



Maynooth University  
Human Resources  
Office

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# **Maynooth University Compassionate Leave Policy**

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## Relevant Information

Children and Family Relationships Act 2015  
Shorter Working Year Policy (unpaid leave).  
Annual Leave Policy.  
Career Break Policy.  
Compassionate Leave “Frequently Asked Questions”.

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# Compassionate Leave Policy

## Section One

### 1. Policy Statement

Compassionate Leave will be granted to an employee to provide care and support to them during a bereavement within their immediate family. The University fully recognises the impact that bereavements may have on employees, and this Compassionate Leave Policy is designed to support employees in such instances.

### 2. General Principles

The University will grant paid Compassionate Leave to employees to take time away from work at a time when there is a bereavement in their immediate family. In exceptional circumstances, the University may extend Compassionate Leave to include a bereavement that occurs outside of the employee's immediate family.

### 3. Eligibility

Employees of Maynooth University are eligible to be considered for Compassionate Leave upon the commencement of their employment.

### 4. Compassionate Leave Provisions

4.1. Compassionate Leave is granted at the time of bereavement to facilitate the employee with paid time off work. Compassionate leave is provided in the manner as set out in the below table.

Relationship of Deceased to the Employee	Compassionate Leave
An employee's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• spouse (including a cohabiting partner);</li><li>• employee's child (including adopted children);</li><li>• children being cared for on the basis of <i>loco parentis</i>; or</li><li>• any person in a relationship of domestic dependency.<sup>1</sup></li></ul>	Twenty (20) Working Days
An employee's immediate relative, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• father, step-father, mother, step-mother, brother, step-brother, half-brother, brother-in-law, sister, step-sister, half-sister, sister-in-law, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, grandfather, grandmother; or grandchild;</li><li>• a similar immediate relative of a cohabiting partner.</li></ul>	Five (5) Working days
An employee's relative, including: uncle, aunt, niece or nephew	One (1) Working Day
In exceptional circumstances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• where the employee lived with the deceased person at the time of their death; or</li></ul>	Five (5) Working days

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<sup>1</sup> Domestic dependency shall be understood to mean a person who resided with an employee and who would have reasonably relied on the employee to make arrangements for the provision of care prior to their death.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the employee has to take charge of funeral arrangements for the deceased.</li> </ul>	
<p>In the event of a stillbirth or prenatal death of a child after twenty-four (24) weeks pregnancy, and where an employee is one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>father of the child;</li> <li>spouse or cohabitant, as the case may be, of the mother of the child; or</li> <li>parent of the child under Section 5 of the Children and Family Relationships Act 2015 where the child is a donor-conceived child within the meaning of Part 2 of that Act.</li> </ul>	Ten (10) Working days

- 4.2. In a case where an employee has to travel abroad to make funeral arrangements in respect of an immediate relative, leave with pay in excess of the limits for Compassionate Leave may be granted at the discretion of the Director of Human Resources, or their nominee, having consulted with the relevant Head of Department.
- 4.3. There is no requirement for an employee to avail of the full amount of Compassionate Leave outlined in paragraph 4.1. Should an employee wish to return to work earlier than they had previously indicated, they should contact their Head of Department or nominee to advise them of same.
- 4.4. Compassionate Leave is granted only at the time of the bereavement and cannot be paused and reinstated at a later time. However, where an employee returns to work sooner than the relevant Compassionate Leave allowance permits, they may, within three working days of their early return, reinstate the remainder of their Compassionate Leave. Compassionate Leave may also be paused/delayed where an employee has to travel abroad to attend a funeral at the discretion of the Director of Human Resources, or their nominee.
- 4.5. Compassionate Leave cannot be substituted for any form of leave, other than annual leave. If the bereavement occurs when an employee is on annual leave, the annual leave can be replaced with bereavement leave, and the annual leave restored.
- 4.6. With regard to part-time employees, the granting of Compassionate Leave and the amount of leave granted will depend on whether, or not the employee was scheduled to work for the period in question. Where a bereavement occurs during days when the employee is not normally scheduled to work, Compassionate Leave may not be granted retrospectively.

