

**Title: Postdoc Time Away from CWRU - Postdoc Sick and Vacation Time Policy**

**Approved by:** Faculty Senate

**Effective date:** February 21, 2022

**Responsible Official:** Director of the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs in partnership with the Human Resources Employee Relations Department

**Responsible University Office:** Office of Postdoctoral Affairs

**Revision History:** December 1, 2015

**Related University and Postdoctoral Policies:** Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), Postdoc Paid Parental Leave Policy, Including Adoption and Foster Care Leave

**Relates to:** Postdoctoral Scholars and Postdoctoral Fellows

**Time Away from CWRU**

1. Vacation Days
  - a. University Closings for Holidays and Other Events , including Winter Recess
  - b. Personal Floating Holiday
2. Breaks
3. Sick Days
  - a. Documentation of Sick Leave
4. Bereavement Leave, Family Illness and Paid Parental Leave\*
5. Unpaid Leave
6. Jury Duty or Subpoenaed Appearances
7. Personal Leave
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\*Note separate policy for Postdoc Paid Parental Leave

**Vacation Days**

Postdocs need to have paid time off for recreational, religious, cultural and other personal reasons. A reasonable period of time per fiscal year is allowable regardless of the reason for using the time and the University prefers to provide this time as vacation days.

Vacation days may be used at the postdoc's discretion and with the notification of the mentor, provided that:

- The time off is pre-scheduled and coordinated with other time off
- The time off is used in whole or half-day increments

Postdocs accrue vacation days monthly and may use them as the days accrue at any point during the fiscal year. Unused earned vacation days can also be carried over to the next fiscal year. The maximum amount of days that can be carried over cannot exceed the postdoc's maximum annual allowance (16 days), and is calculated on the postdoc's anniversary date.

- Postdoc vacation accrual schedule: From date of initial appointment, postdocs accrue 1.33 days per month (16 days per year)

Maintaining records of earned vacation time is the joint responsibility of the postdoc and their faculty mentor. Postdocs and their departments can set up a shared Google Calendar or spreadsheet to track time monthly. Examples are available from the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs.

The vacation rate is based upon the percent of full-time employment. Therefore, part-time postdocs' vacation hours are prorated.

When Postdoctoral Scholars leave CWRU, accrued unused vacation is payable to them. Postdoctoral Fellows are not eligible to be paid out for unused vacation time.

### **University Closings for Holidays and Other Events**

The University observes the following holidays by closing for business:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- \*Winter Recess
- New Year's Eve
- University-designated holiday(s)
- One (1) Personal Floating Holiday

Postdocs have the time off for the observed holiday unless otherwise scheduled. If the postdoc wishes to work on a University holiday in lieu of taking time off for another personally or culturally significant holiday, this can be coordinated between the postdoc and mentor.

In the event that the observed holiday falls on the postdoc's normal day off, the postdoc is entitled to schedule a paid day off within two weeks preceding or following the holiday.

The university may announce other closings from time to time relating to national or regional celebration or as a result of inclement weather or other unusual circumstances. If possible, these closings will be announced in advance or announced at the time of the closing through the President's Office and using local authorized media. Departments should have a plan regarding whether postdocs are considered "essential employees" and should make arrangements for postdocs to take alternate time off if they are required to report on days that the university is closed.

### **\*Winter Recess**

Unless otherwise announced, the university offers paid time off for the workdays between Christmas and New Year's Day that are not already designated as holidays.

Certain essential services must maintain regular coverage and hours. This policy does not supersede the university's obligations with regard to areas such as safety and maintenance. Certain essential employees will be required to work over Winter Recess.

Essential exempt postdocs who work a significant amount of time on campus during Winter Recess may receive equivalent paid time off on a later date; supervisors should be notified of the dates that the alternate time will be taken.

The time provided for Winter Recess is not considered vacation time, therefore, a postdoc's vacation time does not decrease. Similarly, the time does not accumulate, nor is it paid out when a postdoc leaves the university. Postdocs who do not work at least one day into January will not receive Winter Recess time.

### **Personal Floating Holiday**

Postdoctoral Scholars are eligible to receive one (1) personal floating holiday each anniversary year. Postdoctoral Scholars must obtain approval in advance when requesting a personal floating holiday. Supervisors have the authority to approve or deny the request. An unused personal floating holiday may not be carried over to the next anniversary year. Postdocs will not receive compensation for an unused personal floating holiday, and it will not be included in termination pay calculations.

