



POLICY:	Shorter Working Year Policy
FIRST DRAFT:	
ADOPTED:	BR2015#02 (15th June 2015) ET2015#06 (14th May 2015)
AMENDMENTS:	None to Date
REVIEW:	June 2020

Shorter Working Year Policy

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 Mary Immaculate College recognises that in order to achieve satisfactory work life balance, employees may require periods of absence from work. To facilitate such requirements a shorter working year scheme exists.

All policies, guidelines and protocols of Mary Immaculate College, will reflect the Colleges commitment to the promotion of equality and will be fully compliant with the provisions of prevailing equality legislation.

2.0 AIMS OF DOCUMENT

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide information regarding the shorter working year scheme. This document summarises the main provisions of Circular 14/2009 and should be read in conjunction with that document.

3.0 SCOPE OF POLICY

3.1 This Policy applies to all employees of Mary Immaculate College.

4.0 LEGISLATION/OTHER RELATED POLICIES

4.1 Governing legislation, regulations and codes of practice in relation to this document include:

- Circular 14/2009

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 It is the responsibility of each employee to comply with the provisions of this policy.

5.2 It is the responsibility of the Heads of Department/line managers to make decisions on shorter working year scheme applications submitted by staff under their supervision.

5.3 It is the responsibility of the Human Resources (HR) Office to process shorter

working year scheme applications ensuring they are compliant with Circular 14/2009.

6.0 SHORTER WORKING YEAR SCHEME

6.1 The shorter working year scheme is available to permanent employees who have completed their probation and holder of contracts of indefinite duration. Employees may take unpaid leave of a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 13 weeks. The leave may be taken as one continuous period or as a maximum of three separate periods, each consisting of not less than 2 weeks and a maximum of 13 weeks in total.

7.0 APPLICATIONS

7.1 Employees wishing to avail of the shorter working year scheme must submit a completed application form to their Head of Department/line manager at least six weeks prior to the proposed commencement date of the leave.

7.2 The operation of the scheme is subject to the operating requirements of the College not being adversely affected. It is also important that the absence of staff on special leave does not place an undue burden on the staff remaining in the workplace. This provision is particularly pertinent to times of the year where there is greater demand on staff time and accordingly, applications from staff to avail of shorter working year leave in respect of all or part of the three weeks immediately preceding the commencement of the Autumn semester will not be accepted. In respect of all other applications, Heads of Department/line manager's will consider the work patterns and anticipated leave needs of those remaining in the workplace when considering whether an application will impact upon operating requirements.

7.3 It will be a matter for the Head of Department/line manager to approve or refuse applications for the Shorter Working Year Scheme from staff up to and including Executive Officer or equivalent. Given the importance placed on the presence of senior staff at particular times of the year, applications for the Shorter Working Year Scheme for staff at Higher Executive Officer and higher will be considered in the first instance by the immediate line manager who will either refuse the application or make a recommendation that the application be approved. Applications recommended for

approval will be considered for approval by the Executive Team.

7.4 The Head of Department/line manager will forward the completed application form to the HR Office. The HR Office will review the application to ensure it is compliant with circular 14/2009. Applications for consideration by the Executive Team will be reviewed at its next meeting. Applicants will be advised of the outcome of applications in writing by the HR Office.

7.5 An offer of participation must be accepted within five working days of the offer being made to a person. Failure to do so will be considered as a refusal. It will not be possible for a participant to withdraw or to alter an application for the scheme once that undertaking has been given if they have applied for special salary arrangements.

7.6 Subject to the discretion of management, participants will not be granted leave (paid or unpaid) in the four weeks immediately prior to and following a period of special leave approved under this scheme. This restriction will not apply to statutory leave.

8.0 ARRANGEMENTS FOR PAY

8.1 The period of special leave is **unpaid**. However, those participating in the scheme may apply for special administrative arrangements for the payment of part of basic salary during the period of special leave, provided that an application in writing is made by 30th November in the year prior to the year in which it is proposed to avail of the special leave.

8.2 Persons availing of the special administrative arrangements for the payment of salary may not vary their working hours during the same year.

8.3 Each participant is required to give an undertaking that any overpayment that may arise from their participation in the scheme will be repaid to the College not later than the last day of the tax year, 31st December, unless otherwise agreed.

8.4 Staff should note that, under PRSI rules, a person availing of special leave is not earning during the period of leave and is not, therefore, making PRSI contributions. It is the responsibility of the person availing of the scheme to make arrangements to ensure that any voluntary contributions normally deducted from salary, such as VHI contributions, continue to be paid.

9.0 SHORTER WORKING YEAR SCHEME AND OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS

9.1 The period of special leave will reckon for the purposes of increments and seniority. The period of special leave will not reckon for pension purposes. Staff may have this period reckoned for pension purposes through the purchase of notional service. Further information is available through the HR Office.

9.2 Employees who avail of the shorter working year scheme will have their annual leave entitlement reduced to take account of the period spent on unpaid leave. Where no other unpaid time off is taken in the year, full time employees will retain an entitlement to a minimum of 20 working days annual leave.

9.3 Participants may not avail of sick leave during the period of special leave.

9.4 A person taking special leave who avails of administrative arrangements for the payment of salary over twelve months may not take a career break in the same year in which s/he avails of special leave. However, in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the line manager, a career break may be granted in the same year in which a person avails of special leave. Any overpayment which may have arisen as a consequence of taking special leave would have to be repaid to the College prior to the commencement of the career break.