

This Handbook should be read in conjunction with the *Benefits Policy*. Employees found to be abusing this policy and its subsequent and related practices and procedures will be subject to the organisations Disciplinary Policy up to and including dismissal.

Employee Benefits Handbook Version 4

Human Resource Office (6 November 2024)



**CARLOW
COLLEGE**
ST. PATRICK'S



Date Approved: 6 November 2024

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Section 1: Family Related Leave Benefits

1. Maternity / Adoptive Leave

An employee who is on maternity leave is normally entitled to payment from the Department of Social Protection for a period of twenty-six weeks' maternity leave, depending on meeting certain PRSI eligibility criteria. Social Welfare benefits are not payable during the optional additional sixteen week's maternity leave. While the employee is not entitled to remuneration or superannuation during maternity leave, other conditions of employment including full holiday and public holiday entitlements are retained.

Should an employee have more than six-months continuous service (and have successfully passed their probation period) on commencement of maternity leave, Carlow College will make a top up payment as follows:

The amount payable by the College to augment the State maternity benefit paid will be 50% of the difference between the employee's normal gross weekly pay (salary only) and the amount of the State maternity benefit. This additional benefit will be payable to all female employees availing of maternity leave after 1 March 2007, subject to satisfying the College's minimum service criteria (where an employee has completed at least twenty-six weeks of continuous employment prior to commencing the leave with no break in service) and meets the PRSI contribution conditions set down by the Department of Social Protection.

Please note that the employee retains the State maternity benefit.

The current standard rate of state maternity benefit is €274.00 per week (2024 rate). However, should an employee be entitled to a higher figure than the standard amount, they must notify Payroll in order for them to adjust and correctly calculate maternity top up amounts.

Should the Government reduce the standard state maternity benefit, the College will review the top up amount.

**Managers, and employees leaving on, and returning from Maternity / Adoptive Leave should refer to the checklists*

Please see the Maternity/Adoption Leave Policy for further information

2. Paternity Leave

The financial contribution to be made by the College for Paternity Leave is 50% of the difference between the gross weekly salary figure, less any social welfare benefit.

Please see the Paternity Leave Policy for further information.

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3. Parental Leave Policy

The *Parental Leave and Parent's Leave Policy* provides leave to members of staff, who are natural or adoptive parents, to enable them to spend more time with their child and to take care of their child in accordance with the terms and conditions of the *Parental Leave Acts*. . Parental leave entitlements also extend to persons acting in loco parentis in respect of an eligible child.

Please see the Parental Leave and Parent's Leave Policy for further information.

Parent's Leave Policy

The *Parent's Leave and Benefit Act 2019* amended by the *Family Leave and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2021* provides nine weeks statutory leave from 01 August 2024 for a relevant parent within the first two years of a child's life, or in the case of adoption, within two years of the placement of the child with the family.

The current standard rate of state Parent's Benefit is €274.00 per week.

For part time employees, this will be pro-rata and a calculation will be carried out based on hours worked to determine the entitlement an employee will receive

Please see the Parental and Parent's Leave Policy for further information.

4. Different Leave Types (Statutory)

This table explains the differences between the types of leave available

Legal Leave Entitlements			
Leave	Who gets it?	How long?	Is it paid?
Maternity Leave	Female employees	26 weeks and up to 16 unpaid weeks	Yes, Maternity Benefit is paid for 26 weeks (state benefit) <i>*refer to policy for further information</i>

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Adoptive Leave	One parent of the adoptive couple, or a parent adopting alone	24 weeks and up to 16 unpaid weeks	Yes, Adoptive Benefit is paid for 24 weeks (state benefit) <i>*refer to policy for further information</i>
Paternity Leave	New parents of children under 6 months of age (usually the father or the partner of the mother, or in the case of adoption, the parent who is not taking adoptive leave)	2 weeks	Yes, Paternity Benefit is paid for 2 weeks (state benefit) <i>*refer to policy for further information</i>
Parental Leave	Parents and guardians of children under 12	26 weeks	No, it's unpaid <i>*refer to policy for further information</i>
Parent's Leave	Parents of children under 2 years of age Parents of adopted children in the first 2 years of the placement of the child	9 weeks	Yes, Parent's Benefit is paid for 9 weeks (state benefit) <i>*refer to policy for further information</i>
Annual Leave	All members of staff	4 weeks (20) days for full time employees. This is pro rata'd for part time employees.	Yes, paid by employer <i>*refer to policy for further information</i>
Carer's Leave	All members of staff	Minimum of 13 weeks and up to a	No, it's unpaid

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		maximum of 104 weeks.	<i>*refer to policy for further information</i>
Jury Leave	All members of staff (over 18 years of age). If you are aged 65 or over you have the right to be excused from Jury duty	Dependant on the duration of time spent on jury duty	Yes, paid by employer for time spent complying with a jury summons <i>*refer to policy for further information</i>
Public Holidays	All members of staff	10 days	Yes, but there are certain exceptions for part time workers and certain criteria must be met

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Section 2: General Leave Benefits

1. Annual Leave and College Days

In addition to annual leave entitlements, the College offers an additional number of paid College leave days every year (for example Good Friday and days during the Christmas and Easter breaks). These discretionary days are in addition to annual leave and public holiday entitlements. Due to different contractual arrangements, only certain staff will avail of these entitlements. The number of days may vary and their scheduling will remain at the discretion of the organisation and are dependent on operational and business requirements.

Pro-rata for part-time employees.

Please see the Annual Leave Policy for further information.

2. Sick Leave

A sick pay scheme is available to all employees after they have completed their probationary period (which is a minimum of six months and which may be extended at the organisation's discretion, however will not exceed twelve-months). The College offers ten days' sick leave (pro-rata) for part-time staff. It is paid at the discretion of the employer.

Please see the Sickness Absence and Management Policy for further information.

