

HR Policy: Leave of Absence Without Pay

Purpose

Mount Saint Vincent University strives to provide its employees with a positive working environment that allows them to balance personal and work responsibilities, while continuing to be a national leader in creating the best university experience for all members of our community. In support of the health and wellbeing of our workforce, Mount Saint Vincent University recognizes that employees may at times wish to take a leave of absence without pay to tend to personal responsibilities or career enhancement. This policy provides an overview of when such leaves may be granted.

Scope

This policy applies to all permanent employees of Mount Saint Vincent University, including members of NSGEU Local 81, IUOE Local 721 (Steam Plant & Custodians), IUOE Local 721 (Security), and Management & Professional Administrators (MPA). The policy does not cover senior administration, externally funded positions, or full-time and part-time faculty.

For unionized employees, leaves of absence without pay are implemented in accordance with the provisions of the relevant collective agreement:

For the purposes of this policy, the term ‘managing supervisor’ will be interpreted to mean the Chief of Security when the applicant is a member of IUOE 721 (Security) and will be interpreted to mean the Director of Facilities Management when the applicant is a member of IUOE 721 (Steam Plant & Custodians).

Policy

Employees of Mount Saint Vincent University may be eligible to take a leave of absence without pay if the leave does not impede the functioning of the department or the University, and the employee has substantial and warranted reasons for requesting the leave. Proper approval (see Procedure – Step 1) from the University is required for all leaves of absence without pay, and approval of such leaves will always be at the University’s discretion. Employees should consult the appropriate collective agreement or handbook for information on the maximum length of a leave of absence without pay that may be approved as well as other limitations.

Employees who are approved for a leave of absence without pay should be advised of the following adjustments to their benefits:

Salary

Employees will receive no wage or salary during the complete duration of a leave of absence without pay. The employee's salary will be adjusted to reflect the reduced schedule or days of unpaid leave.

Vacation

If the employee is on leave without pay for eleven days or more in any given month, they will lose that month's vacation accrual. If the employee is reducing their work schedule for an extended period, their vacation will be adjusted based on the prorated schedule.

Benefits

Employees will not be entitled to receive the Employer Contribution during a leave of absence without pay. Subject to the provisions of the University's Flexible Benefits Program, employees may continue their coverage as outlined in the plan while on a leave of absence without pay. The employee must arrange and pay for this coverage prior to the commencement of the leave.

Pension

Employees have the option to continue making voluntary contributions to the MSVU Retirement Plan while on a leave of absence without pay. The University will not make matching contributions during the leave. The employee must arrange and pay for this coverage prior to the commencement of the leave.

Seniority

Unionized employees on a leave of absence without pay will retain their seniority but will cease to accumulate seniority while on leave.

Procedure

1. Eligible Employees may request a leave of absence without pay by submitting a request to their Managing Supervisor in writing. Requests are made to the employee's Managing Supervisor and must be approved by the Department Head and Director of Human Resources. Employees must provide sufficient notice for their request to take a leave of absence without pay as stipulated in the appropriate collective agreement or handbook.
2. The arrangement must be mutually agreeable to the employee, the managing supervisor, the Department Head, and the Director of Human Resources.
3. The arrangement must not negatively impact the service provided by the employee's department and must not hamper the operations of the University.
4. The length of the leave will be determined during the initial approval stage and shall not exceed the maximum length as outlined in the appropriate collective agreement or handbook. Any changes in the approved dates of the leave of absence require prior approval of the managing supervisor, the Department Head, and the Director, Human Resources.

Criteria

A leave of absence without pay will be approved when there are substantial and warranted reasons, and approval of leaves of absence without pay will be considered in a fair and consistent manner. The following list is a summary of reasons why a leave of absence without pay may be approved; however, leaves may be approved for reasons other than those listed, and may be denied even if the reason is on this list.

1. To undertake an educational upgrading opportunity directly related to the employee's current role.
2. To undertake a professional development opportunity related to the employee's current role.
3. To undertake a volunteer opportunity in the community or abroad.
4. To care for a family member where the length or type of care does not fall within the paid leave options provided in the relevant collective agreement or handbook.
5. To complete a personal goal related to health and wellness.

Leaves of absence without pay will not be approved for the following reasons:

1. To accept any form of permanent employment with another employer.
2. To undertake an educational upgrading opportunity that does not relate to the employee's current role at the University or potential future roles at the University.

Approved by: Vice President (Administration)

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