ON-CALL ALLOWANCES AND CALL-OUT FEE POLICY

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1 Scope

1.1. This policy sets out:

a. the remuneration, and
b. the terms and conditions that apply to all on-call allowances and call-out fees for employees at University of Greenwich.

2 The Public Sector Equality Duty

2.1. The Equality Act requires public bodies such as the University of Greenwich to consider how their decisions and policies affect people with different protected characteristics (or a combination of these).

2.2. The university is committed to promoting equality of access and outcome for all, celebrating diversity, and providing an inclusive learning and work environment for all students, staff, and visitors. The university will ensure they pay 'due regard', to:

a) the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
b) advance equality of opportunity.
c) foster good relations between people, irrespective of their age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation'.

2.3. Paying 'due regard' means the university will consciously consider or think about the need to do the above.

3 Purpose

3.1. This policy covers payment which will be made to employees who are required to provide on-call cover for work outside of their normal hours. The payment will be paid regardless of whether the employee is called upon to work or not.

3.2. The on-call payment is only payable to staff on grades SG3 to SG9. Senior Management including those on SG10 pay grade are outside this scope of this policy.

3.3. The purpose of the document is to establish a set of payments, terms and conditions that reflect consistency and fairness for all employees.

4 Definitions

4.1. On-call

On-call is a discretionary payment that compensates for the inconvenience of being on stand-by to work outside the normal working hours as and when required, which is outside the scope of the employee's contract.

4.2. Call-out fees

A call-out fee is payable where employees who are on-call are required to undertake work over and above the monitoring requirements of being on-call.

4.3. Emergency call

In exceptional circumstances employees may be called in for an emergency when not on an on-call rota, e.g. for a major incident.

4.4. Normal working hours

Normal hours are those which are regularly worked and/or fixed by the contract of employment. This does not include overtime.

4.5. Planned out-of-hours working

Work that is not defined as on-call and must be covered by alternative payment arrangements.

5 Principles

5.1. The guiding principles are:

a) To be consistent with the principles of equal pay for work of equal value.
b) To provide a payment that reflects the availability for being on-call.
c) To specify payment for work done whilst on call.
d) To provide staff with the option to take time off in lieu (TOIL) rather than payment for work done.
e) To allow for compensatory rest under the Working Time Regulations.
f) To specify the arrangements for payment of travel time and expenses.
g) To specify the arrangements for public holidays.

6 Departmental arrangements

6.1. The following arrangements apply to employees who are required to attend work outside of core hours to provide 'business-critical' services as part of an on-call arrangement, in which the employee must be available to respond accordingly.

6.2. On-call rotas will continue to be managed for existing staff in employment as of 31 December 2024, unless contracts of employment specify otherwise. All staff members who possess the necessary levels of knowledge, skills and experience will be invited to the rota system. Following this a review by management will determine the rota for the area of business.

6.3. Staff employed from 1 January 2025 or appointed to a new post internally on or after this date will be contractually required to participate.

7 Payment for on-call allowance

7.1. An on-call payment is payable to staff who are required to be on call during weekdays, evenings or at weekends.

7.2. Employees contractually required to participate in the on-call rota will receive a daily flat-rate allowance paid monthly. The People Directorate will review the level of the allowance annually. The payment will be paid regardless of whether the employee is called upon to work.

7.3. Rates are per session. A session is defined as follows:

a) Any period between the end of a normal workday and the start of another (effectively 5pm to 9am).

b) Weekend or public holiday.

7.4. The flat rates payable are as follows:

a) Weekday: A fixed rate of £13.50.

b) Weekend and Public Holiday: A fixed rate of £20.09.

7.5. Example:

a) An employee providing on call cover from Friday at 5pm to following Friday at 9am on a 1 in 3 week rota would receive a monthly on-call payment of £157.00.

b) An employee providing on call cover from Friday at 5pm to following Friday at 9am on a 1 in 8 week rota would receive a monthly on-call payment of £58.89.

7.6. A call-out fee is payable in addition to the on-call payment where this is appropriate. On-call payments will be included in staff's monthly salaries and are pensionable.

8 Call-out fee

8.1. A call-out fee is payable where employees who are on-call are required to undertake work over and above the monitoring requirements of being on-call.