### **Breaks**

All postdocs who work a 7.5- or 8-hour day will generally receive a daily, one hour, lunch break around the middle of the postdoc's scheduled workday. The supervisor has discretion for authorizing other breaks for lunch or to meet personal needs.

Nursing postdoc parents are allowed to take reasonable breaks (as determined by the nursing parent) daily to express milk after the birth of a child.

### **Sick Days**

Each year postdocs receive 10 paid sick days to be used for both personal and family medical purposes (including both physical and mental health). This sick time is available from day one of the postdoctoral appointment, and is based on the postdoc's anniversary date. A postdoc may carry over unused balances from year to year; however, unused sick days are not

payable at termination and are forfeited upon termination. Postdocs may draw from their sick day balance up to a maximum of 12 weeks within any twelve month time period for personal medical leaves.

### **Documentation of Sick Leave**

Documentation may be required for postdocs who miss five (5) consecutive days for the same personal illness or medical reason. Postdocs who call off for ten (10) consecutive days must contact the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs to discuss their absences, potential [Family Medical Leave Act \(FMLA\) leave](#), or return date. Failure to do so may be considered a voluntary resignation.

If a postdoc is unable to work for three (3) consecutive days for the same medical concern, they may inquire about their eligibility for FMLA.

### **Bereavement Leave, Family Illness, and Paid Parental Leave**

Postdocs can use up to a total of eight (8) days annually of their unused paid sick time for bereavement, family illness, or family medical reasons.

Postdocs who are on approved FMLA leave for family medical or family military service member leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) Absences and Leave Policy can use up to twelve (12) days of paid sick time annually during such leave (minus any paid sick time they may have used for occasions of bereavement, parenting, adoption, or foster care leave, or family illness not covered by their FMLA leave).

Please see separate policy for Postdoc Paid Parental Leave Policy, Including Adoption and Foster Care Leave.

### **Unpaid Leave**

Postdocs must use all available sick and vacation time prior to commencing any unpaid leave. Any postdoc requiring extended unpaid leave should coordinate this request with the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs and their faculty mentor.

### **Jury Duty or Subpoenaed Appearances**

The university encourages postdocs to honor their civil responsibilities. Therefore, paid leave is granted to all postdocs for jury leave. Jury leave does not get deducted from a postdoc's accumulated personal paid time off. The university will continue to pay a postdoc at the regular rate of pay for the time spent on jury duty.

Postdocs who miss more than five (5) days must submit documentation to verify the time spent on jury duty to the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs.

The Jury Duty policy also applies to postdocs who must serve as subpoenaed witnesses.

### **Personal Leave**

Occasionally, postdocs have unique opportunities for personal and professional development which conflict with their availability to perform their jobs for a specified period of time. The

university recognizes the related value of personal growth for legitimate purposes such as: education, travel, journalism, civic responsibilities, retreat, and other career planning situations or family-related situations. Therefore, the university may provide unpaid personal leaves of absence for up to twelve (12) weeks if approved by the supervisor. The university may provide an extension of such leaves on rare occasions. However, personal leaves are not granted for engaging in employment outside of CWRU.

Supervisors are responsible for reviewing the legitimacy of the request and confirming the leave, if approved, will not interrupt normal departmental operations and services. The postdoc's position will be held for a maximum of twelve (12) weeks if the position has not already been held for twelve (12) weeks during the previous twelve (12) months. The postdoc and supervisor will agree as to the start and end dates of the leave before the leave commences.

Unused vacation time must be used prior to commencing the unpaid portion of the leave, but will be included as part of the total leave time.

Postdocs who are on a paid leave will remain in their current Postdoc Benefits program and continue to accrue service time towards benefits based on active status. Once a postdoc commences an unpaid leave, a plan will be devised regarding whether the postdoc will continue benefits under COBRA or not, depending on the anticipated length of the unpaid leave.

### **Typical Work Week**

The business hours for administrative offices range between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. It is the responsibility of each supervisor to determine if the efficiency and the services of the department will be better served by changing or extending the hours of operation. Each team/unit needs to determine the hours of operation of their group. The typical number of hours expected per week is forty (40) hours or one hundred and sixty (160) hours per month. Flexibility in work schedule is expected for trainees, allowing for both productivity and sufficient time away from work to refresh.