



The American University of Kurdistan

Policy of Leave for Non-Instructional Staff

Policy Number: HR005
Effective Date: May 28, 2023

- 1. Policy:** This policy, established by the Board of Trustees (BoT), outlines the standards and procedures governing leave entitlements for non-faculty employees. The American University of Kurdistan (AUK) is committed to supporting employees during times when they may need to be away from work due to a life event, medical emergency, or vacation. All leave-related regulations must be developed, revised, approved, and communicated in accordance with this policy. The policy will be made readily accessible to the University community, published on the AUK website, and reviewed regularly to ensure its continued effectiveness and alignment with the University's operational needs and applicable labor laws. This policy is consistent with relevant local and national employment regulations regarding leave provisions and employee rights. Members of the AUK are not exempt from any policy that has been approved by the AUK BoT.
 - a. **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to outline the procedures required in order for full-time non-instructional staff employees of AUK to take leaves.
 - b. **Scope:** This policy applies to AUK full-time non-instructional staff with active employment contracts at the time of the request.
- 2. Definition of Terms:**
 - Non-instructional staff:** are employees who support the institution's operations through administrative, operational, or service roles, without involvement in teaching.
 - Annual leave** is a period of paid time off work granted by an employer to an employee each year.
 - Personal leave** is a period of paid time off, typically lasting a few hours and not exceeding a maximum of 4 hours, and is deducted from the employee's annual leave balance.
 - Sick leave** is a period of paid time an employee is allowed to be absent from work due to illness or injury.
 - Family events leave** is a period of paid time off granted to an employee to attend significant family-related occasions such as weddings, funerals, or the birth of a child.
 - Emergency leave** refers to a short-term, unplanned leave of absence taken due to sudden and urgent personal circumstances beyond the employee's control.
 - Education leave** is authorized time off granted to an employee to pursue educational or professional development activities relevant to their role or career growth.
 - Personal unpaid leave:** is an approved absence from work requested by an employee for personal reasons. During this period, no salary or wages are paid.
 - Absence without official leave:** (AWOL) refers to any instance in which an employee fails to report for duty or leaves their assigned post without prior approval from a supervisor or without providing acceptable justification within a reasonable timeframe.

3. Responsibilities:

- a. **Issuing Unit:** The Office of Human Resources (HR) holds primary responsibility for implementation, monitoring compliance, enforcing guidelines, collecting relevant data, and taking necessary actions in case of violations.

b. **Other Stakeholders:**

Supervisor Responsibility: Staff Presence and Output Awareness

It is a core responsibility of supervisors to maintain ongoing awareness of their staff's presence and work output. This involves ensuring that team members are consistently accounted for during working hours, whether in person, working remote, or on approved leave. Supervisors should also monitor and evaluate the quality, timeliness, and consistency of work being produced.

4. Procedures

A. Annual Leave

Short-Term Annual Leave (1-2 days/24-48 Hours)

- Employees requesting annual leave for a duration of one or two days must submit their leave request to the Office of Human Resources no later than 48 hours prior to the requested leave date.
- The leave request must be approved by the employee's direct supervisor before submission.

Extended Annual Leave (More Than 2 Days/Over 48 Hours)

- Employees requesting annual leave for a period exceeding two days must submit their leave request to the Office of Human Resources at least two weeks prior to the intended start date of the leave.
- The leave request must be approved in advance by the employee's supervisor before submission to HR.

All provisions governing annual leave shall be aligned with the following requirements:

- Leave requests submitted outside of the designated notice period may be approved at the discretion of the supervisor. If not approved, the leave will be deemed unapproved, resulting in the absence being recorded as unpaid leave and subject to salary deduction.
- All staff below the manager's level are entitled to 25 days of annual leave, and staff at the manager's level and above are entitled to 35 days of annual leave.
- Employees who are in their probationary period are not entitled to take annual leave except in cases of sickness or emergency. In the case of emergencies, the probation period will be extended for the same number of days as such emergency leave days taken.
- Employees' annual leaves accumulate over one calendar year; only a maximum of 10 days of accrued leave can be carried over to the next year.
- Annual leave is accrued on a monthly basis at the designated rate.
- Personal leave requests submitted on the same day in the early morning are subject to approval at the supervisor's discretion.
- While the AUK will support employees' requests to enjoy their annual leaves, AUK has the right to ask employees to postpone or amend the annual leave request to ensure that the proper operations of their respective units are not impacted.

B. Sick Leave

If the employee gets sick during working hours, then s/he should visit the AUK medical clinic for care and follow the directives for a time-out during the working hours; If the AUK medical doctor or nurse is not available on campus, the University will assist the

individual in visiting a hospital for immediate care and ensure they receive appropriate guidance regarding time off during working hours

All provisions governing sick leave shall be aligned with the following requirements.