8.2. The call-out fee may be paid where employees are called to undertake emergency/urgent work remotely or any campus location. Where additional activity is required, for example dealing with an issue on social media or a media enquiry that requires a prepared response, employees will be entitled to a call-out fee as set out below. This will be subject to agreement in advance with the relevant Senior Manager.

8.3. For staff on grades SG3 to SG9 the rate (call-out fee) payable is the appropriate hourly rate as set out below:

Monday – Friday	Time and a half
Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holidays	Double time

8.4. The rates set out above will be varied in the event that the university rates change. Employees will be notified in writing of any changes.

8.5. Claims for call-out fees should be made by exception, submitted on a timecard via Horizon with an approved justification in the comments section for SG3 – SG6. If the employee is grade SG7 – SG9 please submit via stonefish.

8.6. On-call and call-out fees are pensionable.

8.7. Work done on-call can continue to be done at home, in the normal workplace or elsewhere depending on the circumstances. From the point of call travel time will be paid as if it were work time.

9 Sickness arrangements

9.1. Where an employee may be absent and is responsible for covering an on-call rota, the manager will either find coverage, reassign or swap duties.

9.2. Where a member of staff is absent due to sickness on-call allowance payments will cease where the absence is continuous for four weeks or more.

10 Short notice payments

10.1. Where, in exceptional circumstances, staff who are not on-call (but are part of an on-call rota) are called in to work for an emergency, they will be remunerated as if they had been on-call. This does not apply to telephone calls.

11 Arrangements whilst staff are on call (standby)

11.1. Arrangements for standby rotas will be put in place by departments with a commitment that adequate notice is provided, and that appropriate communication takes place with Security Services and Safety Services to ensure that health and safety considerations are taken into account.

11.2. Members of staff who are on standby are required to respond to a call-out and must be capable of attending work when they are contacted. Staff must not consume alcohol or take substances which could impact on their fitness to respond to a call-out or undertake any necessary tasks. This may impact on social arrangements which will need to be considered at the time of undertaking standby.

11.3. If an individual becomes unwell and unable to undertake work during a standby period, the relevant line manager should be notified as soon as possible. Rota arrangements will be reviewed on a regular basis, bearing in mind changes in staffing levels, the pattern and nature of callouts and other relevant factors. On-call duties are aligned with your role expectation and detailed locally. This includes any escalation processes.

11.4. Where the nature of the work demands it, the university will supply and pay for whatever specialist equipment is necessary for the on-call member of staff to provide the necessary level of service, e.g. a PC or laptop, pre-arranged routes for accessing additional support such as a mobile ‘phone etc.

11.5. The appropriate manager and the member of staff will agree, in advance of being placed on a rota system, the type and nature of support which will be required.

11.6. Call-out fees can be claimed if additional business-critical services are immediately required and will be managed locally.

11.7. Media handling

11.7.1. As part of on call duties: respond immediately to all phone-calls to the out-of-hours number within reason (i.e. to return any missed calls within 30 mins). Non-urgent enquiries and requests (i.e. those that do not present potential reputational risk or require an urgent response) are to be dealt with during office hours.

11.7.2. Additional work, if required, for which call-out fee can be claimed: prepare an initial response to any urgent media enquiries (manage the journalist’s enquiry by identifying key points, additional context and deadlines; identify relevant internal senior leaders and develop a proposed response). All responses to be approved by relevant senior leader/s prior to issue. Relevant supporting information (e.g. key contact names and numbers) to be provided.

11.7.3. Where there is a potentially negative story to respond to, you may need to contact the Vice Chancellor via the Chief Operating Officer or Executive Director for People. If in doubt, please contact the relevant senior leader/s in Marketing and External Relations Directorate for advice.

11.7.4. Circulate coverage arising to internal stakeholders and continue to monitor for coverage while on call and, if the issue continues into next working day, handover to members of PR team.

11.8. Social media

11.8.1. As part of on call duties: monitor social media channels to provide an 'early warning' system for any issues which may present a challenge to the university's reputation (for example a student matter that quickly escalates).

