

## Collective Agreement on Harmonisation of Terms of Conditions of Employment Frequently Asked Questions

The questions below aim to provide additional guidance and information about the Collective Agreement. If you have any questions that are not covered below, please email [reward@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:reward@abdn.ac.uk).

### Q1. What is the Collective Agreement about and why is the University implementing it?

A. The agreement seeks to harmonise terms and conditions across different staff groups, addressing the fact that there have been differences in entitlements such as annual leave and sickness leave according to what grade staff are on (with the main terms and conditions previously differentiating between Grades 1-4 and Grades 5-9).

The University is implementing the agreement as part of our commitment to the New Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff (New JNCHES) and the Framework Agreement for the Modernisation of HE Pay Structures.

### Q2 How was the Collective Agreement developed and agreed?

A. The Collective Agreement was developed and proposed by the Reward Consultation and Negotiation Group which comprises University management and campus trade union representatives. Negotiations about the agreement took place during 2022 and 2023, during which time feedback was sought from staff on the developing proposals. A key meeting took place in November 2023 which involved members of the Reward Consultation and Negotiation Group and broader representation from across Schools, Directorates and different staffing groups. This helped to formulate the final proposals contained in the Collective Agreement which the Reward Consultation and Negotiation Group agreed and which were approved by the Senior Management Team and Partnership Negotiation Consultative Committee. The signed Collective Agreement will be presented to the meeting of University Court in June 2024 for formal endorsement.

### Q3. What terms and conditions are covered in the Collective Agreement?

A. In summary it includes agreement to:

- harmonise **annual leave**, meaning that staff in Grades 1-4 have the same annual leave entitlement as staff in Grades 5-9 from the 2024/25 annual leave year. In addition, as previously communicated, as part of the agreement, staff in Grades 1-4 are being given 2 additional days' annual leave to be taken in the remainder of the 2023/24 annual leave year (i.e., before end September 2024).

- amend arrangements for payments made where staff have to work on **public holidays**, that applied to staff in Grades 1-4 only. This means that current terms and conditions for Grades 1-4 are replaced with new terms and conditions with effect from the remainder of the public holidays falling in the 2023/24 leave year. Staff will no longer receive the enhanced rates of payment/time off in lieu for these days and they will be treated as part of normal annual leave provisions. Therefore, if staff work on any of the remaining public holidays, they will be paid normal rate and will be able to take a day's leave at another time in the 2023/24 leave year. From the 2024/25 leave year, the 7-day period covering Christmas and New Year public

holidays and the 3-day close down period will attract the following payments for staff in Grades 1-4 who have to work them:

- An overtime payment based on double time along with a day off in lieu for each of the 7 days worked; or
- Standard rate with two days off in lieu for each of the 7 days worked

- from the 2024/25 leave year, all other public holidays will be treated as normal leave, with no entitlement to enhanced rates or time off in lieu.

- **Overtime:** from 1 October 2024, introduce the following overtime arrangements for staff in Grades 1-4:

- limited to situations where managers have agreed that there is a clear statutory need or business need for overtime, with new guidance to be created.
- Overtime payment arrangements applying where Grades 1-4 staff have worked the full-time equivalent week of 36.5 hours. Part time staff working additional hours up to 36.5 hours will receive time off in lieu or payment based on plain time for additional hours worked up to 36.5 hours
- Where staff work **one** additional hour above 36.5 hours, time off in lieu will apply.
- Thereafter, where staff are required to work additional hours the following overtime rates apply.

Monday to Saturday Time and a half (i.e., hourly rate x 1.5)

Sunday Double time (i.e., hourly rate x 2)

- **Sickness leave:** harmonising sickness leave entitlements to match Grades 1-4 terms and conditions with Grades 5-9 terms and conditions from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025. An enhanced Attendance Management Policy will be developed to support this.

