



# **Domestic Violence Leave Policy**

## Introduction

In line with the University's commitment and obligation to support the safety and wellbeing of all employees, DCU aims to promote a secure environment whereby all employees feel safe and are free from any form of violence and abuse.

Domestic violence is a traumatic experience that can profoundly affect the physical, emotional, social and financial wellbeing of individuals and their families. The issue of domestic violence and abuse transcends gender, socioeconomic background, age, ethnicity, race, sexuality, religion, or disability. Domestic violence and abuse can occur in all forms of adult personal relationships.

In the workplace, a decline in performance, absenteeism, presenteeism and erratic behaviour are some ways domestic violence can impact an employee's working life.

In supporting employees who may be experiencing domestic violence, the University seeks to create and promote a workplace environment where all colleagues feel able to discuss domestic violence, and those experiencing such violence are able to seek the support and assistance they need in a supportive and non-judgemental manner.

DCU acknowledges that leaving a situation of domestic violence or abuse is extremely complex and challenging for those involved and may take multiple attempts. This policy aims to support employees through their experiences of domestic violence by providing ongoing support and accommodations where needed and when appropriate.

## Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline DCU's commitment to support and deal sensitively with the situation of any employee who is experiencing domestic violence or abuse, through the provision of paid leave and additional accommodations, as well as signposting to supports available both internally and externally.

## Scope

This policy will apply to all employees within the University

## Policy Statement

The University will provide for a period of paid leave from work for employees who have experienced or are experiencing domestic violence or abuse. This leave will enable the employee to take the time they need to seek assistance in a structured and supported environment. Additional accommodations and supports will be available, where relevant. Further details are provided in Section 6 of this policy.

## Provision of Paid Leave

Paid domestic violence leave will be granted for a maximum of 10 working days per year to an employee who has experienced an act or acts of domestic violence or abuse. This paid leave may be taken as a block of leave or broken into separate days of leave as required. Such leave will be added to a staff member's annual leave entitlement on Core Portal and approved by their Line Manager in accordance with existing leave approval procedures.

Domestic violence leave will be granted in addition to all other available leaves to provide the employee with time away from work to seek necessary supports. Such supports may include but are not limited to:

- obtaining medical attention for you or your dependent(s) in respect of a physical or psychological injury resulting from domestic violence or abuse;
- obtaining counselling for you or your dependent(s) or to obtain services from an organisation providing support services for survivors of domestic violence or abuse;
- obtaining legal or law enforcement assistance, including attending court/legal hearings;  
&
- providing for accommodation or protection of the employee, children and/or other family members.

Thereafter, should further time away from work be required, the staff member may have recourse to one or more of the other University leave schemes as applicable, e.g. Annual Leave, Sick Leave, Leave of Absence, etc.

## Additional Accommodations & Supports

Employees experiencing domestic violence may also utilise the following supports available to them if required and as appropriate:

- a) Flexible working arrangements:** affected employees may request a change of working hours, work location or other relevant conditions of their employment. Such requests will be accommodated where at all possible.
- b) Change of Work Contact Details:** affected employees may request a change of work phone number and/or work email address as necessary.
- c) Employee Assistance Service (EAS):** The EAS is a free and confidential professional counselling and information service which is available to employees 24/7, 365 days a year. Staff can access the EAS directly as follows:
  - Freephone IRE: 1800 814 243
  - WhatsApp & SMS: Text 'Hi' to 087 369 0010
  - Further information on the EAS is available on the HR website.
- d) Occupational Health Specialist:** An appointment can be arranged with a Specialist of the University's Occupational Health Provider in order to provide

support and accommodations and/or necessary medical advice to the employee. All referrals are treated with strict confidence. To arrange a referral for reasons related to domestic violence only please email your HR representative(s).

### **Alleged Perpetrators**

Where alleged perpetrators of domestic violence or abuse are also employees of the University, the University reserves the right to invoke the appropriate University policies where relevant (e.g. Dignity and Respect Policy, Code of Conduct, etc.).

### **Child Protection**

In line with DCU's [Child Protection Policy](#), where a disclosure of domestic violence or abuse includes information on child violence/abuse or a threat of violence to a child, all employees have an obligation to adhere to the procedures as set out in the DCU Child Protection Procedures document in relation to the reporting of such cases.

## **Roles & Responsibilities**

### **Employees**

- Familiarise themselves with the conditions and entitlements available under the Domestic Violence Leave Policy. Advice and clarification on the details of the policy is available by contacting your HR Representative(s) directly and/or speaking to your Line Manager.
- Inform their Line Manager of their request to utilise the domestic violence leave policy. If for any reason the affected employee does not wish to inform their Line Manager, they may come directly to their HR Representative(s) to request this leave.
- Contact their HR representative as soon as practicable to request a period of domestic violence leave. The employee may also (through written confirmation) nominate their Line Manager, or selected representative (e.g. health care provider, social worker) to contact HR on their behalf.
- Provide advance notification of leave where possible. The University understands that in certain cases advance notification may not be possible and that the period of leave may have already commenced before notification can be provided.
- Provide additional information if requested (and if possible). The affected employee is not required to provide proof of their abuse or documentary evidence for the leave needed.

### **Line Managers**

- Familiarise themselves with the conditions and entitlements available under the Domestic Violence Leave Policy in order to provide support to employees.
- Seek advice and clarification on the details of the policy and associated documents by contacting HR Representative(s).

