

Right to Request Time Off for Training - Guidelines for Managers

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The University recognises that its staff are fundamental to its success. A strategic, professional approach to staff development helps the University to attract and retain high-calibre staff with the skills and competencies necessary to deliver its objectives.
- 1.2. The University of York is committed to providing its employees with development opportunities to ensure that individuals and departments are able to contribute fully to the achievement of department and University objectives in the context of the strategic plan. The University already provides an extended programme of learning and development activities prioritised against the University's needs and available to all employees. It is envisaged that this policy will be used by staff only in the exceptional circumstance that they are unable to access and use the resources already available to them. Therefore, members of staff wishing to train are should explore their request with their line manager prior to using this policy and procedure and to check what is already available across the University.
- 1.3. Employees have a legal right to request time off for training if they have 26 weeks continuous service at the time the application is made. Conditions for when a member of staff is not eligible are given in section 2.3 of the procedure.
- 1.4. There is no requirement within the registration for the costs of the training to be met by the University, but Managers may consider meeting requests to do so where sufficient funds are available within the department's budget and where it is deemed appropriate. Refer to the staff development policy for further guidance.
- 1.5. All requests made will be considered with due regard to the University's commitment to promoting equality and diversity among employees and commitment to developing our researcher community. All requests will receive due consideration.

2. Receiving an application

- 2.1. Employees who are considering making a request for time off for training should be encouraged to talk to their line manager informally in the first instance. That will provide the opportunity to think through some of the implications; consider what the possible benefits are; if there are disadvantages how they could be overcome, or what might outweigh them. It may be apparent at this stage that further information is needed before a request could be considered.
- 2.2. The time off for training procedure requires employees to submit their formal request in form TFT1 at least 8 weeks in advance of the training or study

taking place. However where circumstances require that that timescale may not be possible, managers should do their best to respond sympathetically.

2.3. On receiving a request managers must acknowledge receipt of the form within 7 days.

3. Considering an application

3.1. Managers will need to give full consideration to the request and must consider a range of factors listed below, bearing in mind that the needs of the department and the University must take priority.

3.1.1. The purpose of the proposed study or training must be to improve the employee's effectiveness in their role and the performance of the University or department.

3.1.2. Assess whether the impact on the service the employee provides will be positive or negative.

3.1.3. Identify any team-related issues that need considering. For example, there may be other members of the team who have requested time off for training or for other reasons; or due to the established work patterns it may not be feasible to accommodate any further adjustments to work patterns within the team.

3.1.4. Similarly, multiple requests that are submitted around the same time may be difficult or impossible to accommodate. In general, these should be dealt with on a 'first come, first served' basis with others going on a waiting list. Where requests are received at the same time and it is impossible to accede to all, preference should be given to those whose approval has the potential to bring the greatest benefit to the University. Existing time off for training arrangements should not, however, be overturned in order to accommodate new requests.

It is important to ensure that in agreeing to a time off for training request managers are not reducing flexibility (for example the ability to utilise a flexitime scheme) and/or increasing workload inappropriately for the rest of the team.

3.1.5. Consider other practical issues:

- are there issues of supervision/monitoring and are they manageable?
- will the permission of an external funding body be required and is it likely to be given?
- does anyone else need to be consulted before a recommendation is made?
- who needs to be informed of the decision?
- the possible effect on the employee of refusing a time off for training request. There may be a deterioration in their motivation or morale that requires attention and support to assist them to a more positive outlook.

Managers should consider appropriate ways to do this while ensuring in the meantime that there is no detrimental impact on customers and/or colleagues.

- 3.1. Managers must summarise the issues on form TFT1 and make a recommendation before passing the form to their HoD for a decision.
- 3.2. Managers will need to give full consideration to the request and must consider a range of factors, bearing in mind that the needs of the organisation must take priority.
- 3.3. Heads of Department will consider the employee's request and the assessment / recommendation of the line manager. They will write to the employee to either approve the request or to convene a meeting to discuss the request further. The meeting must take place within 28 days of the receipt of the TFT1 form from the employee (see 2.7 of the Procedure for exceptions) and the final outcome must be given in writing within 14 days of the meeting.
- 3.4. An employee can withdraw a request at any time until they receive written notification that it has been granted, and may do so by email, verbally or in writing. Managers may also deem an application withdrawn in certain circumstances (see 4.2 of the Procedure). In either case they should confirm in writing immediately that the application has been withdrawn. Employee(s) may not then make a request again within the next 12 months.
- 3.5. If the request is refused, it must be for one of the reasons given in 2.1 of the Procedure. Employee(s) have the right to appeal to the Director of HR, on certain grounds, within 14 days of the refusal. The outcome of the appeal hearing is final and the employee(s) cannot submit a further request for flexible working within 12 months.

Detailed procedural requirements can be found in the Procedure for Requesting Time Off for Training.

4. Implementing the right to request time off for training

- 4.1. In supporting all or part of the original request for time off for training, managers should have agreed the basis on which the time will be taken.
- 4.2. In some circumstances an approved request for time off for training might lead to a permanent or temporary change to the contractual terms of employment for the employee, with no automatic right to revert back to their previous working pattern. Managers should complete any contract variation forms that are necessary and submit them to hr-enquiries@york.ac.uk, along with all formal documentation from the Time Off for Training Request.
- 4.3. Managers should consider what needs to be done locally to implement the new arrangements, for example:

- Make sure the rest of the team are fully informed about any changed arrangements. Ensure customers or colleagues in other sections are informed where necessary.
- Incorporate into your regular reviews with the employee monitoring of progress towards the successful completion and utilisation of the training or study being supported.
- Alter work or holiday rotas where required.

The time off for training arrangements available to staff will be kept under review and, subject to feasibility, may be amended from time to time.

For further information refer to the Request for Time Off for Training Policy and Procedure or see our visual guide to considering a request.