3. Bereavement and Compassionate Leave

Bereavement and Compassionate leave is a paid leave benefit offered by the College in the event of the death of an employee's family member, as identified within the policy. Employees can avail of five days bereavement leave as outlined within the policy. Employees may be granted leave of absence with pay of up to five days, in the event of the death of an immediate family member (spouse or civil partner, partner, parent, sister, brother, son, daughter, grandparent, grandchild, niece, nephew). Employees may be granted leave of absence with pay of two days, in the event of the death of a non-immediate family member (defined as mother / father-in-law, uncle / aunt, son / daughter-in-law).

Please see the Bereavement and Compassionate Leave Policy for further information.

4. Study and Exam Leave

Carlow College wishes to encourage employees to further their educational standard and attain qualifications which are job associated. During performance reviews, a formal opportunity exists for employees to outline how they would like to see their careers develop within the College and how the College can help them in this regard. Where employees

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undertake a relevant recognised formal course of education, Carlow College may provide support by way of examination leave and study leave.

The College currently offers five days' (pro rata for part time employees) study leave to employees (following completion of successful probationary period) who are undertaking an approved educational course/programme. This leave is offered at five days per academic year and cannot be carried over. Special leave of up to 5 days with pay may be afforded for examinations scheduled during working hours and/or evenings within the working week. This leave will be granted where evidence of the professional exams, i.e. the College Examination timetable, is produced to the Line Manager and Human Resources.

Please see Section 2.1: Study and Exam Leave Guidelines and Procedures.

5. Conferring Leave

Leave for Conferring / Graduations with pay may, on application, be given on the occasion of a staff member being conferred on successful completion of an approved course.

Applications for such leave should be made through the relevant Line Manager, with approval from HR. Please note that only one day will be allocated to such leave and documentation will be required. Once approval is sought initially from the Line Manager and HR, the leave must be applied for using the BrightHR system.

6. Time Off in Lieu (TOIL)

It is the policy of Carlow College that a time off in lieu system will operate for time worked over and above an employee's normal contracted working hours. Carlow College intends to ensure employees are appropriately compensated when, due to the requirements of their job, they work hours over and above their normal contracted working week. This is to ensure employees avail of adequate rest outside of the working environment. It is necessary that the policy and guidelines are operated with flexibility. TOIL is time off which you are allowed to take instead of overtime pay, for hours worked beyond the working day (i.e. evenings and weekends).

Please see the Time off in Lieu Policy for further information.

7. Flexi-Time

Flexi-Time is different from other 'flexible working arrangements' offered by the College which include part-time working, reduced hours, term time and hybrid working. Flexible working arrangements are, therefore, not recorded the same way as Flexi-Time.

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Flexi-Time is a scheme whereby Staff availing of Flexi-Time can start and finish work within specified flexible bands, which are outside of specified core hours when staff have to be available to the College. Staff availing of Flexi-Time can also build up hours whereby a Flexi-Day can be taken.

Please see the Flexi-Time Policy for further information.

8. Hybrid Working

The College continues to be committed to policies and procedures which support flexibility in the workplace. The College has introduced a *Hybrid Working Policy*.

Please see the Hybrid Working Policy for further information.

9. Professional Membership Fees

The College may, in its absolute discretion, pay for professional membership fees. This scheme is offered to all employees who have successfully completed their probation period. If you would like the College to pay professional fees, please follow the below steps.

- Employees can apply for this benefit (prior to payment of fee) by sending a detailed request to their Line manager and including a copy of the Fee Invoice.
- If the Line Manager approves the request, the Line Manager will then forward the Fee Invoice with approval noted to the Director of Strategy and Operations.
- The Director of Strategy and Operations makes the final decision on all payments.
- The Director of Strategy and Operations will notify the Line Manager if for any reason the request is refused.
- Once approved, the Director of Strategy and Operations will send the Fee Invoice to the Finance Office for payment.
- The Finance Office will then process the payment directly to Professional Body by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) and will notify the employee of the payment date.

10. Educational Assistance

Carlow College wishes to encourage employees to further their educational standard and attain qualifications which are job associated. During performance reviews, a formal opportunity exists for employees to outline how they would like to see their careers develop within the College and how the College can help them in this regard. Where employees undertake a relevant recognised formal course of education, the College, in its absolute

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discretion, may provide financial support to employees to assist with the cost of undertaking such a course.

This scheme is offered to all employees who have successfully completed their probation period. If you wish to avail of educational assistance from the College, please speak with your Line Manager and Human Resources. Please see the Educational Assistance Guidelines for further information (Section 2.3). All requests for Educational Assistance must be made in writing using the Request for Educational Assistance Form (Section 2.4).

11. Training

We offer mandatory training in the following areas:

- Dignity and Respect
- Health and Safety
- Resilience
- IT
- Data Protection
- Information Security

This is not an exhaustive list and you may be required to undertake mandatory training (when provided).

12. Management Training

We offer mandatory training for Managers in the following areas:

- Dignity and Respect
- Grievance and Disciplinary
- Change Management and Resilience
- Recruitment and Selection
- Conflict Management
- People Management Skills
- Performance Management

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- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

This is not an exhaustive list and you may be required to undertake mandatory training (when provided).

13. Wellbeing

The College has developed a [Wellbeing Handbook](#) promote the College’s commitment to Workplace Wellbeing. The College recognises the importance of employee wellbeing and that a work environment that fosters and supports employee wellbeing is hugely beneficial for all concerned.

14. Athena Swan

Athena SWAN award is a national charter mark that recognises the advancement of gender equality in higher education, encompassing representation, progression and success for all. Carlow College has achieved the Bronze Award. The data analysis informed the development of planned actions such as developing supportive policies, a training need analysis for all CPD training, the introduction of a ‘Family Leave Toolkit’ for employees and managers, and an introduction of a [Wellbeing Handbook](#) to name but a few.

