

Annual Leave Purchase Scheme (ALPS) – Line Manager Guidance

Overview

The Annual Leave Purchase Scheme (ALPS) is a voluntary benefit allowing eligible staff to purchase additional annual leave through a salary sacrifice arrangement. As a line manager, your role is crucial in ensuring requests are reviewed fairly, consistently, and with operational needs in mind.

Your Responsibilities

- Review applications during the designated approval window.
- Assess operational impact and team workload implications.
- Communicate decisions clearly and constructively to staff.
- Approve leave dates for purchased leave as you would for standard annual leave.

Do I Have to Approve a Request?

You are expected to exercise reasonable discretion. Consider:

- Team capacity and workload distribution.
- The potential wellbeing or personal benefit to the employee.
- Whether work can be reprioritised to accommodate the request.

Requests should be supported where possible, unless there are clear business or performance reasons to decline.

Where a request cannot be supported, you should first explore suitable alternatives with the applicant before making a decision, such as reduced hours or alternative dates for the additional leave.

Reasons You May Decline a Request

You may reject a request if it would cause a detrimental impact. Examples include:

- Current staffing shortages.
- Deadline-driven or high-priority work.
- Planned structural or operational changes.
- Negative impact on student experience or service delivery.
- Unfair workload burden on other team members.
- Ongoing performance concerns or formal HR processes.

If unsure, consult your HR Advisor.

Handling Multiple Requests in One Team

If multiple team members apply and not all requests can be accommodated:

- Consider offering a reduced number of days to each applicant.
- Avoid making subjective judgments about whose reasons are more “worthy.”
- Focus on operational feasibility and fairness.
- Document your rationale and discuss options with your HR contact if needed.

Peak Holiday Periods

Be mindful of seasonal pressures, especially in teams with:

- High demand during school holidays.
- Limited cover or small team sizes.

You may need to limit approvals or stagger leave to maintain service levels. Communicate expectations clearly and early.

Head of Department (HoD) Review

In some areas, HoDs may conduct a team-wide review post-application to ensure service continuity. Check with your HoD for:

- Any internal deadlines.
- Requirements for consolidated reporting.

Failure to Approve Within the Timeframe

If you do not approve a request within the designated timeframe:

- The application will be automatically declined.
- The employee will be notified that their request was not approved.

Declined email template

Subject: Outcome of Your Annual Leave Purchase Scheme Application

Dear [Employee's Name],

Thank you for your application to purchase additional annual leave through the Annual Leave Purchase Scheme (ALPS).

After careful consideration, I regret to inform you that your request has not been approved on this occasion.

This decision was made based on the need to balance individual requests with the operational needs of the team. In this case, the following factor(s) influenced the outcome:

(Remove the reasons not relevant)

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- Current staffing shortages within the team.
- High-priority or deadline-driven work during the requested period.
- Planned structural or operational changes that limit flexibility.
- Potential negative impact on student experience or service delivery.
- Risk of creating an unfair workload burden on other team members.
- Ongoing performance concerns or formal HR processes.

Please be assured that this decision was not made lightly. While we aim to support staff wellbeing and flexibility wherever possible, requests must be considered in the context of operational feasibility.

Please note that there is no formal right to appeal this decision.

Thank you for your understanding.