

To the employees of
Maastricht University

Executive Board

your reference

our reference

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Maastricht

Subject: *Accrual, registration and use of holiday leave*

Dear Colleague,

In this letter we would like to draw your attention to the situation involving the UM employees' hours of leave entitlement.

The University attaches great importance to a good work-life balance for all UM employees, which is the subject of attention for the board and management on the one hand, and the institution's representation bodies on the other. There is broad consensus that employees should take sufficient time off. At the same time, we acknowledge that work pressure can sometimes make it difficult to do so. Hopefully, the extension of our workforce in recent years will prove to have been a step in the right direction. In the very near future the broad Work Pressure Task Force will publish its report with recommendations on possible further measures to be taken.

While there is no doubt that people need time off to ensure a good work-life balance, we have observed that unused leave entitlements are still growing every year at UM. Perhaps you yourself are among the colleagues who carry over a great many hours of leave at the end of each calendar year. We would like to sincerely encourage all of you to use your leave hours in the year for which they are intended. Should you experience undue restrictions when planning and taking leave, we suggest that you contact your line manager immediately.

By taking your accrued hours of leave in a timely fashion, you will also be helping the University to pursue a more effective financial policy. This is because as an employer, the University is required to retain a financial reserve for any hours of leave that employees carry over into the following calendar year (the liability for employee leave entitlement). This means that these financial resources are not available to use for other purposes, thus limiting our flexibility.

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What is changing now?

In order to delegate the task of reducing employee leave liability to the parties that can actually carry it out, the Executive Board has recently decided to shift the financial obligation of leave entitlements from the central (UM-wide) level to the decentralised level of the administrative units. The administrative units have additionally been asked to apply the current regulations more stringently (see annex). This means that when an employment contract (whether temporary or permanent) comes to an end, no hours of leave will be paid out as wages unless it was demonstrably impossible for the employee to take the hours of leave. You will also be required to make a schedule of how you intend to use your accrued holiday entitlement for the calendar year, to be submitted each year before 1 July. Effective registration is crucial; therefore, it must be kept up to date.

Our request, therefore, is that each of you claims the hours of leave you have accrued, and we hope we can count on your cooperation. Should you have any questions regarding the content of this letter, please contact your line manager or HR adviser.

Yours faithfully,

On behalf of the Executive Board
of Maastricht University,

Prof. M. Paul
Chair

[Annex](#)

Annex

Accrual, registration and use of holiday leave

What are your duties as an employee?

Plans

Each year **before 1 July**, you will be required to make a schedule showing how you intend to take all hours of leave accrued in the current year, during the course of that calendar year. If you are unable to use your entire holiday entitlement in the course of the current calendar year, you must submit a proposal for reducing that entitlement (for example by using the opportunities provided by Articles 5.5 and 5.6 of the CAO NU).

You are responsible for ensuring that your holiday schedule finds its way to **your designated line manager no later than 1 July** in the manner designated by your specific administrative unit. The manager will render a decision on your proposal(s) for use of your holiday entitlement within a reasonable term (no longer than four weeks). You may derive rights exclusively from written agreements that have obtained the approval of your manager.

In the event your manager has **not** received a properly submitted holiday schedule from you by 1 July, Article 4.7, paragraph 8 sub C of the CAO NU will be applied and holiday leave will be assigned for you in the months of July and August, with a maximum of four times your weekly working hours.

Important: in the absence of written agreements with your manager concerning taking your hours of leave at a later date, your holiday entitlement will expire on 31 December of the year immediately following the year of accrual. The only way for you to avoid this situation is to ensure written agreements for yourself before the deadline. These written agreements are part of the personnel file. This means that agreements concerning holiday leave in 2016, for instance, will expire as of 1 January 2018 unless you have made other agreements on the matter with your manager, in writing.

Registration

You may only take hours of leave (and therefore be absent in connection with a holiday) in the event that you have, prior to taking leave hours, submitted a request for the leave in IMAR (or the designated leave-registration system for your unit), and your intended and approved leave has been registered in the system.

Taking hours of leave prior to termination of employment

Employees whose temporary or permanent employment contract is coming to an end or has been terminated are expected to make use of their entire holiday entitlement prior to the termination of their employment. Employees who are unable to do so should schedule a meeting with their manager in a timely fashion – at least three months before the last working day, if possible – in order to discuss the possibilities. Hours of leave will *not* be paid out as wages upon termination of employment, *unless* the employee can demonstrate that taking the leave was impossible.

What does UM expect of its managers?

UM expects all managers to encourage employees to take and register their holiday leave. The manager's task is to assign holiday leave if necessary, in accordance with the CAO, up to a maximum of four times the weekly working hours, plus the holiday entitlement from the previous year.

Employees must submit their holiday schedule to the manager no later than 1 July. The manager will then respond within four weeks' time, indicating whether or not the holiday schedule has been approved. If the manager does not approve the holiday schedule, he or she will make an appointment with the employee concerned to discuss the timing of holiday leave. The manager may also delegate another official to discuss matters of holiday scheduling. The results of the meeting will be recorded in writing and added to the personnel file.

For further details, please contact your HR adviser.

More information can be found here as well:

- [VSNU](#) – CAO, Chapter 4, Section 2, Article 4.7 in particular
- The UM document 'Maastricht University Additional Leave Regulations' as a supplement to the CAO NU and the 2014 Dutch Work and Care Act.
- [UM-website, holiday and leave](#)