpersons of councils	18	This total may be increased to 24 days if the department is satisfied that the duties equate to those of a Lord Mayor.
Attendance at meetings and other essential business of other recognised authorities, boards, committees, panels, tribunals, governing bodies of educational establishments	6	At the discretion of the line manager.

### Procedure

1. The member of staff applies for special paid leave using the Leave Application form. In urgent cases, a preliminary application may be made by telephone.
2. Line managers have the right to ask for documentary support for a request for paid special leave, such as a doctor's letter, summons to jury service or letter of appointment as a school governor.
3. Line managers must:
  - a. Decide whether to grant or refuse the special paid leave. You should keep a record on a secure file of any requests for paid special leave that have not been approved, along with reasons for your decision.
  - b. Summarise the action taken in a note attached to the leave form.
  - c. Record special leave on the back of your copy of the Leave Application form.

## UK Study Leave

### Reasons for study leave

As a manager, you are encouraged to give consideration to any requests by staff for paid leave to undertake part-time study. Such leave may be requested, for example, to study for or attend exams. Part-time study can enable staff to gain qualifications and to manage their careers effectively. It can widen their knowledge of subjects related to the British Council's work and therefore enhance their value as British Council staff.

### Guidelines for granting study leave

Before granting any paid leave for part-time study, consider such factors as:

- whether the unit will still be able to cope with its workload
- what benefit is likely to accrue to the British Council.

**Note:** Where a member of staff is moving from one post where study leave has been granted, to another, the study leave must be discussed with the receiving manager before any move is finalised.

For guidance on what leave might be appropriate for different levels of study, see the table below.

**Note:** This is only an indication and decisions on the amount of paid leave granted should be made on a case-by-case basis.

Type of study	Number of days
GCSE or equivalent	Up to 5 days
'A' levels or equivalent	Up to 5 days per year over a two year period
Degree courses or equivalent	Up to 10 days a year over a two year period

### Procedure

The procedure is the same as for special paid leave in Procedure above.