

PERSONNEL SERVICES

University Offices, Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JD
Acting Director of Personnel and Related Services



To: heads of departments and institutions, heads of division, faculty board chairmen, divisional secretaries, faculty board secretaries, and departmental administrators

Ref.EMS/5, EMS/6

8 March 2012

cc: Mr Shaw, Dr Gasser, Principal Administrator of the Conference of Colleges

Guidelines for the Olympics

This circular provides guidance to assist departments in planning for the Olympic Games.

London will be hosting the 2012 Olympic Games from 27 July to 12 August, and the Paralympic Games from 29 August and 9 September. These events may give rise to management issues, both with regard to anticipated peaks in leave requests, and in requests from staff to take time off during the working day in order to watch key events.

1. Action required of departments

Departments are asked to:

- read this guidance and use it in developing local arrangements for the periods of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games;
- issue local guidance so that staff are clear about arrangements for leave during this time; and
- ensure that staff are clear about the possibility, or otherwise, of watching events during the working day.

2. Background

The 2012 London Olympic Games is a significant event and therefore requires special consideration. There are three issues:

- a. the likely peak in demand for leave to coincide with the two sets of games from competitors, volunteers and spectators (whether at the stadia or at home);
- b. the likelihood that some staff may want to take time out during a working day to watch key events (of which there will be many, depending on interest and nationality); and
- c. how to provide for (a) and (b) without significant impact on work, without prejudice to those who have no interest in the Olympics, and without provoking demands for similar treatment for other events.

The guidance offered in this circular is broadly consistent with advice issued by ACAS and UCEA



3. Arrangements for annual leave

- Any member of staff wishing to take time off for the Olympics, including to act as official volunteers, should request annual leave in the normal way.
- Departments should recognise that there may be an unusual peak of leave requests around the Games. Those who have been accepted as volunteers, or have managed to acquire tickets, are likely already to know their leave requirements. If they have not already done so, departments should take steps now to ascertain people's leave intentions.
- It is for departments to judge what cover they need over the peak periods and whether, operationally, they can accommodate all Olympic Games leave requests without prejudice either to those with 'normal' summer holiday plans or to those who have no interest in the Olympics.
- It is possible that departments will have to reject or limit some leave requests. It would be better to do this in advance and also to be transparent about any priority order to be followed in authorising leave requests. For example, either (a) first come, first served, or (b) a pecking order along the lines of: competitors; volunteer workers at the Olympics; then ticket holders; and finally those who wish to watch from home.

4. Time-out in working hours

- Departments should establish and publish in advance their own guidance about whether they will allow staff time off during the working day to watch events.
- Departments might be willing to allow time out if this were made up later in the same day (bearing in mind that events are of very variable length), or week.
- Departments should decide and publicise their policy on watching the Olympics at desks (online)¹.

Whatever arrangements are made, computer viewing should only be permitted in ways that do not impinge on the work of the department.

It may also be an appropriate moment to remind staff of the Regulations concerning IT use <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/regulations/196-052.shtml>.

MS A CROSS

AC/KAB

¹ Departments are reminded that a television licence must be held to watch (or record) live TV programmes regardless of the equipment used: this includes the use of devices such as computers, mobile phone, tablets, games consoles, digital boxes or DVD/VHS recorders. (See <http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/check-if-you-need-one/topics/>)