



Leave Management FAQs

(To be read in conjunction with the Unitec Leave Management Policy)

1. Why is it so important to take leave?

Taking leave refreshes you both physically and mentally. You not only feel better, but also, after a break, you are more productive and better able to manage the stresses of life in general. Having a better work-life balance is not only good for you, it is also good for Unitec – a “win-win” situation.

Leave is a term of your employment. It is important that you get to take your leave as provided in your employment agreement.

In most cases, when you do not take your leave, it accumulates. Financially, this has an adverse effect on Unitec’s balance sheet. Managing leave appropriately helps reduce the liability for leave and to achieve a better financial out-turn.

2. What about casual employees?

Employees on casual agreements are paid holiday pay as they go.

3. Why should I take my leave as it accrues?

Taking leave, little and often, is good for you and refreshes you. It is also important for you to take a longer break. So rather than accumulate lots of leave, we encourage you to take your leave in the year that it accrues.

4. Can I take my leave during my period of notice?

It is important that you are at work during your notice period so that an appropriate handover can take place.

5. What is “excessive” leave?

Excessive leave is normally leave that is entitled and more than one year’s balance of your leave. To manage leave, you are required to work out a leave plan with your Manager, having regard to your needs as well as Unitec’s. We understand that in some scenarios, you might want to save up a bit of leave for that special overseas trip. In this exceptional situation, liaise with your Manager at planning stage to ensure that it can be accommodated. It is important that you take appropriate leave each year. It is also important that Unitec’s leave liability is at an appropriate level.

6. When is it likely that my leave will be forfeited?

We would much prefer that this situation never arises. We want you to take your leave, and we encourage you to do so. It is important that you don’t allow your leave to accumulate to the point where it becomes very difficult for you to take it without causing major inconvenience to your work colleagues and to Unitec. It is certainly our preference not to utilise the forfeiture provisions in your employment agreement so we encourage you to plan and take your leave appropriately.

7. Why do we have to take leave over Christmas?

The Christmas period provides an opportunity for you to take a reasonably long period of leave to refresh yourself after a busy year (the run up to Christmas is usually flat out), while taking very few annual leave days. This is because there are 4 statutory leave days during this period, which when combined with the weekends, provide for a reasonable period of leave without having to dip into your other contractual leave entitlements.

8. What happens if I don't have enough leave owing to me at the time Unitec suspends its operations over the Christmas period?

If this happens, Unitec will usually let you take leave in advance of accrual. But before this will be done, you will be required to authorise a deduction from your final pay or acknowledge that you owe us a debt for the amount of the accrual advanced. If, for some reason, you are not allowed annual leave in advance of accrual, you will still be entitled to the time off and will be calculated in accordance with the provisions of the Holidays Act. If this situation arises, talk to HR. They will be able to advise you.

9. Why do I have to sign anything when I need deductions from my salary?

We are required to consult with you regarding any deductions from your salary and the reason for the deduction. This is why we ask you to acknowledge as a debt the amount that you owe us and to give an undertaking to repay any amount that we have advanced to you.

10. How much annual leave can I cash up?

Annual holidays can only be cashed up once you have completed 12 months' employment. You may request to cash up less than a week at a time and can make more than one request until a maximum of one week of your minimum annual holidays is paid out in each entitlement year.

11. What happens if I have run out of annual leave, as well as sick leave?

You will not be paid during your absence in this scenario, however it is important to talk to your Manager, as there may be other options that could apply to your particular circumstances.

12. What does "primacy of annual leave" mean?

This clause is primarily aimed at use of discretionary leave which is available to academic staff employed on the terms of the academic staff collective agreement. We would like these staff members, wherever possible, to take their annual leave before they take their discretionary leave. Unitec's financial year ends on 31 December each year. The academic leave year, however, ends on 31 January. All untaken annual leave balances as at 31 December appear as a liability on Unitec's balance sheet. Discretionary leave does not. We would like academic staff who are entitled to discretionary leave to take as much of their annual leave as possible before 31 December and use their discretionary leave in January.

13. Can I have a public holiday on a day other than on one of public holidays listed in the Act?

Yes, you can if your employment agreement provides for this. This is called an "alternative" day's holiday.

14. Easter Tuesday

Easter Tuesday is provided to you as an additional day's leave (not a public holiday). It is not a day that is substituted for one of the public holidays specified in the Holidays Act, and therefore does not attract penal rates that apply when working on a public holiday.

15. Do weekends count when calculating the 3-day sick leave period?

Yes. If you got sick on Friday, then you could be asked for proof of sickness (usually from a doctor) on the Monday of the following week. In other words, the weekend days, which may not be usual working days for you, would be counted as part of the 3-day period.

16. Do I receive my sick leave balance when I leave Unitec?

You do not get paid out your sick leave balance on termination. Sick leave is an entitlement that applies during your employment.

17. Who is entitled to discretionary leave?

Staff employed on the terms of the academic staff collective agreement are entitled to discretionary leave which is leave taken for whatever purpose the staff member sees fit.

18. What do I do if I am called up for Jury Service?

You must notify their Manager as soon as practicable prior to the commencement of a jury service period and apply for Jury Leave via Self Service. You will be paid as normal, however, you are required to reimburse the jury fees and travel expenses you receive from the Court. You must provide a copy of this documentation to Payroll along with payment either by cheque or internet banking. Contact Payroll for Unitec banking account details.

19. Who does the Volunteers Employment Protection Act apply to?

This Act applies to people who are serving in the Reserve Forces of the New Zealand Armed Forces. The Volunteers Employment Protection Act allows employees who are members of the Reserves to take leave to carry out their military duties without risking their normal employment and entitlements. An employee who is a member of the Reserve Forces has a number of rights, but also a number of obligations.