- Support employees who disclose to them that they are experiencing domestic violence in a sensitive, non-judgemental and confidential manner.
- Act promptly if an employee discloses that they are experiencing domestic violence. Line managers should discuss domestic violence leave and other supports available with the affected employee.
- Agree with the affected employee who will alert the relevant HR representative(s) of the need for this leave. Alert HR as soon as possible.
- Participate in training in order to equip themselves for dealing with disclosures of domestic violence and to provide sufficient support to their employees in this regard.
- Treat any disclosure of domestic violence and subsequent request for leave with the strictest confidence in line with our GDPR Policy.

## Human Resources

- Ensure that the additional leave requested by any employee under this policy, once approved, is added to their leave entitlement on Core in an efficient manner.
- Participate in training in order to equip themselves for dealing with disclosures of domestic violence and to provide sufficient support to employees in this regard.
- Provide information to support Line Managers and employees, assist in arranging accommodations where required and help ensure accurate signposting to additional external supports where needed.
- Treat any disclosure of domestic violence and subsequent request for leave with the strictest confidence in line with our GDPR Policy.
- Carry out equality monitoring of leave application and uptake.

## Definitions

### Domestic Violence<sup>1</sup>

Domestic abuse is the physical, sexual, financial, emotional or psychological abuse of one person against another who is a family member or has been an intimate partner, regardless of gender or sexuality.

*The term ‘domestic violence’ goes beyond actual physical violence. It can also involve the destruction of property; isolation from friends, family and other potential sources of support; threats to others including children; stalking; and control over access to money, personal items, food, transportation and the telephone.*

*It occurs in all social classes, all ethnic groups and among people of every educational background.*

*It can be described as the use of physical or emotional force or the threat of physical force, including sexual violence in close adult relationships.*

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<sup>1</sup> [Irish Government, Department of Justice](#)

*Domestic violence profoundly affects the physical, emotional, social and financial wellbeing of individuals and families.<sup>2</sup>*

Domestic violence and abuse can occur between opposite or same-sex intimate partners of any age, who may or may not be married or living together. It can also occur between family members, or between carers and those they live with or care for in the home. The perpetrator therefore may be the employee's current or former spouse/partner, parent, child, other family member or other person in an intimate relationship with the employee.

While domestic violence can involve just one isolated individual offence of physical assault in a domestic relationship, the term is most often used to describe a pattern of repeated abusive and controlling behaviours that take place within an intimate or family-type relationship and may continue after the relationship has ended.

A list of non-exhaustive examples of domestic violence and abuse is listed below.

<b>Physical Assault and Violence</b>	Causing or potentially causing any harm to the body of the other person, including by engaging in any of the following behaviours: throwing of objects; shoving; hitting; slapping; punching; biting; burning; choking; mutilation. The use of a weapon aggravates the risk of harm.
<b>Verbal Abuse</b>	Refers to the use of language to ridicule, disrespect, manipulate, degrade, and demean; compelling you to engage in humiliating acts, whether in private or public.
<b>Sexual Violence and Abuse</b>	Sexual violence includes any form of sexual activity that takes place without the full and freely given consent of one of the people involved. It includes sexual degradation and any form of physical or emotional coercion or manipulation into any type of sexual activity that is against the wishes of one of the people involved. Any unwanted sexual activity from sexual touching to rape between spouses, cohabitants, partners or ex-partners is a form of sexual violence.
<b>Emotional or Psychological Abuse</b>	Causing or attempting to cause psychological harm to the other person by the use of verbal aggression and threats; humiliation; undermining of self-esteem; name calling; continual "put downs"; psychological degradation; exploitation; threatening to hurt children; intimidation; bullying.
<b>Coercive Control</b>	A systematic pattern of behaviour with the purpose of undermining you and creating fear through threats, humiliation and intimidation, and depriving you of support

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<sup>2</sup>[Irish Government, Department of Justice](#)

	<p>and independence. It is a psychological or emotional form of abuse that is used to control and limit the freedom of an intimate partner/relation.</p> <p>Some common examples of coercive behaviour include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Isolating you from friends and family</li> <li>● depriving you of basic needs, such as food</li> <li>● Monitoring your time</li> <li>● Monitoring you via online communication tools or spyware</li> <li>● Taking control over aspects of your everyday life, such as where you can go, who you can see, what you can wear and when you can sleep</li> <li>● Depriving you of access to support services, such as medical services</li> </ul> <p>Coercive control can be difficult to detect from the outside looking into a relationship, so too can it be hard to spot when in the relationship itself. As the behaviour worsens and each iteration of abuse becomes a new normal, low self-esteem is just one of the many factors that can stop people from seeing the reality of their situation.</p>
<p><b>Financial or Economic Abuse</b></p>	<p>Controlling or attempting to control the other person by means of economic blackmail; having dominant or complete control of all monies and bank accounts; denial of access to necessary funds; preventing the victim from working or having financial independence.</p>
<p><b>Stalking</b></p>	<p>Stalking is a pattern of fixated, obsessive, unwanted and repeated behaviour that causes you to feel distressed or scared. Stalking can occur at any point of your day-to-day life. Workplace stalking often results in the perpetrator following you to and from your place of work or hanging around the workplace entrance.</p>
<p><b>Cyber Harassment / Tech Abuse</b></p>	<p>Many of the forms of control, threats and stalking are carried out virtually through email, text messages, telephone messages, social media and so on.</p>

## Contacts

For further details on any aspect of this Policy please contact: [edi@dcu.ie](mailto:edi@dcu.ie).


## Additional Supports

Please refer to this Policy's accompanying online toolkit for a full list of additional supports.

## Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually or as soon as practicable after there has been a material change in any matter to which this Policy refers.

## Version Control

<b>Document Name</b>	Domestic Violence Leave Policy		 Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath Dublin City University
<b>Unit Owner</b>	Human Resources		
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End.