15. Other Benefits offered by Carlow College

Tea & Coffee is available in the Staff Room. Tea is also available at no cost through the College Dining Hall which also offers subsidised food during the academic year.

This table explains the non-statutory general leave benefits at Carlow College

General Leave Benefits			
General Benefits	Who gets it?	How long?	Is it paid?
College Days	Dependant on contract type	Decided on by College Calendar (approx. 10-12 days for full time staff)	Yes <i>*refer to policy for further information</i>

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Sick Leave	All employees	Maximum of 10 days for full time staff	Yes – to a maximum of 10 days in a 12 month rolling period <i>*refer to policy for further information</i>
Bereavement and Compassionate Leave	All employees	Up to 5 days bereavement leave for an immediate family member; 2 days for a non-immediate family member	Yes <i>*refer to policy for further information</i>
Study and Exam Leave	All employees	5 days study leave and up to 5 days special leave for exams (in a 12 month period; days cannot be carried over)	Yes <i>*refer to policy for further information</i>
Conferring Leave	All employees	1 day	Yes <i>*refer to policy for further information</i>
TOIL	All employees	Hours worked outside of normal working day/week	Yes <i>*refer to policy for further information</i>

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Flexi-Time	All Professional & Support Staff (who use BLIP)	Staff can start and finish work within specified flexible bands	Yes <i>*refer to policy for further information</i>
Hybrid Working	All employees	Requests must be made in advance to the Line Manager	Yes <i>*refer to policy for further information</i>
Professional Membership Fees	All employees	Pay for professional membership fees at the College's discretion	Yes <i>*refer to policy for further information</i>
Educational Assistance	All employees	May provide financial support to employees to assist with the cost of undertaking a recognised formal course (at the discretion of the College)	Yes <i>*refer to policy for further information</i>

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Section 2.1: Study and Exam Leave Guidelines and Procedures

Carlow College wishes to encourage employees to further their educational standard and attain qualifications which are job associated. During performance reviews, a formal opportunity exists for employees to outline how they would like to see their careers develop within the College and how the College can help them in this regard. Where employees undertake a relevant recognised and approved formal course of education, Carlow College may provide support by way of examination leave and study leave.

These procedures apply to all staff undertaking postgraduate study up to and including PhD, wishing to apply for additional paid leave.

A maximum of five days paid annual postgraduate study leave will be granted in respect of doctoral research and other postgraduate study (i.e. dissertations/thesis) which is work related. This 5-day leave benefit will be pro-rata'd for part-time staff. For academic staff, subject to the Academic Workload Allocation Policy, these days are included in the annual research allocation agreed with their line manager

Special leave of up to 5 days with pay may be afforded for examinations scheduled during working hours and/or evenings within the working week. This leave will be granted where evidence of the professional exams, i.e. the College Examination timetable, is produced to the Line Manager and Human Resources.


As far as possible, these should be days on which lectures / meetings / deadlines are not scheduled so as to minimise disruption to schedules / operations. This extra leave can be used to support staff to attend postgraduate supervision / lectures / presentations but is more so intended to provide additional time to study for and sit exams.

Any request for postgraduate study leave that exceeds five days will be treated as an annual leave request and must be applied for through the Bright HR leave management system. When making Annual Leave applications, staff members are asked to adhere to the annual leave policy and its approval requirements i.e. the operational needs of the College take priority and employees are expected to minimise disruption to student teaching and/or to support duties.

The College will not pay travel or subsistence allowances in connection with postgraduate study or attendance at required presentations, conferences, summer schools, lectures, tutorials, exams. Financial support for doctoral study is reflected in the €3,000 College Bursary that is awarded to all candidates on the conferring of their PhD or Professional Doctorate.

Requests for postgraduate study / exam leave should be made at least fourteen days in advance of the requested leave dates. Evidence of examinations will be required.

Section 2.2: Study and Exam Leave Request Form

Study / Exam Leave Request Form				 CARLOW COLLEGE ST. PATRICK'S
1. Please ensure that you have read the <i>Benefits Policy</i> when applying for study/exam leave before completing this form. A copy of this policy is available on the Staff Portal at https://www.carlowcollege.ie/staff-gateway/				
2. Up to 5 days' study leave is available, subject to the approval of the Line Manager in conjunction with Human Resources.				
3. Exam leave is available, subject to the approval of the Line Manager in conjunction with Human Resources, for approved courses. The leave will be granted for the duration of each examination period, e.g. morning, afternoon, or evening.				
4. An examination timetable and details of the course <u>must</u> be submitted with this form.				
5. This form should be completed and returned to the Human Resources Office.				
Name:				
Department:		Tel. Ext.:		
Type of Leave Requested	Study Leave:	Examination Leave:		
Course of Study being undertaken:				
Dates of Approved Course	From:		To:	
Dates of Proposed Study Leave	From:		To:	
	From:		To:	
AND/OR				
Dates of Proposed Examination Leave	From:		To:	
	From:		To:	
Approval				
Signature of Applicant:		Date:		
Signature of Line Manager:		Date:		
Signature of Human Resources:		Date:		

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Section 2.3: Educational Assistance Guidelines and Procedures

Carlow College wishes to encourage employees to further their educational standard and attain qualifications which are job associated. During performance reviews, a formal opportunity exists for employees to outline how they would like to see their careers develop within the College and how the College can help them in this regard. Where employees undertake a relevant recognised formal course of education, the College, in its absolute discretion, may provide financial support to employees to assist with the cost of undertaking such a course. This scheme is offered to all employees who have successfully completed their probation period. Educational Assistance for approved courses is granted following a Performance Management Review, therefore, this should be completed in the first instance prior to requesting educational assistance. If you wish to avail of educational assistance from the College, please speak with your Line Manager and Human Resources. All requests for Educational Assistance must be made in writing using the Request for Educational Assistance Form (Section 2.4).