- **Pre-Retirement leave:** harmonising terms and conditions across staff to provide all staff who are retiring pre-retirement leave in accordance with the arrangements specified in Q12 below. A Retirement Toolkit will also be available to support staff and managers.

**Q4. What is the effective date of each change provided for the in the Collective Agreement and the difference between current and new terms and conditions?**

A. Please see below.

Current T&C	New T&C	Effective date
<b>Annual leave</b>  Varying entitlements whether staff are Grade 1-4 or Grade 5-9.  Grades 1-4: 35 days, rising to 36 days after 5 years; 37 days after 7 years and 38 days after 12 days service (including annual leave, public holidays and closedown days).	<b>Annual leave</b>  2 additional days leave for Grades 1-4 staff to be used in 2023/24 leave year.  Matching Grades 1-4 to Grades 5-9 terms and conditions.	May – September 2024  2024/25 leave year (i.e., from 1 October 2024).

Current T&C	New T&C	Effective date
<p>Grades 5-9: 41 days (including annual leave, public holidays and closedown days).</p>		
<p><b>Public Holiday payments</b></p> <p><b>Applies to Grades 1-4 staff only</b></p> <p>Where agreed staff have to work on a public holiday, entitled to receive overtime (double time plus a day in lieu or plain time plus two days in lieu).</p> <p>No enhanced rates for Christmas/New Year closedown days.</p>	<p><b>Public Holiday payments</b></p> <p><b>Applies to Grades 1-4 staff only</b></p> <p>No enhancements for remaining public holidays in 2023/24</p> <p>7-day Christmas and New Year public holiday/closedown payments for staff in Grades 1-4 who have to work them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-An overtime payment based on double time along with a day off in lieu for each of the 7 days worked; or</li> <li>-Standard rate with two days off in lieu for each of the 7 days worked</li> </ul> <p>No enhancements for the other public holidays in 2024/25 and beyond.</p>	<p>Remaining public holidays in 2023/24</p> <p>Christmas/New Year 2024/25 and beyond</p> <p>From 1 October 2024</p>
<p><b>Overtime</b></p> <p><b>For Grades 1-4 staff only</b></p> <p>Part time staff paid standard rate up to 36.5 hours.</p> <p>Where possible any overtime compensated with time off in lieu.</p> <p>If not possible then payment based on:</p> <p>Monday to Saturday Time and a half (i.e., hourly rate x 1.5)</p> <p>Sunday Double time (i.e., hourly rate x 2)</p>	<p><b>Overtime</b></p> <p><b>For Grades 1-4 staff only</b></p> <p>Limited to situations where managers have agreed that there is a clear statutory need or business need for overtime, with new guidance to be created.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Overtime payment arrangements applying where Grades 1-4 staff have worked the full-time equivalent week of 36.5 hours.</li> <li>-Part time staff working additional hours up to 36.5 hours will receive time off in lieu or payment based on plain time for additional hours worked up to 36.5 hours</li> <li>-Where staff work <b>one</b> additional hour above 36.5 hours, time off in lieu will apply.</li> </ul>	<p>1 October 2024</p> <p>Until then, current terms and conditions continue to apply.</p>

