

Dear Colleagues,

I write in relation to a review of the University's annual leave policy with respect to recording and accrual/carryover of annual leave. The background to the review is the requirement to give effect to the findings in this regard of the University's 2012 audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General.[C&AG}

The current University policy on annual leave approved in July, 2003, states *inter alia* that: "annual leave should be taken within the leave year in which it is earned" and also "the carryover of leave to the next leave year can only be permitted following a written application to the Head of Department at least one month in advance of the leave year. Annual leave carried forward should be utilised within six months of the new leave year."

There is some evidence within the University of staff accruing greater levels of annual leave than are permitted by the current University policy, which has been highlighted by the C&AG from a budgetary and compliance perspective. In light of the University's statutory obligations particularly under the Organisation of Working Time Act, there is a necessity to approve and record all annual leave. The system set up under CORE to record annual leave has been in place for some time. Having regard to the C&AG findings, the following has been approved by the University Management Team and will be implemented from the start of the new Leave Year- 1 July 2013:

Revised Annual Leave Provisions:

1. From 1 July, 2013, **ALL** staff must have their annual leave signed off by the appropriate Head/Manager;
2. Carryover of annual leave, in exceptional circumstances having regard to work requirements, will be a maximum of 10 days (pro rata for part-time staff), with the prior written approval of the Head/Manager, to be taken in the first six months of the subsequent leave year. Any leave carried forward in this manner and not taken by the end of the six months will be forfeited.
3. The leave year will remain unchanged – 1 July to 30 June;
4. No carryover will be permitted beyond the terms of the policy;
5. Any staff member who claims to have a historic balance of annual leave prior to 1 July, 2013, will have that balance held in a separate record until verified and signed off by the Head of School/Department/Unit and the Department of Human Resources;
6. Historic leave balances must be verified and taken by 30 June, 2016. All balances as of that date will be forfeited apart from the 10 days rollover from the previous year allowed by the policy. Subsequent to that date a maximum of ten days leave (pro rata for part-time staff) carryover may be permitted, subject to the terms of the Annual Leave Policy [as revised].

It is acknowledged that there may be difficulties arising from the implementation of No. 2, 5 or 6 and it is our intention that these will be resolved in consultation with the staff concerned and/or their union representatives.

This initiative, along with being a statutory and compliance matter, may also be important as options under the PSSA [Haddington Road Agreement] fall to be exercised.

Can I thank you in advance most sincerely for your co-operation.

Michael Farrell
Corporate Secretary,
University College Cork