In deciding whether to provide such support, the College will particularly consider the relevance of the course to the achievement of Carlow Colleges' overall objectives. In deciding whether to provide such support, the College will also consider the availability of funds within the budget, and the priorities with which that budget should be applied.

Employees are advised to discuss with their Line Manager in advance of undertaking any such educational course, whether financial support is likely to be available in whole or in part, and not to assume that it will be available.

Any financial support given will generally be provided in advance of the course on production of a course invoice. Where the course of education is spread over a number of years, an indication will be given at the outset of the programme of whether financial support will extend for the duration of the course, subject to the successful completion of any assessments or examinations.

Accordingly, any financial support is given subject to the provision that should the employee concerned leave the College's employment within eighteen months of the completion of the course or the payment of the funds, whichever is the later, the financial support provided by the College to the employee in relation to the course will be repayable in whole or in part according to the following sliding scale:

Between 0 and 12 months 100%

12 to 18 months 50%

Employees who leave the Colleges employment in such circumstances are expected to enter into reasonable arrangements by agreement with the College to repay the amounts advanced. The College will take into account the personal circumstances of the individual in arriving at such arrangements.

Policy: *Benefits Policy*


Owner: Human Resources

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If you fail to complete the course or are unsuccessful in passing your exams or terminate your contract prior to course completion, then the College reserves the right to be reimbursed for the current year's fees paid for by the College.

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Section 2.4: Request for Educational Assistance Form

Request for Educational Assistance Form		 CARLOW COLLEGE ST. PATRICK'S	
Section 1: Details			
Employee Name:			
Date of Request:			
Section 2: Development Requested			
Name of Course:		Course Fee: €	
Time Commitment:		Start Date:	
		Finish Date:	
Percentage support and amount requested from the College:			
Section 3: Summary description of course: (Please attach supplementary course information)			
Subjects covered in the Programme:			
How the course relates to current role and work of the College:			
Employee Name:		Date:	
Employee Signature:			
Approval			
Support of Line Manager:	Reason(s) for non-financial assistance.		
Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
Manager Name:		Date:	
Manager Signature:			
HR Name:		Date:	
HR Signature:			
<i>This form must be submitted to Human Resources (HR to notify Finance)</i>			

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Section 2.5: Professional Leave

Carlow College provides Professional Leave in addition to all other leave. This leave is provided to employees who are required to attend approved business-related meetings and/or any other approved role related duties that require an employee on or off site to fulfil a business-related event and or duty. This facilitates ongoing and necessary business and College development for all staff members.

Professional leave requests must be submitted five working days in advance via the BrightHR system. This leave is available to all staff members who have successfully completed their probationary period or have obtained prior approval from their line manager.

Section 3: Benefits available through our Finance Office

1. Pension (PRSA Scheme)

Carlow College as an employer, are required by Law to ensure they provide access for all their employees to a Standard Personal Retirement Savings Account (P.R.S.A.).

Irish Life Assurance (AIB) are the nominated provider for Carlow College and there are a number of employees already availing of this Scheme. Carlow College adds 10% to amounts subscribed by Employees to their PRSA.

We are anxious that staff be sufficiently briefed on the scheme. So if you would like to know more or are interested in joining please contact:

Richard Geraghty QFA | RPA | SIA | FPRA

Finance Adviser | Irish Life Financial Services

M 087 490 2010 | **E** richard.geraghty@irishlife.ie | **W** www.irishlife.ie

Richard Geraghty will be very happy to answer all your questions and help you join the scheme should you wish to do so.

This scheme is offered to all employees who have successfully completed their probation period.

2. Taxsaver

This scheme lets you purchase annual TaxSaver commuter tickets from Dublin Bus, Iarnród Éireann and Luas through Carlow College. The TaxSaver scheme is operated by Dublin Bus and Iarnród Éireann in conjunction with the Revenue Commissioners. By availing of the scheme, you can save up to 48% of travel costs as a result of tax and PRSI savings. The scheme is administered by the Finance Office and further information is available from this office or by consulting www.taxsaver.ie. This scheme is offered to all employees who have successfully completed their probation period.

3. Bike to Work Scheme

The Bike to Work Scheme is a tax incentive scheme which aims to encourage employees to cycle to and from work. Under the scheme employers can pay for bicycles and bicycle equipment for their employees and the employee pays back through a salary sacrifice arrangement of up to 12 months. The employee is not liable for tax, PRSI, levies or the Universal Social Charge on their repayments.

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This scheme is offered to all employees who have successfully completed their probation period.

a) What equipment does the scheme apply to?

The scheme applies to new bicycles and pedelecs (electrically assisted bicycles which require some effort from the cyclist). It does not cover motorbikes, scooters or mopeds. Purchase of the following new safety equipment is also covered:

- Cycle helmets which conform to European standard EN 1078
- Bells and bulb horns
- Lights, including dynamo packs
- Mirrors and mudguards to ensure that the rider's visibility is not impaired
- Cycle clips and dress guards
- Panniers, luggage carriers and straps to allow luggage to be safely carried
- Locks and chains to ensure cycle can be safely secured
- Pumps, puncture repair kits, cycle tool kits and tyre sealant to allow for minor repairs
- Reflective clothing along with white front reflectors and spoke reflectors

The Bicycle must be purchased for the Employees own use and used mainly for travelling to and from work

b) How do I pay for the bicycle?

Carlow College, St. Patrick's pays the supplier for the bicycle and sets up a 'salary sacrifice' arrangement from your salary over an agreed time frame (which cannot be more than 12 months). This generally means that you visit the shop, select the equipment you wish to buy and have the shop invoice Carlow College directly for the cost. (Note that the tax exemption does not apply if you pay for the bicycle)

The repayment for the bicycle and equipment is then deducted from your gross salary (this means before income tax, PRSI levies or Universal Social Charge are deducted). These deductions can be made weekly or monthly depending on your salary payment arrangement.

c) Rates

There are three limits depending on the type of bike purchased.

