

Policy Implementation Guideline: Sabbatical Leave

Document updated: 1 May 2022

SABBATICAL LEAVE

I. Definition

Large block of leave taken for a duration to pursue personal interests which may be fully paid, partially paid or unpaid, e.g. a few months or 1 to 2 years, in order to pursue an objective, project or family matters. Sabbatical helps to manage employee's burnout and improve retention.

II. Important Considerations:

- Employees should have a minimum of 1 year of full time/ continuous service (or equivalent).
- Employees should have good past performance history and support from supervisor.
- Eligibility to utilise sabbatical leave arrangement and data privacy and intellectual property policy must be clearly defined prior to implementation.
- The expectations of the sabbatical leave must be clearly communicated and defined in the policy prior to implementation. E.g, Employees are not allowed to be engaged in other forms of employment during the period of sabbatical leave.
- Any outside services during the sabbatical leave for which an employee can receive compensation must be agreed upon and a special employment contract should be issued. Outside services must not be related to the employer's business or the employees' responsibilities within the company.
- Employees must use any existing vacation balance before the sabbatical leave.
- Time spent on sabbatical does not contribute to an employee's period of continuous service.
- Employees are not eligible for training during the leave period.
- Technology related items (hardware and software) issued to employee must be returned or discontinued if sabbatical period is more than 6 months.
- Re-training requirements for employees who have been away from the workforce for more than a defined period of time.
- Sabbatical leave is granted on a discretionary basis and is not to be considered as an employee's right.
- The sabbatical leave arrangement should be reviewed at least once per year.
- HR may edit or discontinue the policy if it no longer meets business needs.

III. Policy Guidelines:

- **Eligibility:** All full-time employees who has served a minimum number of years to the company, with a strong potential to progress within the company.
- **Application and Approval Process:**
 - a. Eligible employees intending to apply for the sabbatical should discuss their intentions with their immediate supervisor.
 - b. A written request must be submitted to HR and copy the appropriate individuals. The sabbatical leave should be requested at least 30 days prior to the preferred start date of the leave. This request should contain the following information:
 - Start date of sabbatical leave.
 - Motivation for sabbatical leave.
 - Timeframe for sabbatical leave.
 - Reasons supporting approval of the sabbatical leave.

The request for sabbatical leave must be approved by the employee's service line lead & HR. A contract outlining the details of the sabbatical leave will be set up containing the timeframe and the changes to the "Terms of Employment". This contract must be signed by the employee, HR and the employee's service line lead.

Additionally, a formal approval process is required for each individual application that takes into account:

- a. Employee's job responsibilities.
 - b. The impacts to the business and the requesting employee.
 - c. Clear communication of expectations.
- **Review of Sabbatical Leave:**
 - a. A review is typically not required during the period of sabbatical leave. However, the employee should discuss with HR to determine if one is required prior to commencing the sabbatical leave.
 - **Expectations of Employees on Sabbatical Leave:**
 - a. Employees should not consider the arrangement an entitlement and will not abuse the privilege.
 - **Rewards and Salary:**

The employer does not cover health and social insurance (SOCSO) during the time period that the employee is on sabbatical leave. The Benefits & Compensation Team should be contacted in order to clarify any questions prior

to commencing the sabbatical leave.

Sabbatical leave will typically have an implication on the following:

- a. *Annual vacation*: Vacation balances cannot be paid out in lieu of taking avacation and employees do not accrue vacation whilst on sabbatical.
- b. *Salary*: Employees typically do not receive a salary or provident fundpayments during the sabbatical leave period.
- c. *Other benefits*: All benefits will be suspended during the sabbatical leave.

- **Performance Management:**

The employer's standard performance management process will only take into consideration the time served during the business year. The employee will only be part of the standard performance management process of the year for the period when the employment status is active.

Checklist for Employers:

- ☐ Define workforce and employee eligibility.
- ☐ Develop communication of the initiative for a clear understanding of the terms and conditions of the policy and send to target audience.
- ☐ Receive application and timeline notification from employee of the intention.
- ☐ Confirm eligibility and confirm entitlement and duration of sabbatical leave with employee.
- ☐ Inform Payroll and determine impact on salary and annual bonus if necessary.
- ☐ Employee and supervisor defines work transition plan and arrange on method and frequency for staying in touch while on sabbatical leave.
- ☐ Receive completed and signed forms from employee (e.g. data privacy and intellectual property protection forms).
- ☐ Provide 'Technology Checklist' for employee to complete on items to be returned to the company and returns related items (hardware and software) to IT department if sabbatical leave period is more than 6 months.

Technology Checklist Sample:

Please confirm the following items are returned prior to commencing sabbatical leave arrangement

- Hardware and Software:
 - ☐ Laptop or computer
 - ☐ Headphones and microphones
 - ☐ Others
- Home Office Equipment:
 - ☐ Mobile Phone (if applicable)
 - ☐ Others