## 5. Applying for Compassionate Leave

- 5.1. Employees should request Compassionate Leave from their Head of Department, or their nominee, on the first day of the absence.
- 5.2. As soon as is practicable, the employee should apply for Compassionate Leave through the HR Employee Self Service (ESS) portal on the University's website. Alternatively, the Head of Department may automatically input the leave to the Manager Self Service (MSS) portal.
- 5.3. Annual Leave may be taken by the employee to extend time off during the bereavement period, subject to approval from the Head of Department or their nominee.
- 5.4. The Head of Department, or their nominee, will have the authority to exercise discretion in exceptional circumstances but is required to notify and consult with the Director of Human Resources as soon as practicably possible when such discretion is exercised.

## 6. Unpaid Leave

- 6.1. An employee may need to take additional time for the purpose of coping with the bereavement or associated issues which may arise during this difficult time. In such instances, eligible employees should apply for unpaid leave under the Shorter Working Year Policy. The Head of Department must approve such additional unpaid leave, through the HR Employee Self Service (ESS) portal, prior to the leave commencing.

## 7. Relevant Support

- 7.1. The Head of Department, or their nominee, has the responsibility to establish and maintain reasonable and open communication with the bereaved employee. In offering condolences, they should establish from the employee what information is appropriate for sharing with other colleagues.
- 7.2. The Head of Department, or their nominee, shall demonstrate flexibility and understanding in respect of work-related matters and the return to work by the bereaved employee.
- 7.3. Upon request, Human Resources shall support the Head of Department or their nominee in the management and Compassionate Leave and advise on the supports available to employees in such instances.
- 7.4. The resources of Inspire Workplaces (formerly EAP) are available to provide support to all employees. Details of this service are available on the University's website here <https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/human-resources/employee-wellbeing>.
- 7.5. For employees who need more specialist support, please contact Inspire Workplaces. At the employee's request, Human Resources are also available to contact Inspire Workplaces on behalf of the employee.
- 7.6. Compassionate Leave is available to support employees on the death of a family member or relative. The University recognises that the bereavement process is personal to each employee. When considering an employee's request for additional time off work, the Head of Department, or their nominee, will take account of all the circumstances, and will explore with the employee whether other solutions such as annual leave or temporarily reducing contracted hours of work may help. For longer periods of leave (over a month), it may be more appropriate to consider whether another form of leave might apply.

## Section Two

### 8. Roles and Responsibilities

#### 8.1. The University Executive

The University Executive is responsible for:

- Approving the Compassionate Leave policy; and
- Ensuring the policy is reviewed as required.

#### 8.2. Heads of Department

Heads of Department have primary responsibility for ensuring the content of this policy is applied across their part of the University. In addition, Heads of Department are responsible for:

- The dissemination of this policy within their Department;
- Liaising with the Human Resources department to seek guidance on the implementation of the policy; and

- Inputting the approved leave to the Manager Self Service portal, in circumstances where it is not possible for the employee to apply for Compassionate Leave through the HR ESS portal in a timely manner.

### 8.3. **Human Resources (HR) Department**

The Human Resources Department is responsible for:

- Carrying out ongoing reviews of the Compassionate Leave policy with relevant stakeholders; and
- Providing guidance to Heads of Departments on the implementation of the policy.

### 8.4. **Employees of Maynooth University**

Employees who are seeking or are absent from the University on Compassionate Leave are responsible for:

- Requesting approval from their Head of Department for the granting of Compassionate Leave in accordance with this policy;
- Applying for Compassionate Leave via the HR employee self-service portal, as soon as is practicable;
- Ensure reasonable notice is given where possible and to maintain contact, with due regards for the circumstances, with their Head of Department, or nominee during the period(s) of leave; and
- Making themselves aware of their obligations under this policy.

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