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- €3,000 for cargo and ecargo bikes.
- €1,500 for pedelecs and e-bikes.
- €1,250 for other bikes.

If you spend more than this limit you are liable for a benefit-in-kind income tax charge.

You can only avail of the scheme once in a four-year period. This applies even if you do not purchase equipment up to the limits above.

d) If you are interested in availing of this scheme, please proceed as follows:

1. Select your Bicycle and accessories and request your chosen supplier to issue Invoice to Carlow College, St. Patrick's.
2. Notify the Finance Office (by email) the details of your purchase and submit the Invoice. Please note, the Invoice should include the suppliers Trade Name and Address, VAT No. and contact number. This will enable the Finance Office to obtain bank details and process payment by EFT.
3. The Finance Office will then contact you and the Salary Sacrifice, whether weekly or monthly, can be agreed. Carlow College, St. Patrick's requests that pay back is completed within the current tax year.
4. You will then confirm your agreement to pay back terms agreed (in writing or by email).
5. The Finance Office (will notify you when payment has issued to the supplier and you can then collect your bicycle.

For any queries regarding your own tax circumstance please log on to myAccount (Revenue Online).

What is myAccount?

MyAccount is a secure revenue online facility which allows you to:

- manage your tax credits;
- declare income;
- claim refunds & view your revenue records;
- Pay property tax.

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If you have not done so previously, we suggest that you register for myAccount as soon as you commence employment with the College.

It is a very simple procedure as follows:

1. Logon to www.revenue.ie
2. In the My Account box select: Register for my Account
3. Input your PPS number and proceed as instructed

Policy: *Benefits Policy*

Owner: Human Resources

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Section 4: HEAnet Store

HEAnet Store provides a wide range of educational discounts on ICT hardware, software and other services. This scheme allows you to avail of a HEAnet subsidy discount to use on your home computer using a valid College email address. We do not provide IT support regarding the offer and you are entirely responsible regarding its use.

<https://www.heanet.ie/store>

Please contact the IT Department for further information.

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Section 5: Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) Guidelines

Introduction

The purposes of this document are:

- to outline what an EAP is; and
- to describe procedures associated with Carlow College EAP

The procedures described in this document are in accordance with the procedures of the EAP provider as well as those of Carlow College. This document should be read in conjunction with various booklets and forms issued by the EAP provider (appended).

Various personal data is processed by both the EAP provider and Carlow College in association with the EAP. Therefore, the procedures in this document are in accordance with the provisions of data protection laws, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

What is an EAP?

Carlow College values all employees and is committed to assisting employees to maintain a positive sense of wellbeing. The College recognises the need to provide supports to employees who are experiencing difficulties. An EAP is an example of one such support.

An EAP is a programme whose objective is to support employees by identifying and resolving both personal and workplace issues that may affect their personal lives or job performance, including but not limited to, parenting, relationships, bereavement, substance abuse, legal or financial concerns. Further information is available in the EAP provider's handbooks and on its website. Services such as telephone and face-to-face counselling are available to employees as part of the EAP provider's services. Carlow College has agreed to provide unlimited telephone services and up to six face-to-face counselling sessions to employees and their family members in any twelve-month period. The EAP provider can also provide services in relation to critical incidents affecting the workplace, such as the illness or death of a colleague, a workplace accident, fire, assault or theft.

EAPs are made available by employers to their employees. Carlow College has contracted VHI Corporate Services to provide its employees with an EAP. In turn, VHI Corporate Services has sub-contracted Optum to actually provide EAP services. The EAP team comprises professionally qualified counsellors and information specialists. Carlow College's EAP is available to all current employees and their family members, and all retired or redundant employees for up to three months after the end of their employment.

The Human Resources (HR) Office manages the EAP on behalf of Carlow College. As the EAP is handling personal data on behalf of the College, the College and the VHI have a contract in place that is compliant with the requirements of the GDPR. In turn, the VHI is obliged to have a similar contract in place with Optum.

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Confidentiality and the EAP

Users of the EAP decide what information to share with the EAP team. The EAP team is bound by the codes of practice of the Irish Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (IACP) or relevant clinical bodies and users' information remains confidential except for the following exceptions:

- Where the EAP user instructs the EAP team to release information to a named party (a named Carlow College HR representative or Occupational Health Provider (hereafter OHP))
- Where there is a risk to someone's life, the user's safety or the safety of others
- Where required by law

If the EAP provider considers it necessary to break confidentiality it is done only to the extent necessary to contain the immediate risk. Most commonly, the emergency services are contacted, but it could also include talking with someone else present with the EAP user, contacting site managers or site security, social services, the EAP user's General Practitioner or anyone else likely to be able to take practical 'on site' action to contain the risk. In the case of corporate risk, the EAP provider would contact the line manager, the Occupational Health Provider or Human Resources. Breaking confidentiality is done with the EAP user's permission, where possible. However, in extreme situations, and after consultation with a manager, the EAP provider may decide to break confidentiality even if the EAP user will not give permission.

The EAP provider provides Carlow College with anonymous statistical data for service evaluation purposes. Such reports do not identify individuals.

Contacting the EAP

Under the EAP provider's procedures, there are three options for a referral to the EAP: self-referral, informal / assisted referral and formal / management referral. There are some differences between the three options and the following sections endeavour to explain these differences.

By way of introduction, as noted in the foregoing section, in some cases an EAP user may consent to the release of their information by the EAP provider to a named party (a HR representative or the OHP). In line with data protection rights, where an individual is asked for consent to share their personal data, they may grant or refuse consent. If an individual grants consent, they may later withdraw the consent. Employees may withdraw consent by contacting the EAP provider. Withdrawal of consent does not affect the lawfulness of processing (use) of the personal data before the withdrawal.

