

Major Sporting and Other Special Events	
Enabling Policy Statement; Executive Owner; Approval Route:	Our Colleagues - Chief People Officer - Operations Committee
Is the Procedure for internal use only (Non- disclosable) ?	Disclosable
Associated Policy Statements:	N/A
Authorised Owner:	Human Resources Director
Authorised Co-ordinator:	Head of HR Performance Delivery
Effective date:	14 March 2024
Due date for full review:	14 March 2027
Sub documentation:	N/A

Approval History

Version	Reason for review	Approval Route	Date
1.0	3 Yearly review and migration to the POPP governance structure	Operations Committee	14 March 2024

1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to managers and employees on handling issues and planning time off during major sporting and other special events. The University recognises that employees may wish to take time off at or around the time of major events, such as the World Cup, Olympics, Wimbledon, or weddings or funerals of national significance.

Whilst the University is supportive of employees who wish to enter into the spirit of such events, it is important that the productivity and work of the Faculties/Departments and the University are not negatively affected.

Any concessions granted to employees and/or flexibility in working hours implemented for the duration of a sporting or other special event will be temporary measures and are a privilege, rather than a right, for staff.

It is an expectation that staff whose travel arrangements may be affected by major events, plan ahead to ensure that their normal working hours are not disrupted. Members of staff who believe that travel to and from work or work-related meetings are likely to be affected over a long period by major events should discuss this with their line manager.

2. Scope and Exceptions to the Procedure

This procedure applies to all employees at the University.

This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. It may be amended from time to time with appropriate consultation with recognised Trade Union representatives.

3. Definitions and Terminology

Examples of major events that are covered by the procedure are:

- World Cup (when held in the UK)
- Olympics (when held in the UK)
- Wimbledon
- Weddings or funerals of national significance

This list is not exhaustive.

4. Procedural Principles

The University of Surrey is a diverse organisation. As such, it is important to recognise that during major sporting events, employees may wish to take time off to support a variety of different teams and players. The University acknowledges this and will make no distinction between requests for annual leave or flexitime from employees of different nationalities.

A number of sporting events held in the UK will ask for volunteers. Volunteering may provide a unique insight into a major sporting event and employees should consider any guidelines issued by the event organisers.

4.1. Time Off Work

All employees wishing to take time off to watch sporting events or to attend "volunteer days" to support major sporting events must book annual leave as set out in accordance with the relevant Terms & Conditions of Employment, taking note of the minimum notice periods required.

Requests will be dealt with on a first-come, first-served basis and approval will only be granted if

minimum staffing levels can be maintained, both for operational and safety reasons.

It follows that if the University, or a particular Faculty/Department, receives a large number of requests for annual leave at the same time, then some of them may have to be refused. In these circumstances, managers will endeavour to be as fair as possible to all staff.

4.2. Flexibility in Working Time

All employees are entitled to request flexible working for the duration of such events in accordance with the University Flexible Working Procedure. The University will, if it is possible to do so without creating operational difficulties, permit flexibility in start and finish times for employees who request it for the duration of a designated special event.

For events that begin around midday, employees may wish to request to take a longer lunchbreak with working time being made up as appropriate. Similarly, if an event is scheduled to begin in the late afternoon/early evening, line managers may permit employees who request it to leave work up to an hour earlier than their normal finishing time to enable them to watch the event.

In line with the University Flexible Working Procedure, this will be on the basis that an employee who seeks flexibility obtains line management permission in advance of the event and that they agree to make up any lost time as agreed with their line manager.

Employees may also request a shift swap. They can, with their manager's permission, swap one or more shifts with a colleague, subject always to health and safety provisions.

As with annual leave, requests will be dealt with on a first-come, first-served basis and approval will only be granted if minimum staffing levels can be maintained, both for operational and safety reasons.

It follows that if the University, or a particular Faculty/Department, receives a large number of requests for flexibility, there may be business-based reasons why they cannot all be granted. If that is the case, employees will be notified of this and will be required to continue to work normally.

With few exceptions employees willing to volunteer to support a major sporting event will be expected to take annual leave and to ensure they put aside enough leave from their holiday entitlement to cover any planned volunteering activities.

If a major event held in the UK requires volunteers to sign up for a minimum number of days above 5 days, employees must use annual leave for the first five days and unpaid leave for the next 5 days up to a maximum of 10 days for the volunteer work. To qualify for this special arrangement employees must provide proof of the volunteering requirements from the official organisers of the event.

The unpaid leave benefit associated with a major sporting event is supplementary to the additional planned leave that staff can purchase, outlined in Section 3.5 of the University Salary Sacrifice Procedure. Staff may elect to use the benefit of purchasing the additional leave under the Salary Sacrifice Procedure for their volunteer work, but to do so they must apply for the leave before the 1st of July prior to the start of a new holiday year in which the event takes place.

4.3. Additional Information

4.3.1. Alcohol Consumption

All employees are reminded that attendance at work whilst under the influence of alcohol is not

permissible. Employees are advised to ensure that they are familiar with guidance outlined in the University Substance Misuse Procedure.

4.3.2. Sickness Absence

All employees are required to provide notification and details of any sickness absence by 10.00am on the day of the absence, in accordance with the University Sickness Absence Procedure. Absence which is not supported by a self-certified (first 7 days of sickness) or a certified sick certificate (after the first 7 days of sickness) will be investigated further, and disciplinary action may be taken if no valid reason for the absence is provided.

4.3.3. Facilities for Watching Televised Events

The University of Surrey provides access to televised sporting and other special events in a number of venues.

Employees must nevertheless always ensure that they have obtained permission from their line manager before leaving their work location to watch the event at work. Time off to watch the event will be granted only where it does not cause any disruption to the employee's work, or inconvenience to students or other employees. Where employees are permitted to watch the event on television, they may, at the line manager's discretion, be required to make up the lost work time.

Similarly, the University may, at its discretion, vary its procedure on use of the internet during a major event to allow employees to watch the event on their workplace computers. Again, this is not a right and employees must obtain express permission from their line manager before accessing or watching any special event on the internet at work.

4.3.4. Unauthorised Absence

Managers and employees are reminded that taking absence from work which is unauthorised is a disciplinary offence. This includes taking unreasonable periods of time away from the work location, so it is important that normal break times continue to be adhered to, unless agreed otherwise, for the duration of major sporting events.

Levels of attendance at work will be monitored in particular for the duration of major sporting or other special events. Unauthorised or unjustified absences or lateness will not be tolerated.

5. Governance Requirements

5.1. Implementation: Communication Plan

The procedure was embedded when first published.

5.2. Implementation: Training Plan

The procedure was embedded when first published. Further support will be provided to colleagues implementing the procedure when required.

5.3. Review

This procedure will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner if required by a change in legislation or practice.

5.4. Legislative Context and Higher Education Sector Guidance or Requirements

N/A

5.5. Sustainability

This procedure is deemed to have little to no impact on sustainability.

6. Stakeholder Engagement and Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment was completed on 05 March 2024 and is held by the Authorised Co-ordinator.

Stakeholder Consultation was completed, as follows:

Stakeholder	Nature of Engagement	Request EB Approval (Y/N)	Date	Name of Contact
Governance	Governance Review	N	11 January 2024	Andrea Langley
H&S	H&S Review	N	24 January 2024	Matt Purcell
Sustainability	Sustainability Review	N	15 December 2023	Martin Wiles