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## **1. Purpose and scope**

These rules of procedure discuss flexible working, annual leave, absence due to illness or injury, trauma and family emergencies, personal circumstances and other authorised and unauthorised absences.

The purpose of these rules of procedure is to support the health and well-being of employees, to promote a healthy and safe working environment and to reduce absences due to illness through a standardised approach. These rules are based on the Government Employees Act no. 70/1996, the Holiday Allowance Act no. 30/1987 and current collective wage agreements. These rules of procedure apply to all UI employees. Where an issue concerns only certain groups of employees this will be made clear. The term 'manager' is used in these rules of procedure to mean the person defined as the employee's immediate superior. In the case of academic staff, the faculty head is the manager in this context.

## **2. Responsibility**

The director of the Division of Human Resources is responsible for ensuring that these rules of procedure are correct at any given time and managers are responsible for ensuring that they are followed.

## **3. Employee attendance and absence at the University of Iceland**

### **3.3 Attendance and flexible working hours**

Generally, employees work normal office hours from Monday to Friday, in consultation with their manager and in accordance with the way their unit is organised<sup>1</sup>. Where possible, employees are permitted to work flexible hours, but care must be taken to ensure that this does not have a detrimental impact on operations or services.


Employees who record their working hours using the time clock system may not carry out personal errands or leave the workplace during working hours without consulting the relevant manager and, where appropriate, clocking out (in Vinnustund). Absences due to necessary medical treatment for an employee or their child are not deducted from working hours.

### **3.2 Compassionate leave**

It is UI policy to accommodate employees as far as possible if they are unable to work due to a family emergency. The term family emergency refers to situations such as serious illness or death of a relative. Managers may grant up to five days of paid compassionate

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<sup>1</sup> Administrative and support staff who record daily attendance should generally work their contracted hours for each wage period. If they do not, they are expected to make up missed hours within the next two wage periods.

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leave in such circumstances and human resources managers are authorised to grant up to five additional days where appropriate.

### 3.3 Unauthorised absences

Unauthorised absences are absences that are neither allowed for in the collective wage agreement nor approved by a manager. If an employee is absent from work without explanation, their manager shall request an explanation and supporting documents, e.g. a doctor's note.

### 3.4 Absence review meetings

Managers must follow up frequent short-term absences, whether due to illness or other reasons, by holding an absence review meeting with the employee. The purpose is to create a formal opportunity to review reasons for short-term absences and, as appropriate, to discuss conditions in the workplace that could affect attendance and solutions that could support the employee's ability to do the job. In cases where further action is required, employees must be informed of what will happen and who will be involved.

## 4. Annual leave

Annual leave for employees at UI is standardised on the basis of the Holiday Allowance Act no. 30/1987, with subsequent amendments, Article 11 of the Government Employees Act no. 70/1996, and current collective wage agreements.


### 4.1 Leave period

The leave year is from 1 May to 30 April. By working throughout the leave year, employees accrue entitlement to annual leave and holiday pay for the next leave year. The summer holiday period is generally from 1 May to 15 September. Due to the way the University operates, and in accordance with collective wage agreements, it is assumed that employees will take annual leave during this period.

Based on full-time employment, employees have the right to 30 days (240 hours) of annual leave per leave year. Accrual of holiday entitlement is proportionate to FTE and length of employment.

### 4.2 Organisation of annual leave

The managers of the unit are responsible for overseeing employees' annual leave and ensuring that it is available by 31 March each year at the latest, unless exceptional circumstances cause delays. In this case, employees shall be informed of the situation using a documented method of communication, by email or through the time clock system as appropriate. Employees shall be permitted to take annual leave whenever they wish as far as possible. When organising annual leave, it must be kept in mind that UI is an educational and research institution in which various aspects of operations run to an inflexible schedule.

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#### 4.3 Taking annual leave

Generally, employees are expected to take at least 20 days of annual leave during the summer holiday period, 1 May – 15 September, and to take all their annual leave by the end of the leave year. All employees should take at least 15 days of uninterrupted annual leave where possible.

If employees are asked in writing by a manager to take some of their annual leave after the end of the summer holiday period, they shall be entitled to 25% more leave. Otherwise, holiday entitlement will not be extended regardless of when employees take their annual leave.

#### 4.4 Illness during annual leave

If an employee becomes ill while on annual leave, they must report it immediately to their manager. The period of illness will not be deducted from holiday entitlement, if a doctor's note, supplied as soon as possible, proves that the employee is unable to use the annual leave. If an employee is unable to take annual leave due to illness they have the right to take it at a later date, for example outside the summer holiday period. This shall be determined in consultation with a manager.

#### 4.5 Expiry of holiday entitlement



If employees are unable to use all their annual leave within the leave year, unused holiday entitlement rolls over to the next leave year, with the manager's approval. On 1 May, employees may have saved up a maximum of one year's worth of holiday entitlement, i.e. 30 days. This means that the maximum total of holiday entitlement accrued and carried over from the previous leave year is 60 days. This rule is valid up until 30 April 2023, in accordance with collective wage agreements.

