**Additional Holiday Leave**

**Frequently Asked Questions concerning Additional Holiday Leave**

1. **Why is the College offering the possibility of additional holiday leave?**

Additional holiday leave supports the College’s work life balance policies, and allows staff to spread the cost of extra holiday leave over a period of time.

Departmental budgets will also benefit from the savings in employment costs.

2. **How does the additional holiday leave scheme work?**

Additional holiday leave operates as a salary exchange arrangement. Members of staff agree to reduce their salary, and in exchange the College agrees to grant additional holiday leave, to a maximum of ten days a year for full-time staff and pro-rata for part-time staff. Additional holiday leave is granted subject to the approval of line managers who should confirm that the work requirements of the department can be met during the period when the member of staff is absent without the need to engage additional resources.

Once agreed, the additional holiday leave is treated as an addition to existing holiday leave entitlement and is subject to the same arrangements as normal holiday leave.

All staff are eligible to make a request for additional holiday leave, regardless of their length of service, providing that their department/division is participating in the additional holiday scheme.

3. **When can I apply for additional holiday leave?**

The College leave year runs from 1 February in one year to 31 January in the next. There are two opportunities to apply for additional leave:

Just before the start of the leave year, with applications being submitted to your line manager by 18 January, and reaching the payroll office by 31 January; and

At the mid-point, with applications being submitted to your line manager by 18 July, and reaching the payroll office by 31 July. Applications should not be forwarded to your line manager any earlier than two months before the dates stated above.

You cannot apply at any other time, and if you miss these deadlines you will need to wait another six months before your application can be considered.

See paragraph 20 for further details of the timetable for applications.

4. **What will it cost me?**

To benefit from the scheme, you will need to agree to exchange an equivalent portion of your salary for the number of days taken as additional holiday leave. For full-time staff the reduction in pay for each day of additional holiday leave approved is equal to your annual basic salary divided by 261 (based on there being 261 working days a year); for part-time staff the reduction will be calculated pro-rata. If your line manager allows you to take the maximum ten days your salary for the year will be reduced by about 4% The reduction in pay is spread evenly across the period in which the extra leave is granted (twelve or six months depending whether you apply in January or July). This applies regardless of when you actually choose to use the leave. London weighting, special allowances and honoraria, if any, are not affected by the pay reduction.

By reducing your salary, the amount of tax and National Insurance you pay will also reduce. At the end of the agreed period, your salary will revert to its normal level.

Please note that when additional holiday leave has been agreed, you cannot change your mind. The changes to your employment contract and your salary cannot be reverted before the end of the leave year and only in exceptional circumstances will you be able to carry forward additional holiday leave into the next leave year (see question 9).
5. **Who can apply for additional holiday leave; do I need any length of service?**

Anyone can apply regardless of length of service, providing that their department/division is participating in the additional holiday scheme.

6. **Can my manager turn down my request for additional holiday leave?**

Yes, if your absence while taking additional holiday leave will adversely affect the work of the team or department or if your department/division is not participating in the additional holiday scheme.

Line managers should consider requests for additional holiday leave fairly and consistently. If, after due consideration, a request has to be turned down the reasons for doing so should be explained to the member of staff. Additional holiday leave is, however, an entirely discretionary benefit, and employees cannot appeal against their line manager’s decision.

If requests cannot be agreed in full, partial approval from participating departments/divisions should be considered, especially where this allows a larger number of staff to receive some additional holiday leave. For example, if four members out of a team of five each make a request for three additional days of leave, but the operational requirements of the department can only support eight additional days in total, the line manager should consider granting two additional days each to all four applicants, rather than turning down one individual’s request entirely.

7. **Can my application for additional holiday be considered after the cut-off date for receipt of applications?**

No, in no circumstance will applications be considered after the cut-off date. However, as additional leave is available at the start of the leave year and then again mid way through the leave year, you may, of course apply for additional leave at the next available opportunity. Please bear in mind that cut-off dates for applications are 31 January and 31 July each year.

