

Policy on Time off for Public Duties

The Employment Rights Act 1996 requires employers to permit employees who hold certain public positions reasonable time off to perform the duties associated with them.

This policy provides a framework for allowing staff members time away from the workplace to carry out these public duties. This will be in addition to the staff members' contractual leave entitlement/leave entitlement under the Working Time Regulations. Staff members undertaking such duties have a statutory right to "reasonable time off", but such time off will be without pay.

St Mary's University wishes to support staff members holding public office or a public position. Those who are covered by this policy include:

- Justices of the Peace**
- Elected members of local authorities or police authorities
- Prison visitors
- Members of a statutory tribunal
- Members of a relevant health body
- School/college governors
- Members of the General Teaching Councils for England and Wales
- Members of the Environment Agency

(This list is not exhaustive)

Where a staff member holds a public office or public position as described above, it is the University policy to grant a reasonable amount of time off work without pay so that the staff member can perform the duties associated with that position. The staff member will not be required to make up for any such time off by working additional hours at another time.

**The Employment Rights Act 1996 states that employers must permit Justices of the Peace time off during working hours to fulfil their duties. The Department of Constitutional Affairs asks employers to allow Justices of the Peace the equivalent of 13 full days (or 26 half days) per year for this purpose.

NB: for staff members who are summoned for Jury Service, please refer to the **Jury Service procedure**.

Staff members should provide written notification to their line manager of any dates on which they wish to take time off work for public duties, stating the expected length of their absence. This notification should be provided as far in advance as possible.

In considering such requests, line managers will consider how much time off is requested, how much time off has already been granted for the duties in question, and the impact of the absence on the operational requirements of St Mary’s University.

If the amount of time off that the staff member requires for public duties becomes excessive, or begins to cause operational difficulties for the University, the University has the right to refuse the staff member further time off in the immediate future. Alternatively, the staff member may be permitted to take time off out of his/her annual holiday entitlement for this purpose.

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