- In accordance with the provisions of the Iraqi Labor Law, each employee shall be entitled to thirty (30) calendar days of fully paid sick leave annually.
- If the employee does not submit a medical report within 48 hours from the onset of his/her sickness leave, the leave days shall be considered as an absence and result in a deduction balance in his/her annual leave.
- A one-day sick leave requires approval from the immediate supervisors only; a sick leave of two days or more needs to be certified by a medical professional and submitted to HR.
- Employees undergoing probation shall be entitled to sick leave solely upon presentation of a medical report duly authorized by a licensed physician; provided, however, that medical evidence shall not be required in the event of a single day of sick leave. The duration of the probationary period shall, in all cases, be extended by a period equivalent to the total number of days of sick leave taken.
- In the case of the number of leaves exceeding the balance of 30 days per year, salary in the amount of those extra days will be deducted from the employee's pay.
- Any cases or provisions relating to sick leave beyond thirty (30) days, partial-day sick leave, or leave due to occupational illness or work-related injury may be considered on a case-by-case basis and shall require the approval of the immediate supervisor and the respective VP.

C. Family Events Leave

Employees are required to request leave for family events by submitting a formal leave request to both the HR and his/her direct supervisor. Requests should be made as early as possible to allow sufficient time for review and approval.

All provisions governing family events leave shall be aligned with the following requirements.

Marriage Leave

- The employee shall be entitled to a maximum of 5 days as marriage leave.
- The employee is entitled to only one marriage leave during the duration of his/her employment at AUK.

Maternity Leave

- In accordance with Iraqi Labor Law, female employees who have completed at least 6 months of employment at AUK are eligible for a total of 14 weeks as maternity leave.

Paternity Leave

- Male AUK employees are entitled to a five-day paternity leave upon the birth of a child.

Bereavement Leave

- The employee is allowed five working days of bereavement leave upon the immediate death of a first-grade family member; this classification solely includes parents, spouse, siblings, or children.
- The employee is allowed three working days of bereavement leave upon the immediate death of an extended-grade family member.

D. Education Leave

- Educational leave requests must first be approved by the employee's direct supervisor before being formally submitted for further processing. This ensures that the leave aligns with departmental needs and responsibilities.
- After obtaining approval from the direct supervisor, the employee should submit the educational leave request along with any required supporting documents to the HR department. The HR department will review the submission for completeness and compliance. Final approval will be granted by the VPAF.
- Participation in training programs, workshops, or certification courses, as well as the subsequent sharing of learning outcomes with other employees, may be approved on a case-by-case basis, subject to the prior authorization of the immediate supervisor and HR and the respective VP.

All provisions governing education leave shall be aligned with the following requirements:

- Full-time employees interested in taking an unpaid leave to complete certificates, diploma programs, or academic programs (bachelor's, master's, doctoral) may be entitled to a one-year leave to pursue accredited academic credentials.
- If the leave is approved, the employee will be required to return at the conclusion of the one-year leave to resume his/her former position.
- While AUK commits to keeping the position available for the employee taking educational leave, it does not guarantee a change in position title or modification to the salary.

E. Personal Unpaid Leave

Personal unpaid leave may be requested by an employee for personal reasons not covered under other types of leave. Such requests must be discussed with the employee's supervisor, who will review the situation and consult with HR and the respective VP for approval. During this period, no salary or wages are paid.

F. Absence Without Official Leave

In the case of an employee being absent from work without a legitimate excuse and without approved official leave, the employee will first receive a warning letter/email with a salary deduction for days absent. If the absence exceeds 10 consecutive days or 20 separate days, this will result in a final warning letter and termination of the employee's contract.

Note: AUK cannot terminate the employment of any person on leave if that leave has been officially approved and registered.

G. Emergency Leave

There may be unforeseen circumstances which require an employee to take a leave with little or no notice. Such cases should be immediately discussed with the supervisor and Human Resources as soon as possible. The handling of specific cases shall be determined on an individual basis, subject to the approval of the respective VP.

H. Appeals

Employees who wish to appeal a decision related to leave entitlements or the denial of a leave request should refer to the Policy for Employee Grievances. This policy provides a clear and structured process for raising concerns and requesting a formal review, ensuring that all appeals are handled fairly and in accordance with organizational procedures.

5. Timeline and Communication/Implementation Plan

Activity	Responsibility Party	Timeline	Communication Channels	Details
Policy Revision Announcement	HR	November, 2025	University website, email	Announce the revision of the policy, assessment metrics, and objectives.
Feedback Collection	HR	December, 2025 and beyond	Surveys, suggestion boxes, email	Gather feedback from the University community on the policy's effectiveness, challenges, and areas for improvement.
Periodic Reviews and Updates	OIEP, University Leadership	October, 2026	Website, email, staff meetings	Review the policy and its enforcement mechanisms & procedures annually or as necessary to ensure continued relevance and compliance.

6. Related Documents

[Policy of Employee Code of Conduct](#)

[Policy of Employee Grievance](#)

7. Ways to Measure Success

Utilization Metrics (i.e., Are employees using their entitlements appropriately?)

- **Annual Leave Utilization Rate**
Average # of annual leave days taken per employee vs. entitlement (25 or 35 days)
- **Sick Leave Utilization Rate**
Average # of sick leave days taken vs. entitlement (30 days)

8. Policy History

- Approved by:** Board of Trustees
- Adopted:** May 28, 2023
- Revised:** November 2, 2025