The employee may elect to have the EAP provider provide data to the OHP rather than the employer. Currently, Medwise is under contract (compliant with the requirements of the

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GDPR) to Carlow College as its OHP. The Medwise team is bound by professional ethics attaching to the medical profession. The Medwise confidentiality provisions are similar to those outlined in this document for the EAP provider, and, in general, Medwise does not release patient data without consent.

Use of the EAP by an employee is voluntary. Employees are at liberty to accept or decline a request to be subject to an informal / assisted referral or a formal / management referral. Employees will not be penalised or subject to disciplinary action for deciding to refuse an EAP referral.

The initial contact with the EAP may be made during working hours. The EAP is available outside of standard work hours and therefore, in general, employees are expected to contact the EAP and schedule appointments outside their working hours.

Following is an outline of the three methods by which contact may be made with the EAP, and the descriptions additionally include reference to where signed consent is required, and where information may be returned to the employer or the OHP:

Option 1: Self-referral

- Where an individual call or emails the EAP directly on 1800 995 955 / eap@vhics.ie, speaks with a service representative and progresses with the initial assessment from there
- The EAP is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Information is also available on the website www.livewell.optum.com (username, vhicarlowcollege)
- No information is returned to the employer
- No signed consent form is needed
- Colleagues or the relevant line manager may encourage employees to discuss an issue affecting them

Option 2: Informal / assisted referral

- This process arranges a telephone call from the EAP provider to an employee at a time that is suitable
- Section A of the form is completed and signed by the individual consenting to accept the telephone call
- No information is returned to the employer

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- The assisted referral process may be used where a line manager or HR is aware that an employee is encountering difficulties that the employer is unsuccessfully trying to manage independently. It is the policy of Carlow College that all assisted referrals are handled by HR. Therefore, any line manager who believes that the EAP might be able to assist an employee should contact HR with a view to an assisted referral being made

Option 3: Formal / management referral

- This referral process arranges a telephone call from the EAP provider to the employee at a time that is suitable
- Information is shared with the employer or OHP if the employee has given written consent to same. Section B of the Management Referral Form documents any consent that is given by an employee to the EAP provider to give information to the employer or OHP. The form also permits the employee to decide what information is to be disclosed.
- Such formal / management referrals should only occur rarely. Typically, where feedback is requested it is in connection with circumstances where an employee is encountering difficulties and HR wishes to put supports in place for the employee. It is the policy of Carlow College that employees are entitled to ask HR for a written explanation of what their personal data will be used for.
- It is the policy of Carlow College that only HR may request feedback from the EAP provider. Individual line managers are not to seek feedback from the EAP provider, and again, should discuss concerns about employees with HR.
- In some circumstances, it may be more appropriate that an employee is referred to the OHP rather than the EAP service, and the HR Office will decide which service is more appropriate.

The VHI Management Referral Form can be found on the Staff Gateway. Additionally, there are VHI information booklets in relation to the EAP for managers and employees on the Staff Gateway.

Manager support helpline

The EAP provider also provides a manager support helpline, which may be used by managers to discuss issues or concerns about a staff member. The EAP provider does not seek to know or record the identity of the staff member who is discussed, and it is the policy of the EAP provider to encourage managers to make a formal / management referral or to encourage self-referral.

Policy: *Benefits Policy*

Owner: Human Resources

Date Approved: 6 November 2024

Updates

This document may be updated from time to time to reflect Carlow College or EAP provider change of procedures; or legislative change affecting the processing of personal data.

Further information

Employees who require further information about the EAP may contact the HR Office at hr@carlowcollege.ie or 059-9153293/ 059-9153288

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Section 6: Carlow College Conference Attendance – Expenses and Procedures

Carlow College recognises that the process of attending conferences and presenting papers is at the core of good academic teaching, research practice and professional engagement. These presentations are seen to enhance both the reputation of academic staff, professional staff and Carlow College. Following approval, all staff are required to book this leave through the BrightHR System. This form must then be sent to Leave Administration for recording.

Wherever possible members of staff will be financially supported to attend conferences where they have been invited to make a presentation of their work. All members of staff who are applying for conference expenses are expected to acknowledge Carlow College in their written conference submissions.

A copy of the conference paper should be presented to the Head of Academic Delivery and Programmes and the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar when claiming expenses.

As a reciprocal gesture the College also expects that any member of staff who receives conference expenses will share their learning from the conference by way of a presentation to their colleagues.

Due to budgetary constraints staff attending conferences but not presenting papers will not be able to claim expenses.

Conference Rates (maximum rate including registration, travel and subsistence)

Presenting a Conference Paper

Conferences within Ireland:	Registration	- Max amount paid: €100
	Travel	- Max amount paid: €125
	Subsistence	- Max amount paid: <u>€ 75</u>
	Total	€300
Conferences within UK and Europe:	Registration	- Max amount paid: €175
	Travel	- Max amount paid: €175
	Subsistence	- Max amount paid: <u>€150</u>

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Total €500

International conferences: (Outside of Europe)	Registration - Max amount paid: €150
	Travel - Max amount paid: €400
	Subsistence - Max amount paid: <u>€100</u>
	Total €650

Attendance Application and Reimbursement Claim

- a) Applications and approval to attend conferences should be made using **Application (Form A) (Section 6.1)** in the first instance with the Head of Academic Delivery and Programmes and Vice President for Academic Affairs **21 days in advance of the conference.**
- b) For all requests the Conference Programme should be submitted also.
- c) Employees must then apply for the leave through the Bright HR Leave Management System.

