

**CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
STAFF PERSONNEL MEMORANDA**

<b>Personal Leaves of Absence</b>	<b>Memo No. 25</b> <b>Pages: 3</b> <b>Date: March 1, 2020</b>
Approved by: Julia McCallin, Associate Vice President and Chief Human Resources Officer	

(This supersedes Memo No. 25, dated July 24, 2012)

**1.0 Policy**

It is the Institute's policy to consider employee requests for personal leaves of absence for purposes such as education, scientific research, public service, and personal reasons not covered by other paid time off or leaves of absence. Approval of such personal leaves of absence are discretionary and approval will be determined based upon the needs of the Institute. Personal leaves of absence in order to accept employment elsewhere are generally not approved.

Note: Time off up to nine (9) unpaid workdays may be granted by the supervisor without following the formal leave process.

**2.0 General**

- 2.1 Personal leaves are unpaid.
- 2.2 Personal leaves may be granted for up to six (6) months, with the exception of personal leaves for scientific research which may be granted for up to twelve (12) months. The Institute may consider extensions to personal leaves on a case-by-case basis.
- 2.3 Personal leaves must be for a specified period, including a beginning and end date, which must be approved in advance by the manager with verification from Human Resources.

**3.0 Eligibility and Approval**

- 3.1 Regular employees who have completed initial probation may request personal leaves of up to six (6) months. Temporary and probationary employees may request personal leaves of up to thirty (30) calendar days. Occasional employees are not eligible for personal leaves.
- 3.2 In addition to meeting the eligibility criteria, a scientific research leave of up to 12 months may be requested as follows:
  - The research will be conducted at a nonprofit academic or research institution (host institution)
  - Any remuneration is paid by the host institution
  - Campus or JPL approval is required before the beginning of the leave

The employee must provide documentation from the host institution verifying the employee's participation in the research

- 3.3 A request for a personal leave of absence or an extension to an already approved personal leave requires approval of the employee's supervisor and verification and authorization by Human Resources.
- 3.4 Human Resources is responsible for informing an employee and the supervisor whether a personal leave request has been granted.

#### **4.0 Employee Accruals/Benefits**

- 4.1 An employee who goes on a personal leave will retain the vacation and sick time balances accrued up to the beginning date of the personal leave. However, at the onset of a personal leave, an employee may request a lump sum payment of accrued, unused vacation and personal holiday.
- 4.2 An employee on a personal leave will not accrue vacation or sick time during the leave of absence.
- 4.3 An employee on a personal leave may be able to continue participation in certain Institute benefits, to a maximum period of twelve (12) months, provided the employee pays the full cost of the applicable premium (employee plus employer portion) and any associated fees. Information about the programs and eligibility requirements can be found in the [Benefits Handbook](#).
- 4.4 When a personal leave exceeds twelve (12) months, the employee's service date will be adjusted. This adjustment may impact retirement eligibility and other benefits.

#### **5.0 Applying for Personal Leave**

- 5.1 An employee requesting a personal leave must submit a Leave of Absence Request Form to the supervisor at least thirty (30) days prior to the requested leave start date. In the case of an emergency, the employee should notify the supervisor as soon as it is practical.
- 5.2 The employee's supervisor will review the leave request. If approved, the Leave of Absence Request Form will be forwarded to the Leave Unit in Human Resources to confirm eligibility.
- 5.3 Human Resources will inform the employee and the supervisor whether a personal leave request has been granted.
- 5.4 Requests for extensions to an already approved personal leave must be approved by the manager and submitted to the Leave Unit for verification.

#### **6.0 Return to Work**

- 6.1 There is no guarantee that the employee's regular position will be available when the employee returns to work. Before going on an approved personal leave, it is advisable for the employee and the supervisor to discuss the possibility of filling the vacant position during the leave period.

*Supervisors must contact Human Resources before posting and/or filling a position vacated by an employee who is on any type of leave of absence.*

- 6.2 The employee should confirm their intention to return to work with their supervisor and Human Resources two (2) weeks before the expiration date of the leave. The employee shall not return to work until Human Resources confirms the return to work.

- 6.3 If while on personal leave, the employee's regular position has been filled, there is no guarantee that a position will be available when the employee returns to work. If a position is not available upon the employee's return their employment will be terminated and will not be entitled to separation benefits.

Note: Employees returning to work from personal leaves of absence are not entitled to preferred consideration to open positions.

An employee who does not return to work at the end of an approved personal leave, including approved extensions, will be considered to have voluntarily resigned and their employment with the Institute will be terminated.

#### 7.0 **Exceptions**

Any exception to this policy requires the approval of the Associate Vice President for Human Resources or designee for Campus staff, or of the Director for Human Resources at JPL or designee for JPL staff.

#### 8.0 **Related Policies**

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