Current T&C	New T&C	Effective date																		
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<p><b>Sickness leave</b></p> <p><b>Grades 1-4</b></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="209 701 632 1077"> <thead> <tr> <th>Service</th> <th>Full Pay</th> <th>Half Pay</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Up to 6 months</td> <td>Statutory Sick Pay only</td> <td>Statutory Sick Pay only</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6 months to One year</td> <td>2 months</td> <td>2 months</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Second/Third Year</td> <td>3 months</td> <td>3 months</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fourth/Fifth Year</td> <td>5 months</td> <td>5 months</td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Fifth Year</td> <td>6 months</td> <td>6 months</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Grades 5-9</b></p> <p>Provided that staff comply with the University's sick pay requirements and conditions, all staff will be eligible for payment of up to 6 months at their basic salary and 6 months at half of their basic salary.</p>	Service	Full Pay	Half Pay	Up to 6 months	Statutory Sick Pay only	Statutory Sick Pay only	6 months to One year	2 months	2 months	Second/Third Year	3 months	3 months	Fourth/Fifth Year	5 months	5 months	After Fifth Year	6 months	6 months	<p><b>Sickness leave</b></p> <p><b>All staff</b></p> <p>Provided that staff comply with the University's sick pay requirements and conditions, all staff will be eligible for payment of up to 6 months at their basic salary and 6 months at half of their basic salary.</p>	<p>1 July 2025</p> <p>Until then, current terms and conditions continue to apply.</p>
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<p><b>Pre-Retirement leave</b></p> <p>Applicable to Grade 1-4 and Technical Staff only</p>	<p><b>Pre-Retirement leave</b></p> <p>Applicable to all staff (see Q12 for details)</p>	<p>1 October 2024</p> <p>Until then current terms and conditions continue to apply.</p>																		

**Q5. What has happened to the proposal to introduce a 35-hour working week?**

A. Consideration was given to introducing a 35-hour week for all grades, with considerable discussion undertaken with Schools and Directorates to establish the impact that this would have. This also considered the feedback that was submitted by staff which showed strong support for the idea of a 35-hour week but highlighted key challenges, including workload and how reducing the working week would impact on this. Following discussion, and in the context of the financial challenges facing the University, it was agreed that consideration of introducing a 35-hour week be paused. There remains, however, a firm commitment to reconsidering this,

subject to affordability and once the outcomes of national discussions about the pay spine are known, as well as focused consideration has been given by the University to the areas of efficiency, productivity and workload.

#### **Q6. What Annual Leave Policy will apply to all staff?**

A. The current [Annual Leave Regulations Grades 5-9.pdf](#) will apply to all staff from the 2024/25 annual leave year (the Policy will be updated to apply to all).

#### **Q7. What are the new Public Holiday Payments and when do they apply from?**

A. The new arrangements are detailed below and they apply for the remaining public holidays in 2023/24 and from the 2024/25 onwards.

2023/24 - As a result of the acceleration of annual leave entitlement for staff Grades 1-4 the remaining public holidays falling during the 2023/2024 annual leave year will be treated as normal leave, therefore, will not attract the enhanced payment rates or time off in lieu currently applicable to staff Grades 1-4.

2024/25 and onwards - from the 2024/2025 annual leave year, all public holidays will be treated as normal leave. This is with the exception of the public holidays falling on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day and 2<sup>nd</sup> January, as well as the three-day close down period (therefore 7 days in total over the Christmas and New Year period). The arrangements for the 7-day period are detailed below.

#### **Q8. What are the new 7-day Christmas/New Year payments and who do they apply to?**

A. Where staff Grades 1-4 are required to work their normal duties as part of their normal work arrangements, during the 7-day Christmas and New Year Public Holiday/Closure Period they will be entitled to payment/time off in lieu as follows:

- An overtime payment based on double time along with a day off in lieu for each of the 7 days worked; or
- Standard rate with two days off in lieu for each of the 7 days worked

The requirement to work will be based on clear justification on the grounds of a statutory need and/or service need with clear approval given by line managers.

This does not change existing agreed arrangements in particular services whereby cover is being provided, either remotely or on campus for particular activities during the 7-day period. The existing arrangements will continue to apply.

It also does not change other existing agreed arrangements for staff in receipt of call-out payments during the 7-day period who are required to be on call and who may/may not attend work as they are called out. The existing arrangements will continue to apply.

#### **Q9. What are the new overtime arrangements and when do they apply from?**

A. From 1 October 2024, the following overtime arrangements apply to staff in Grades 1-4 only.

Overtime will be limited to situations where managers have agreed that there is a clear statutory need or business need for it.

The overtime payment arrangements detailed below will only apply where staff have worked the full-time equivalent week of 36.5 hours. Part time staff working additional hours up to 36.5 hours will receive time off in lieu or payment based on plain time for additional hours worked up to 36.5 hours.