Reimbursement Claim

- a) Claims for reimbursement of conference expenses must be submitted on **Claim (Form B) (Section 6.2)** within **21 days of the conference ending** and must be accompanied by receipts for conference registration, travel, and subsistence.
- b) No expenses can be paid without receipts.

Section 6.1: Conference Attendance Application Form A



Conference Attendance Application Form

Name: _____

A. Details of the conference (*please attach conference brochure and call for papers*)

Dates: _____

Venue: _____

Organising Body: _____

Theme of Conference: _____

Please provide the title of the paper and a brief description (*you will be required to submit a copy of your paper to the Registrar when claiming expenses*).

B. How many other conference applications have you made during the current academic year and what has been the total amount of your financial reimbursement?

Number of conference applications this academic year: _____

Total reimbursement to date: _____

C. Please briefly explain how your participation benefits your work at Carlow College? (*Staff members who receive conference expenses will be expected to give a paper or make a presentation to their colleagues and peers at Carlow College within six months of their conference attendance.*)

Date Approved: 6 November 2024

D. Please provide a breakdown of your estimated expenses:

- a) Conference Fee / Registration Fee: _____
- b) Travel: _____
- c) Subsistence: _____

E. If the conference is taking place during term time, what arrangements have been put in place to cover your teaching? (Such arrangements should not involve extra financial cost to the College.)

F. Declaration

I agree that if I receive financial reimbursement for conference expenses from Carlow College I will furnish a copy of my paper to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar when claiming my conference expenses. Furthermore, I undertake to present a paper to my colleagues who did not attend the conference within six months of my attendance.

Signature of Applicant: _____ **Date:** _____

Office of the Registrar	
Conference attendance on the above date	Approved / Not Approved
_____	_____
Head of Academic Delivery and Programmes	Date
_____	_____

Date Approved: 6 November 2024

Section 6.2: Conference Expenses Form B



Conference Expenses Claim Form

Name of applicant: _____

Name of conference attended: _____

Location of conference and date: _____

Title of your paper at the conference: _____

Please attach a copy of the paper presented at the conference (please tick) _____

Please provide a breakdown of your expenses and **provide receipts** for each of the following:

- a) Conference fee / registration: _____
- b) Travel: _____
- c) Subsistence: _____
- d) Total amount claimed: _____

Office of the Registrar	
Payment of Conference Expenses Claim Form	Approved / Not Approved
_____ Head of Academic Delivery and Programmes	_____ Date
Finance Office	_____ Date Paid

Section 7: Academic Staff PhD Bursary Guidelines and Procedures Form

Carlow College recognises that a PhD is internationally recognised as the entry level qualification for lecturing staff working in third level institutions. The requirement for staff to hold a PhD, or a professional practice doctorate in certain circumstances, will be reflected in job descriptions and person specifications for teaching and research posts at the College.

To encourage and facilitate existing full-time permanent staff to complete their doctoral studies whilst in the employment of Carlow College, the College offers a once-off College Bursary in the sum of 3,000 Euro to all full-time permanent staff undertaking doctoral research. This award can be claimed following the conferring of the degree.

Applications should be made to the Office of the Registrar by completing form on the next page.

Date Approved: 6 November 2024

Section 7.1: Staff Doctoral Bursary



Staff Doctoral Bursary

Carlow College, St. Patrick’s recognises that a PhD is internationally recognised as the entry level qualification for lecturing staff working in third level institutions. The requirement for staff to hold a PhD, or a professional practice doctorate in certain circumstances, will be reflected in job descriptions and person specifications for teaching and research posts at the College.

To encourage and facilitate existing full-time permanent staff to complete their doctoral studies whilst in the employment of Carlow College, the College offers a once-off College Bursary in the sum of €3,000 to all full-time staff undertaking doctoral research. This award can be claimed following the conferring of the degree.

Applications should be made to the Office of the Registrar by completing the section below.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Title of doctoral degree (e.g. PhD, D.Soc.Sc.): _____

Awarding Institution: _____

Name of doctoral supervisor: _____

Name of internal examiner: _____

Name of external examiner: _____

Year of first registration: _____

Date of viva voce: _____

Date of final submission: _____

Date of conferral: _____

Approved for payment:	_____	_____
	Vice President for Academic Affairs / Registrar	Date

Section 8: Academic Book Publications Bursary Guidelines and Procedures Form

Carlow College seeks to encourage and facilitate full-time staff seeking to publish their research in book form. The College recognises that academic publishers increasingly seek a financial contribution from authors to defray publishing costs. A grant in-aid of publication fund has therefore been put in place to which members of staff can apply when they are at the stage of submitting a manuscript to an established and respected publisher. In return the college will ask for the Carlow College logo to be shown on the book as one of the bodies that aided publication. The grant to be made available will vary according to the book to be published. It is unlikely to exceed €2500. Applications can be made where the member of staff is the sole author of a book-length scholarly work.

Applications should be made to the Office of the Registrar's Office by completing form on the next page.

Date Approved: 6 November 2024

Section 8.1: Staff Book Publications Bursary



Staff Book Publications Bursary

Carlow College, St. Patrick’s seeks to encourage and facilitate full-time staff seeking to publish their research in book form. The College recognises that academic publishers increasingly seek a financial contribution from authors to defray publishing costs. A grant in-aid of publication fund has therefore been put in place to which members of staff can apply when they are at the stage of submitting a manuscript to an established and respected publisher. In return, the College will ask for the Carlow College logo to be shown on the book as one of the bodies that aided publication. The grant to be made available will vary according to the book to be published. It is unlikely to exceed €2,500. Applications can be made where the member of staff is the sole author of a book-length scholarly work.

Applications should be made to the Office of the Registrar by completing the section below.

Name: _____

Title of Book: _____

Details of the grant in-aid of publication requested by your publisher and the purposes for which it will be used (*please provide documentary evidence*).