8. **Do I have to apply for a specific number of days?**

You can apply to take any number of days up to the permitted maximum (i.e. ten or five days, according to when you apply), pro-rated for part time staff.

9. **If I apply for fewer than the maximum number of days can I make a further application for additional holiday leave during the remainder of the period?**

No, you cannot make more than one request for additional holiday leave in any given leave year.

10. **Do I have to take all of the extra days at once?**

No, you can take days of additional holiday leave any time you like, subject to the usual approval arrangements; just treat them as an extension to your existing holiday leave entitlement up to 31 January. Please note that only in exceptional circumstances can additional holiday leave be carried forward to the next leave year, so this portion of your leave entitlement must be taken first.

11. **I work part time; are the maximum number of days pro-rated?**

Yes. For example if you normally work three standard full days a week (with each day being for 7.5 hours), you may apply for a maximum of six extra days of leave under the Additional Holiday Leave scheme each year. For full-time staff their salary is reduced by 1/261 of their basic salary, based on there being 261 working days in a year; for part-time staff the value of a working day will be calculated pro-rata and the appropriate reduction in salary applied.

If you work five days a week, but your working hours in each day are less than the standard for your job, e.g. five hours each day as opposed to 7.5 hours, then the salary adjustment will correctly reflect the fact that each extra day’s leave has a pay value less than a standard full day’s pay.
12. What happens if I change my working hours during the additional leave period?

Deductions will continue to be taken from your salary payment based on your changed working hours, i.e. a member of staff moving from full time to part time employment will have deductions made according to their pro-rated salary.

13. Can I apply for the additional leave while I have other salary sacrifice (i.e. pension, childcare voucher or nursery fees)?

Yes, provided that your hourly rate of pay does not fall below the National Minimum Wage or the Primary threshold.

14. Can I apply for additional holiday if I am on unpaid leave or in receipt of a statutory payment only at the time of the first deduction?

No. Please contact your local HR representative to discuss alternative leave options.

15. I have been granted additional holiday, salary deductions in respect of this have commenced. I am now going to take unpaid leave (i.e. sabbatical or unpaid Maternity leave), what happens to my additional holiday and also deductions during this period?

You should take your additional holiday as agreed. Salary deductions will cease when you move onto unpaid leave, and will recommence when you return from unpaid leave. Please note that you may not apply for additional leave whilst the extended salary deductions are still being taken.

16. When do I have to take this holiday leave?

During the next College leave period after it has been requested, i.e. before 31 January.

17. I have already carried forward five days holiday from the last leave year; can I still apply for additional leave in the new leave year?

Yes, however your department will need to give consideration to any operational impact that may be caused by granting additional leave on top of leave that has already been carried over into the new leave year.

18. Can I carry this holiday leave forward at the end of the year, if I haven’t used it?

Only in exceptional circumstances would a line manager give approval for additional holiday leave to be carried forward to the following leave year. Additional holiday leave should be taken before regular annual leave.

19. Can I abandon this arrangement after approval if I do so before 31 January?

No. Approval of additional holiday leave constitutes an irrevocable change to your employment contract, including your salary, for the period to 31 January. At the end of this period your contract will automatically revert to normal (unless this arrangement has been renewed or extended by mutual agreement before that date).

20. Can I suddenly decide to request additional holiday leave during the year?

No. You can only make one request for additional holiday leave in any given leave year. Your application for additional holiday leave must be submitted to your line manager by 18 January or 18 July as the case may be, who must forward it to Payroll by 31 January or 31 July (at the latest).

21. Do I need to have a special reason to request extra days of leave?

No. It is entirely up to you how you use it, and why you want it.
22. What happens if I’m promoted, receive a pay rise or change job family during the period when my salary has been reduced through the additional holiday leave scheme?