As of 1 May 2023, it will not be possible to carry unused holiday entitlement over between leave years except in exceptional circumstances, e.g. when annual leave is delayed at the written request of a manager or when an employee is unable to take annual leave due to maternity/paternity leave or illness. In this case, that number of days is then available to take up until the end of the leave year, along with that year's holiday entitlement. At the start of the next leave year, unused holiday entitlement expires.

### 5. Sick leave

There must be consistent procedures in place across UI for dealing with illness that leaves employees either partially or fully unable to work.

Managers must take systematic action to promote a healthy work environment, thereby supporting the mental and physical health and well-being of employees. In the case of long-term sick leave, support must be provided for the employee and potentially for colleagues and managers as well. Likewise, there must be support in place to ensure a successful return to work for employees who have been absent long term due to illness or injury.

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## 5.1 Sickness absences

### *Sick leave entitlement*

Employees have the right to take sick leave for themselves and also paid leave to care for their sick child, in accordance with the law and the collective wage agreement with their union as applicable.

Sickness absences are categorised as either short-term or long-term absences. Long-term absences are 30 consecutive days or longer. All other sickness absences shall be considered short-term absences.

### *Reporting illness and doctor's notes*

Employees must report illness to their manager, using the procedure stipulated by the manager, by 9 am on the day of sick leave. Illness must be reported every day of sick leave unless the employee has supplied a doctor's note confirming that they will be absent for more than a few days. Employees who are unable to fulfil their teaching duties must make arrangements, as far as possible, to ensure that students are informed as soon as possible.


A doctor's note must be supplied if an employee needs to be absent for more than five consecutive working days or in the case of repeated short-term absences. The University will refund the cost of the doctor's note. The doctor's note must be submitted to the manager who shall then forward it to the appropriate human resources manager and the Payroll Office.

### *Communication during sick leave*

Managers must keep in touch with employees on sick leave and provide support as appropriate. Ideally, managers should contact employees in the second week of sick leave, although the specific circumstances should be taken into account. Employees are not required to provide their manager with details about their health, but managers must treat any health-related information as confidential in accordance with the law. If the illness lasts longer than 30 days and is therefore considered a long-term absence, it is the manager's role to maintain a strong relationship with the employee. The manager might encourage the employee to visit the workplace or participate in events or social gatherings, although only if appropriate in the circumstances. Each case must be assessed in consideration of the reason for the absence and the employee's relationships with the manager and the team. In consultation with the school human resources manager, or the UI Division of Human Resources in the case of central administration, employees on long-term sick leave must be provided with special support. This is vital to ensuring a successful return to work.

### *Return to work after long-term sick leave*

If an employee has been continuously unable to work due to illness for a month or longer, they may not return to work unless a doctor's note confirms that they are fit to do so. A manager may seek the opinion of a University medical officer on the note supplied.

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Before an employee returns to work after a long illness, the manager shall meet with the employee to discuss how the return will be organised. In the case of changes to work arrangements or reduced FTE, a written agreement must be signed, see Article 5.2.

*Absence review meeting and frequent short-term absences*

Managers are responsible for monitoring staff absence and responding appropriately. In order to evaluate absences due to short-term illness, managers will use the so-called Bradford Formula, which converts the number of sick days into points. This procedure improves oversight, highlights possible opportunities for action and promotes fairness<sup>2</sup>. Managers will look at either a 13-week or a 52-week period and respond to the results as follows:

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**Over a year (52 weeks)**

- 0-99 points: No action taken
- 100-499 points: Absence review meeting with manager
- 500-999 points: Meeting with human resources
- 1,000 points or more: Session booked with a professional in consultation with human resources

**Over a quarter (13 weeks)**

- 0-30 points: No action taken
- 31-250 points: Absence review meeting with manager
- 250 points or more: Meeting with human resources

See Article 3.3 for more information about absence review meetings.


Employees may, on their own initiative, request a meeting with their manager, the school human resources manager, or the UI Division of Human Resources to discuss health-related issues.

**5.2 Reduced FTE and partial sick leave**

If employees experience health issues that reduce their capacity to work, as certified by a qualified professional, UI will attempt to accommodate their needs with reduced FTE. However, this is not an automatic right. It will always be at the manager's discretion, depending on circumstances in the workplace. Such cases must be assessed fairly and decisions supported by well-reasoned arguments.

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<sup>2</sup> The Bradford Formula is used to calculate attendance scores over either a 52-week or 13-week period. The formula is  $B = S^2 \times D$  (B = Bradford points, S = spells (instances) of absence, D = days of absence). In order for the Bradford Formula to be applied, sick days must have been recorded in the time clock system (Vinnustund).

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To take partial sick leave and work reduced hours, the employee must sign a written agreement. This kind of agreement may be valid for no more than three months at a time, up to a maximum of six months. Partial sick leave is intended to be part of a rehabilitation process and the employee is not considered to have fully returned to work until they have regained their former working capacity.