Proposed date of publication: _____

Name and address of publisher: _____

Office of the Registrar	
Approved for payment on receipt of the published book:	Yes / No
Vice President for Academic Affairs / Registrar	Date

Section 9: Academic Staff Post-Doctoral Research Leave Guidelines and Procedures

This leave and its subsequent procedures apply to academic staff working across all programmes in respect of applications for post-doctoral research leave.

Five days' research leave will be granted annually in respect of post-doctoral research. These days can be used for example, for visiting libraries / archives, collaborating with colleagues in other institutions on research projects and meeting editors and publishers. This will be pro-rata for part-time staff. These should be days on which lectures are not scheduled so as to minimize disruption to schedules. This extra leave is intended to be used to support staff to attend meetings and other events relevant to their research profile and the publication of their work.

All full-time academic staff at Carlow College receive forty days annual leave (pro-rata for part-time staff) in recognition of the expectation that academics spend time over the summer break on research related activities. Any request for post-doctoral leave that exceeds five days will therefore be treated as annual leave and must be applied for through the BrightHR system, however the staff post-doctoral research leave application form (Section 9.1) must be submitted to the Registrar's office in the first instance for prior approval. When making applications staff members are asked to bear in mind that annual leave is not usually granted during the academic term and to therefore endeavour to minimise disruption to lecturing and teaching duties.

Applications for post-doctoral research leave should in the first instance, be made using the staff post-doctoral research leave application. This should be submitted to the Head of Academic Delivery and Programmes at least fourteen days in advance of the requested leave dates. This form must then be sent to Leave Administration for recording. Once approved, all staff are then required to submit this leave through the BrightHR system.

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Section 9.1. Academic Staff Post-Doctoral Research Leave Application Form



Academic Staff Post-Doctoral Research Leave Application Form

Academic staff undertaking post-doctoral research can apply for additional paid leave. A maximum of five days annual post-doctoral research leave (pro-rata for part-time staff) will be granted in respect of post-doctoral research. These days can be used for example, for visiting libraries / archives, collaborating with colleagues in other institutions on research projects and meeting editors and publishers. As far as possible, these should be days on which lectures are not scheduled so as to minimize disruption to schedules. For academic staff, subject to the *Academic Staff Workload Allocation Policy*, these days are included in the annual research allocation agreed with their line manager.

All full-time lecturing staff at Carlow College receive forty days (pro-rata for part-time staff) annual leave in recognition of the expectation that academics spend time over the summer break on research related activities. Any request for post-doctoral research leave that exceeds five days will therefore be treated as annual leave and must be applied for via the BrightHR leave system. When making applications, staff members are asked to bear in mind that annual leave is not usually granted during the academic term and to therefore endeavour to minimise disruption to lecturing and teaching duties.

Name:		
Title of research:		
Name of Funding Body / Organisation/ Collaborating Institution (if applicable):		
Estimated completion date of the research:		
Date(s) of requested post-doctoral research leave:		
What is the reason for applying for post-doctoral leave on this occasion?		
Number of days post-doctoral leave requested so far during this academic year:		

Date Approved: 6 November 2024

If you are applying to take post-doctoral leave during term time, what arrangements have been made to cover your teaching/work commitments?	
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Note: While the College endeavours to promote and encourage post-doctoral research leave by providing this leave, all additional personal costs and expenses in relation to the research are borne by the staff member.

Office of the Registrar

Post-doctoral leave on the above dates:	Approved / Not Approved
Head of Academic Delivery and Programmes	Date

Date Approved: 6 November 2024

Section 10: Contact Details

1. Human Resources

Employees who require further information in relation to this Policy or other benefit related policies, you can contact the HR Office:

Jill Colston, Head of Human Resources and EDI

Email: hr@carlowcollege.ie

Phone: 059 91 53293

Chante Janse van Vuuren, Human Resources Administrator

Email: hr@carlowcollege.ie

Phone: 059 91 53288

2. Finance

Evelina Pocevicene, Senior Finance Specialist

Email: accounts2@carlowcollege.ie

Phone: 059 91 53285

Rachel Mahon Larkin, Accounts and Payroll Administrator

Email: accounts2@carlowcollege.ie

Phone: 059 91 53260

3. IT Department (for the HEAnet discount package)

Keith Baxter, Head of Technology

Email: itsupport@carlowcollege.ie

Phone: 059 91 53233 / 059 91 53272

Policy: *Benefits Policy*

Owner: Human Resources

Date Approved: 6 November 2024

Employees found to be abusing this policy and its subsequent and related practices and procedures will be subject to the organisations *Disciplinary Policy*, up to and including dismissal.

Version Control Register			
Version Number	Superseded or Obsolete Policy / Procedure(s)	Date Updated	Changes
1	<i>Employee Benefits Handbook</i>	27 February 2019	Initial Issue
2	<i>Employee Benefits Handbook</i>	10 March 2021	Included Parent’s Leave Updated contact details for PRSA Updated contact details Updated Bike to Work Scheme information
3	<i>Employee Benefits Handbook</i>	1 June 2022	Included updated Parent’s Leave entitlements and rate, as well as Maternity and Paternity rates. Added Statutory Leave Table Added Parents/Guardians Leave Poster Included Flexi-Time and Hybrid Working Updated Titles
4	<i>Employee Benefits Handbook</i>	6 November 2024	Updated Maternity Leave rate of pay Updated Parental Leave entitlement Updated Parent’s leave entitlement and rate of pay Updated Flexi time to reflect new policy Updated Hybrid working to reflect new policy Updated Pension Scheme contact information Updated the rates in the Bile to Work Scheme Updated the IT HEAnet Store scheme Updated Contact Details of Departments

Appendix 1.0 – Benefits Tree



Appendix 1.1 – Parents / Guardians at Work Benefits



Appendix 1.2 – Staff Wellbeing Initiatives