11.8.2. In practice this will entail checking X twice an evening (e.g. 6.30pm and 9pm) on weeknights and intervals throughout the day on weekends (e.g. 9am; 2pm; 7pm) when on call; occasional checks on Facebook and Instagram.

11.8.3. When required advise senior leaders on management and response, in conjunction with the relevant senior leader/s in the Marketing and External Relations Directorate.

11.9. Emails and work WhatsApp

11.9.1. As part of on call duties: monitor the public relations (PR) inbox and review WhatsApp for any urgent enquiries or issues arising. In practice this means twice in an evening and 2/3 times on weekend days (as above) when on call and acting accordingly in response (see above).

11.10. Emergency Response Group

11.10.1. As part of on call duties to be on standby to prepare initial communications support to the Emergency Response Group in the early stages of an emergency as the group is convened and the Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Communications Leads are in place.

11.10.2. Training on who is part of the ERG group, initial expectations for this group, as well as 'how to' sessions on handling media calls, managing social media issues and escalation processes will be provided for all staff on the rota.

11.10.3. Additional work if required for which call-out fees can be claimed: to advise on and prepare initial response to incidents, in conjunction with senior management.

12 Travel and expenses

12.1. Staff are expected to be within a reasonable distance of their work location and use the most appropriate form of transport for their journey to and from work, depending on the time of the call, personal safety and cost.

12.2. Staff are expected to follow the rules of the road and the university will not be liable for any offence committed by members of staff (e.g. speeding fines) whilst travelling to or from an on-call shift.

12.3. Terms are set out in the staff expenses policy.

13 Time off in lieu (TOIL)

13.1. TOIL is managed locally. Employees can request to take TOIL (taken as plain time) rather than payment for any period of work done while on-call. Employees are required to take TOIL within three months, or the time will be lost. However, where TOIL cannot be taken within three months because of operational reasons, the hours will be paid as per the terms set out above.

14 Bank holidays and calculations of the allowances

14.1. Bank holidays are factored into the on-call allowance calculation as part of an annualisation process which is split equally across 12 monthly payments.

15 Working time regulations and rest periods

15.1. Managers should monitor the frequency and length of callouts and unplanned out of hours working on a regular basis to ensure that no employee is required to undertake additional work which may be detrimental to their health and wellbeing. For the purposes of this policy, working time is defined as the time employees are required to work whilst on-call, including travel time of up to 60 minutes maximum.

15.2. The working time regulations provide for rest periods of:

a) 20 minutes after 6 hours work.
b) 11 hours rest in any 24 hours.
c) 24 hours rest in any 7 day period, or
d) 48 hours rest in any 14 day period.

16 Compensatory rest

16.1. Managers will set the rest requirements for their rotas with regard to the needs of the service and the health and safety of their staff, considering the frequency and intensity of calls. Where possible, the on-call rotas should allow for 11 hours' rest between shifts. However, if this is not possible because of the needs of the service, the remainder of the daily rest requirement may be taken as compensatory rest at a time to be agreed by the line manager.

16.2. If staff are on-call or on standby for 2x24-hour periods (e.g. over a weekend) it may not be possible to incorporate compensatory rest immediately after the period worked. However, managers must ensure that the principle of minimum 90 hours' rest per week on average is adhered to. For example, the rules below could be applied if there is nothing already arranged in your area (on-call only):

16.3. After a period of call-out, the following protocols should be met:

a) Midnight - Normal start time next day.
b) Between midnight and 3.00am - 2 hours after normal start time.
c) After 3.00am - 5 hours after normal start time.

16.4. The compensatory rest period may fall on a working or non-working day. If it falls on a non-working day, staff do not accrue any additional compensatory rest.

Compensatory rest must be taken at a time when rotas and the service allow, subject to the agreement of the line manager.

17 Policy review

17.1. The operation of this policy will be reviewed after its first full year of operation to ensure that it is meeting all necessary university requirements and to test that implementation has complied with the university's duty of care in relation to issues of working time and staff wellbeing. Thereafter the policy will be reviewed on a regular basis.

17.2. The university may make changes to this policy from time to time to improve the effectiveness of its operation. In this regard, any staff member who wishes to make any comments about this policy may forward their suggestions to the people directorate.

Version No.	Purpose/Change	Author	Approved By	Date
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