



University  
of Exeter

## Disability Leave

### Snapshot

The University provides leave for disabled employees as a reasonable adjustment to support them with managing a disability. Leave can be used for a pre-agreed fixed short period(s) of time for a planned appointment related to an employee's disability.

Where required, the provision for disability leave is up to 5 working days (pro rata) paid leave within a 12-month rolling period.

Disability leave is part of the University's [Special Leave scheme](#).

The University is committed to supporting each other to thrive, be fulfilled and reach our potential, being fair and compassionate and prioritising the health and wellbeing of all employees. To support these aims, the University recognises that disabled employees may require additional time off work to manage their disability.

Disability leave is time off work which has been approved by the University for a pre-agreed fixed short period(s) of time, for example for a planned appointment or to receive treatment, to help employees manage their disability (see further examples below). As a type of reasonable adjustment, by having provisions available for disability leave we aim to support employees to more effectively manage these situations.

The provision of disability leave allows for an element of flexibility so that a short period of leave can be provided where reasonable, to cover unforeseen but appropriate circumstances that fall within the scope of the policy.

How a disability manifests itself will vary from person to person and may include fluctuating symptoms that affect individuals, and their ability to work, in different ways. These guidelines are expected to ensure that disability leave is granted in a fair and equitable manner across the University, at the same time recognising that arrangements may need to be flexible to support individual circumstances. A management referral to [Occupational Health](#) may be beneficial to provide guidance and advice to the employee and the manager on any work-related matters and as part of ongoing workplace support, however this is not always required.

### Types of disability leave

The following examples cover situations where disability leave may be required. This list is not definitive, and further advice can be sought from the HR Advisor team to support individual cases:

- Hospital appointments related to an individual's disability
- Specialist clinic appointments
- Rehabilitation
- Disability related treatment such as blood transfusion, chemotherapy, radiotherapy or dialysis
- Assessment for conditions
- Training for example with guide or hearing dog or in the use of specialist equipment
- Physiotherapy related to the disability
- Counselling for a mental health condition
- To allow for adaptations or adjustments to be implemented in the workplace

## Leave

The University provides up to 5 working days<sup>1</sup> (pro-rata for part time employees) paid leave within a 12-month rolling period, which commences on the first day leave is taken. Disability leave can be taken as a half day (which is the minimum time that can be taken off) or a full day of an employee's working day and can be taken on individual days or as a whole week (pro-rata), where required.

Disability leave is discretionary, not a contractual entitlement, to be used when required for the purposes set out in this policy. Many employees will not need to take the full allowance every year.

Disability leave is not intended for sickness absence related to a disability, which should continue to be recorded as sickness absence following procedures set by the University. It should not be used as a replacement for sick leave or as an additional entitlement to University sick pay.

## Disability leave and disability related sickness absence

**Disability leave** is a type of leave which has been approved by the University for a pre-agreed fixed short period(s) of time, for example for a planned appointment, to help employees manage their disability.

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<sup>1</sup> For simplicity we have referred to days but to mirror other leave it will be converted to hours (5 days = 36.5 hours)

**Disability related sickness** is a form of sickness absence that is either directly or indirectly attributed to an employee’s disability and as such should be recorded as sickness absence. An employee should inform their manager in cases where a sickness absence is attributed to their disability when notifying them of their absence. Further guidance on our support regarding sickness absence related to a disability is available.

### How to request disability leave

To help the University effectively support disabled employees with removing or reducing barriers, employees are encouraged to have an open dialogue with their manager about their disability, the barriers they face at work and the support they need from the University to reduce or remove these. Although the disclosure of a disability is voluntary, employees who require disability leave should have informed the University of their disability for the requested period of leave to be agreed. Confirmation of appointments may be requested.

Conversations regarding the need for disability leave should be part of ongoing support and as a reasonable adjustment agreed between the employee and their manager, which can be documented through an individual's Tailored Adjustment Plan (TAP). Employees can involve a member of the HR Advisor team with these conversations if this would be beneficial.

Once conversations have taken place between an employee and their manager in relation to the use of disability leave, the below steps should be followed for this to be recorded:

1. The employee should apply for a period of disability leave via Employee Self Service, similar to booking annual leave but ensure that they choose disability leave as the reason for leave, under ‘other absence’.
2. Managers will receive an automated request via email and should “approve” the leave.
3. If an employee needs to change or delete a period of disability leave once requested, they will need to contact their line manager for them to amend the iTrent record as employees do not have authorisation to make any changes to this type of leave once it is approved in iTrent.

Policy Name	Disability Leave
Version	1
Owner	HR Policy
Approved by	University Executive Board
Date	July 2025  28 May 2026, updated to reflect booking half day in itrent self service

Equality Impact Assessment Date	July 2025
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## Appendix A

The below scenarios intend to demonstrate how disability leave may be used. This list of examples is not exhaustive.

These examples assume that no disability leave has been taken in the preceding 12 months.

Example	Frequency	Duration	Total disability leave required
A full-time employee requires a period of treatment to manage pain relief for Arthritis.	once a month for 3 months	½ working day	1.5 days (10.95 hours)
A part-time employee who works 3 days a week (0.6 of full time) requires a period of hospital treatment related to their disability, followed by a review appointment.	1 period of treatment	2 days	2.5 days (18.25 hours)
	1 review appointment	½ working day	
A full-time employee is returning to work following a long-term sickness absence related to cancer treatment/recovery.  They are required to attend weekly referrals as part of their rehabilitation.	Once a week for 8 weeks	½ working day	4 days (29.2 hours)
An employee with dyslexia has reasonable adjustments in place to reduce/remove barriers in work and does not require routine medical appointments.	N/A	N/A	0 days

<p>A full-time employee has a long-term medical condition, requiring ongoing regular hospital treatment.</p>	<p>Once a month, ongoing</p>	<p>½ day</p>	<p>5 days (36.5 hours)</p> <p>An informal arrangement is in place for the time to be made up during the week for the remaining 1 day required (2x ½ days)</p>
<p>A part-time employee who works 3 days (0.5 of full time) needs to attend a one-off training session for the use of specialist equipment.</p>	<p>One-off training day</p>	<p>1 day</p>	<p>1 day (6.08 hours)</p>