Your basic salary (before the reduction required to purchase additional holiday leave) will be adjusted in accordance with the usual procedures for promotions or pay rises. This will automatically result in a small adjustment to the reduction for additional holiday leave, from the point at which the changes are made. Arrears of pay will not affect this calculation.

23. Can I claim overtime?

If you are in a grade where overtime payments are made, you will continue to be paid for approved overtime at a rate based on your basic salary (i.e. before the reduction required to purchase additional holiday leave).

24. Will purchasing additional holiday leave affect my pension?

No.

Pensionable salary (i.e. before the reduction required to purchase additional holiday leave) is used for pension calculation purposes. Neither pensionable salary nor the length of service used to calculate your pension is affected by the additional holiday leave scheme.

In order to maintain their full pension record, staff should continue to pay their normal contributions through the payroll system, whether or not they purchase additional holiday leave. The College will likewise continue to maintain the employer’s contribution in full.

Any queries should be raised with the Pensions Office (pensions@imperial.ac.uk or phone 020 7594 5539).

25. What about state benefits?

As purchasing additional holiday leave involves a reduction in your contractual salary, members of staff should be aware that any state benefits which use this as the basis for calculating entitlement may be affected. This includes state pension, statutory maternity pay, and tax credits, although the impact on some of these will be negligible (you may choose to seek advice on this from HMRC).

Statutory maternity, paternity and sick pay are, for the majority of employees, enhanced by the College’s contractual pay schemes, and therefore most employees’ overall entitlements will be unaffected by the Additional Holiday Leave scheme. However, this depends upon individual circumstances and in cases of doubt staff should seek independent advice (e.g. from a Citizens Advice Bureau, or the Government Agency responsible for providing the benefit in question).

For staff who have chosen not to join the College’s superannuation schemes, there may also be an impact on their state Second Pension as this is linked to NI contributions. It is anticipated that this impact will be minimal.

26. What happens if I leave the College during the leave year?

As now, you should use any (pro rated) outstanding holiday leave entitlement prior to leaving the College. In exceptional circumstances you may be entitled to payment in lieu of holiday leave, subject to approval by your head of department.

27. What happens if I am sick during this leave?

The normal rules apply. See http://www.imperial.ac.uk/human-resources/procedures/health-and-wellbeing-policies/sickness-absence/

28. How does this leave relate to parental leave?
They are not related; additional holiday leave is in addition to parental leave.

29. **Is additional holiday leave a replacement for compassionate leave or time off for dependants?**

No. It is in addition to these other kinds of leave.

30. **Does this policy also mean that I can “sell” some of my holiday leave, i.e. give up leave in return for extra pay?**

No. It is not possible to sell your holiday leave.

31. **Will my payslip change?**

The monthly reduction in your pay will appear (like any other salary sacrifices which you have entered into) as a separate item under the column “Pay Details this Period” as negative earnings, i.e. with brackets around it.

32. **What rate of salary should I quote if applying for mortgage finance or similar?**

This is up to you. In response to formal requests received by the College for confirmation of your salary, your basic salary (i.e. before the reduction required to purchase additional holiday leave) will be provided.

33. **What will be the impact of additional holiday leave on departmental budgets?**

If additional holiday leave is approved, savings resulting from the reduction in the staff member’s salary will accrue in the same departmental account that covers their basic salary.

34. **I use the College’s ICAMS system to request holiday, how does my additional holiday get added to my ICAMS’ record?**

This will not happen automatically. Once your holiday has been approved, your manager will need to advise your local ICAMS’ administrator so that they can add the additional holiday you have purchased to your ICAMS’ record.

34. **How do I apply?**

Staff must submit applications to their line manager using the additional holiday form, by 18 January or 18 July before the proposed change takes effect. After approval, the form must be forwarded by the Departmental/Divisional administrator, using a digitally authenticated email, to reach the Payroll office by 31 January or 31 July as the case may be. The Payroll office will confirm to the member of staff, receipt of the form by email.

Any agreed additional holiday leave must have been used by the end of the College leave year it was requested for, i.e. 31 January.