- Where staff work one additional hour above 36.5 hours, time off in lieu will apply.
- Thereafter where staff work additional hours the following overtime rates apply.

Monday to Saturday Time and a half (i.e., hourly rate x 1.5)  
Sunday Double time (i.e., hourly rate x 2)

#### **Q10. What are the new arrangements for sickness leave?**

A. The Collective Agreement includes enhancing sickness leave entitlement for staff in Grades 1-4 to match the current terms and conditions for staff in Grades 5-9 with a new Attendance Management Policy to be introduced. This will apply from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025. Until then, the existing terms and conditions for staff in Grades 1-4 will continue to apply.

Therefore, from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025, provided that staff comply with the University's sick pay requirements and conditions, all staff will be eligible for payment of up to 6 months at their basic salary and 6 months at half of their basic salary. Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) will apply as follows:

- For staff on sick pay – SSP is inclusive and will be paid and offset against pay accordingly.
- For staff on half pay – SSP is paid, as well as half pay.
- If half pay plus SSP exceeds full pay the difference will be offset.

#### **Q11. How will entitlement to sick pay be calculated for staff in Grades 1-4 as at 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025?**

A. On 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025, terms and conditions will be matched for any member of Grades 1-4 staff who is absent. Any sickness in the previous 12 months will be taken into consideration and deducted from the new entitlement in determining remaining sickness entitlement. The examples below are provided to clarify.

(i) Grades 1-4 member of staff absent for 2 months in the previous 12 months at 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025: sickness entitlement will be calculated as 4 months at their basic salary and 6 months at half of their basic salary.

(ii) Grades 1-4 member of staff absent for a total of one month in the previous 12 months at 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025: sickness entitlement will be calculated as 5 months at their basic salary and 6 months at half their basic salary.

## Q12. What are the new Pre-Retirement Leave arrangements and when do they apply?

A. The new Pre-Retirement Leave arrangements are designed to assist staff in making the transition from work to retirement and will apply from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024, replacing the current arrangements that are in place for staff Grades 1-4 and Technical Staff.

Staff will be entitled to Pre-Retirement Leave where they:

- Are providing notice of retirement date above the contractual minimum notice period and as detailed in table below.
- Are retiring at age 55 years or over.
- Have 3 years' service at the intended date of retirement.

Pre-retirement leave is not available to staff taking flexible retirement (i.e., drawing some pension whilst continuing to work for the University on a part time basis), those retiring as part of the terms of a Voluntary Severance Scheme or those retiring due to ill health.

Subject to eligibility, the amount of pre-retirement leave staff will be entitled to is detailed below.

Notice of retirement provided	Pre-retirement leave days
12 months	20 days
11 months	19 days
10 months	18 days
9 months	17 days
Below 9 months	No entitlement

## Q13. Will Pre-Retirement Leave be able to be taken in a block?

A. As Pre-Retirement Leave is designed to assist staff in making the transition from work to retirement, staff will not be able to take it in one block during their notice period or at the end of their employment, therefore, to bring forward their date of retirement.

## Q14. What if staff are unable to take their Pre-Retirement Leave, will they receive payment in lieu?

A. As Pre-Retirement Leave is designed to assist staff in making the transition from work to retirement, and for those giving notice of retirement above their contractual requirement, they should discuss with their line manager at what points during the 9-12 months they would wish to use their Pre-Retirement Leave. It cannot be exchanged for payment, i.e., it will not be paid in lieu if it has not been taken before the leaving date.

## Q15. What entitlement will I have to pre-retirement leave, if I give a year's notice from July 2024, i.e., to retire in July 2025?

A. This will be calculated based on the effective date of the new Pre-Retirement Leave Policy (1 October 2024), therefore October 2024 to July 2025, which is 10 months, giving an entitlement of 18 days to be used between October 2024 and July 2025.