



Guidance on Time Off for Training

1. Identifying Appropriate Learning and Development Activities

Through its Annual Review framework, the University of Edinburgh has a recognised approach to identifying appropriate learning and development activities that will enable the individual to fulfil their role in the University. Although development conversations can take place throughout the year, the annual review process encourages taking a more structured and formal approach to discussing an individual's learning and development needs. The Annual Review resources on our Conversations Hub offer all employees across the University guidance on making the most of those conversations: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/human-resources/learning-development/annual-review>

The Annual Review discussion is held on an annual basis, although managers and staff are also encouraged to meet between Annual Reviews to discuss progress, address any changes in circumstances that might have an impact on the already agreed learning and development activity, and if required, identify other learning and development needs and/or objectives arising during the year. The Annual Review cycle should never preclude this type of ongoing discussion about staff development options.

The Annual Review framework encourages discussion around appropriate learning and development activities, where the time and effort invested in any activity, be it participation in a workshop, a longer-term course, involvement in mentoring, work shadowing etc., is clearly linked to the individual's role and the work priorities of the School or unit. In some situations, the preferred form of development support will not be achievable, due to resource constraints, the pressure of other work priorities, or the availability of another form of support that provides more value for money. However, in most situations, through discussion, the reviewer and reviewee will be expected to reach agreement on the most appropriate and cost-effective way of addressing a particular learning and development need.

In some instances where a member of staff suggests a training activity which is not directly relevant to their current employment, managers may wish to support this option by extending flexibility to enable the individual to undertake the activity, perhaps through unpaid or annual leave.

2. Statutory right to request time off for training

Staff have a statutory right to request time off for training – which may be paid or unpaid. The statutory right has a formalised process which, when applied, requires the member of staff and the manager to take specific actions within a set timescale. Although a statutory request can be made at any time, it is expected that discussions on time for training can usually be managed through the University's Annual Review process and through normal discussion between the member of staff and manager as described above.

Managers receiving a statutory request for time off to train should seek advice from their local College/Support Group Human Resources team.

3. Making a Statutory Request for Time Off to Train

A member of staff wishing to request time off for training or study should follow the University's normal processes i.e., discussion with their manager, including in Annual Reviews which take place as part of the Annual Review process, as outlined above. Where the member of staff has exhausted this approach and still wishes to make a statutory request for a specific form of training, then this should be made in writing to the staff member's manager and should include the following:

- The date of the application
- A statement that the application is a request 'under section 63D Employment Rights Act 1996'
- The subject matter of the proposed training or study
- Where and when the proposed training or study would take place
- Who would provide or supervise the training or study
- What qualifications it would lead to, if any
- How the member of staff thinks the proposed training or study would improve their effectiveness in the University and the performance of the University
- If they've made a statutory request before, and when.

Further general information on the statutory process can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/training-study-work-your-rights>

4. Policy creation and review

This guidance was created in June 2012, updated in 2017 and reviewed in full in March 2025. It will be reviewed again by December 2028.

5. Alternative Formats

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact hrhelpline@ed.ac.uk.