

## **Guidance on paid and unpaid compassionate leave for students funded by the University of Sheffield and/or UKRI**

In November 2022, UKRI amended their Training Grant Terms and Conditions to include provision for paid and unpaid time off for emergencies and/or compassionate leave for the students whom it funds. The University has recently agreed to extend this policy to cover University of Sheffield-funded students. Students must be within their funded period (i.e. still receiving a maintenance stipend) in order to receive any additional paid leave.

The following guidance is proposed to support implementation of this policy at Sheffield:

1. In the event of the death of a dependent child under the age of 18, the student shall be entitled to 14 days of paid leave, to be taken as leave of absence.
2. In the event of the death of a dependent who is not a child under the age of 18, or a close relative or close friend of the student, the student shall be entitled to up to 5 days of paid leave, to be taken as leave of absence.
3. In the event of illness or serious injury involving a dependent, or a close relative or close friend, the student shall be entitled to up to 5 days of paid leave, to be taken as leave of absence.
4. This policy is limited to emergencies involving bereavement, illness or injury relating to individuals close to the student (mainly dependents and family), and not to other household or caring-related emergencies, for example childcare issues, for which an authorised absence or annual leave would normally be considered more appropriate.
5. In addition to the paid leave entitlement, students may request additional unpaid leave of absence, as required.
6. The University reserves the right to request relevant evidence to support requests for paid compassionate/emergency leave but will be mindful of the difficult circumstances inherent to such requests. We recognise that it would not be appropriate to request medical evidence pertaining to individuals who are not themselves students of the University.
7. Normal rules relating to retrospective requests for leave of absence shall apply, i.e. requests shall not normally be backdated more than 30 days. This allows for the fact that requesting compassionate/emergency leave will not be an immediate priority.
8. Students should take any paid or unpaid leave for emergency or compassionate reasons as a leave of absence, as this will enable us to extend both the student's funded/fee-paying period, as well as their time limit. The University has a minimum period of leave of absence, which is normally four weeks. However, there is already scope for exceptions to this minimum period on certain exceptional grounds and this could encompass cases of emergency/compassionate leave, as outlined above.