An agreement on partial sick leave is not appropriate where the employee is permanently incapable of returning to work at the previous FTE. In such cases, consideration will be given to a permanent change of FTE or severance pay<sup>3</sup>.

If an employee is on partial sick leave and working reduced hours, sick leave entitlement for the hours they are working is managed separately. This means that an agreement on partial sick leave does not increase the number of sick days to which the employee is entitled in a twelve month period in accordance with the collective wage agreement.

The employee's FTE may be changed during the term of the agreement at the employee's request, subject to consultation with a medical officer. If the employee's working capacity changes during the term of the agreement, the agreement becomes invalid and a new agreement shall be made as appropriate. If the employee becomes fully incapable of working due to health reasons during the term of the agreement, the agreement becomes invalid.

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The employee and the manager must both respect the FTE provided for by the agreement, since the agreement is based on the employee's certified working capacity.

Where applicable, the employee shall record attendance and absence in the time clock system (Vinnustund) and the manager shall confirm these records in accordance with further instructions from the Payroll Office. Teaching duties are managed in the recording system Kol. The Payroll Office manages sick leave entitlement in accordance with collective wage agreements and sends managers monthly updates. When it becomes clear that an employee's entitlement to paid sick leave is running out, the manager is asked to inform the employee of the situation and consequences.

### 5.3. Addiction rehabilitation leave

Employees struggling with alcohol or drug addiction may be authorised to take paid leave for rehabilitation treatment. This is funded by deducting the leave from the sick leave entitlement they would otherwise have for that period. It is not a legal or contractual obligation for UI to approve addiction rehabilitation leave. The maximum length of addiction rehabilitation leave is six weeks. An employee will not be authorised to take this kind of leave more than once during their period of employment. In order for the leave to be approved, the employee must go into full-time addiction rehabilitation, as

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<sup>3</sup> It may be appropriate to dismiss employees in cases of long-term inability to work, in accordance with the relevant collective wage agreement. The employee will then continue to receive full wages for three months.



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certified by the rehabilitation centre or a doctor. A written agreement must be made with the employee, clearly stating that wages during the period of leave are deducted from sick leave entitlement.

## **6. Maternity/paternity and parental leave**

### **6.1 Informing the employer**

Employees are entitled to maternity/paternity and parental leave in accordance with the Act on Maternity/Paternity Leave and Parental Leave no. 144/2020. This Act defines the rights of employees following the birth of a child, primary adoption of a child, taking a child into permanent foster care, still birth or miscarriage.

No later than eight weeks before the expected date of birth, the parent must inform their manager of how they plan to use their rights to maternity/paternity leave. This information must be supplied using a special form available on the Maternity/Paternity Leave Fund website.

The manager will pass the information on to the Payroll Office. The parent should email [laun@hi.is](mailto:laun@hi.is) once the child has been born to inform them of the date of birth. Maternity/paternity leave is then recorded based on that date.

### **6.2 Communication during maternity/paternity leave**

During maternity/paternity leave, the manager must keep in touch with the employee as appropriate. Employees on maternity/paternity leave may be actively involved in social events in the workplace. No later than six weeks before the employee's planned date of return to work, the manager should get in touch to discuss arrangements.


### **6.3 Return to work after maternity/paternity leave**

When returning to work after maternity/paternity leave, employees may be offered flexible FTE and/or working conditions where circumstances permit. In this case, a written agreement is made, outlining the duties or changes to duties involved. Such an agreement may be valid for a maximum of 12 months and not past the child's second birthday.

Academic staff who have been on maternity/paternity leave for at least three months may reduce their teaching duties in favour of increased research duties when they return to work. The reduction is a minimum of 25% of the employee's annual teaching load or a maximum of 50% of the annual teaching load if the employee has taken six or more months of maternity/paternity leave.

The employee's manager shall ensure that appropriate equipment and facilities are available when the employee returns to work.

### **6.4 Parental leave**

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Parental leave is unpaid leave. An employee acquires parental leave entitlement after the birth of a child, the primary adoption of a child younger than eight, or taking a child younger than eight into permanent foster care. Employees wishing to take parental leave must announce their intentions as soon as possible, not later than six weeks before they plan to go on leave. Employees on parental leave will not receive payments from the Maternity/Paternity Leave Fund. In accordance with Act no. 144/2020, employees have the right to take parental leave after having worked continuously for an employer for six months. This applies whether the employee has been hired on a temporary or permanent contract.

## **7. Entry into force**

These rules of procedure enter into force on 12 January 2023. At the same time, the rules of procedure on annual leave, approved by the University Council 12 May 2005, are repealed.

### References:

Government Employees Act no. 70/1996

Holiday Allowance Act no. 30/1987

Regulation on secondary employment of academic staff at the University of Iceland no. 1096/2008, in particular

Article 6

Responsible party: Director of Human Resources

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