



YOUR VACATION PLANNING GUIDE

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WHY VACATION PLANNING IS IMPORTANT

Ryerson University is committed to putting people first, by supporting time off for your health and wellness.

Vacations are pre-planned time away from work meant to provide employees with an opportunity for refreshment and rejuvenation. Taking regular vacation is associated with a longer, healthier life by, for example, reducing stress and helping people to maintain strong bonds in their personal relationships.

This in turn helps to improve attendance at work and job performance. Numerous studies have found that human beings perform best and are most productive when they alternate between periods of intense focus and intermittent renewal.

Ryerson leaders, including your Manager or Supervisor, are making annual vacation planning a top priority.

FRAMEWORK

Vacation time is generally mutually arranged between Managers or Supervisors and their employees. However, if employees do not take enough vacation, Managers and Supervisors are responsible for making sure additional vacation time is taken. Ryerson policies and collective agreement provisions limit the amount of vacation credits an employee can carry forward from one year into another (see the section on Vacation Balances).

YOUR VACATION PLANNING GUIDE



The Ontario *Employment Standards Act* requires that employees are provided with **at least 2 weeks of vacation every year**. Ryerson's benefits provide significantly more than this minimum requirement. Vacation accruals based on years of service are also a reward for long service at the University.

You can find details about vacation and other leave provisions in policies (for Executives, Senior Academic and Administrative Leaders and MAC) and collective agreements (for RFA Librarians and Counsellors, OPSEU and CUPE 233) at www.ryerson.ca/hr/policy.

A PLANNED APPROACH TO EMPLOYEE VACATION TIME

This guide provides strategies to help employees in the following groups to plan annual vacation time.

- Executives (such as the President, Provost and Vice Presidents)
- Senior Academic and Administrative Leaders (such as Vice Provosts, Associate Vice Provosts, Assistant Vice Presidents, Sr. Directors, Deans, Chief Librarian)
- Librarians and Counsellors (RFA)
- Management and Confidential Staff (MAC)
- Academic and Administrative Support Staff (OPSEU)
- Maintenance and Trades Staff (CUPE 233)

Vacation Planning Considerations and Strategies

You should start thinking about taking time off as early as possible, and work with your manager or supervisor to identify suitable time periods that take into account operational cycles and/or project related activities. Together with your Manager or Supervisor, you need to discuss and agree on vacation time that does not impact services to students and clients or the ongoing operations of the Faculty, Department or School.

If an unexpected circumstance results in you not being able to take your planned vacation time, a rescheduled time should be arranged as soon as possible after the original scheduled vacation period.

Following are some things to think about when you are planning vacation time off.

Employees with High Vacation Accrual Rates

It can sometimes be challenging to find mutually agreed time for vacation when you accrue 5 or 6 weeks of vacation credits per year. In addition to planning for vacation time off, some tips and strategies include:

- scheduling two separate two week vacation periods in a year;
- using vacation credits to create a three or four day week in the summer or other periods when it is feasible (this would be in addition to the minimum two week vacation time off in a year);

YOUR VACATION PLANNING GUIDE



- using vacation credits prior to or following the midyear break, where feasible (this would be in addition to the minimum two week vacation time off in a year).

Pre-Retirement Vacation

Another option to consider is to take more vacation prior to retirement. During the six months prior to a planned retirement date, you may use your vacation credits to take a full time leave, or to reduce your work hours immediately prior to retirement, with the agreement of your Manager or Supervisor.

You would be asked to sign an irrevocable agreement that exempt you from LTD, STD, salary increases and vacation accrual while on full time leave immediately prior to your retirement date.

The benefit is that you continue to receive full pay, and contribute to the Ryerson Pension Plan.

Taking into Account the Impact of other Leaves

One of the reasons why you may accrue excess vacation credits, despite planning, is because of the impact of other leaves of absences, for example, sick leave, bereavement leave, or maternity or parental leave. For example, when an employee is on maternity or parental leave, he/she continues to accrue vacation credits and yet may not take vacation for a year or more. This will lead to a buildup of vacation credits.

A good tip to address this issue is to discuss the possibility of taking vacation immediately prior to or following a leave of absence to extend your time away. Your Manager or Supervisor will already be making arrangements to hire someone on a temporary basis to fill in for you, or other arrangements to make sure the work gets done during the leave, so this approach can have minimal impact on operations.

New Employees

Often employees in their first year of employment work the entire year without vacation. It is important for new employees to plan vacation time to be taken within or soon after the first year.

Note: Employees may take an advance of 5 days vacation, at the discretion of their Manager or Supervisor.

Compensating Time Off and Vacation Credit Balances

In some cases, major projects or unexpected increases in volume of work may lead to overtime.

In situations where you are eligible to receive overtime as compensating time off, an unintended consequence may be that it reduces your opportunity to use your vacation credits.

You need to avoid building up compensating time off to the point where it leads to excess vacation credit balances. In order to prevent this from becoming a significant issue, as a policy, you must use vacation credits for annual planned vacation time before using compensating time off credits. If compensating time off credits above policy and collective agreement limits are not used by the end of a calendar year, they will be paid out at the beginning of the following year, starting in January 2014.



Recording Vacation Requests and Approvals

Vacation time is requested by employees and approved by managers online, in eHR, in advance of the time off.

It is essential that vacations are recorded and approved in eHR to avoid problems such as appearing to have excess vacation balances or taking more vacation than you are entitled to.

In addition, it is important to ensure that leaves are recorded accurately. For example, vacation would be the appropriate leave to use for a dental check up, not sick leave. Another example is that vacation would be the appropriate leave to use for a parent teacher interview, not family leave. You should check with your Manager or Supervisor, or Human Resources if you are unsure about the appropriate leave to use.

VACATION BALANCES

You may carry a maximum balance of 2 times your annual vacation entitlement. Management of excess vacation balances will be a phased in process.

Phase One: Planning for the September 30, 2014 Deadline

- If you have remaining excess vacation credit and you have not made arrangements to reduce it to within allowable limits, **you need to do so before the September 30, 2014 deadline.**
- **When we reach the deadline, you will no longer have the option for a payout and any excess vacation will be forfeit.** Employees' vacation credits will be reduced to the maximum allowable amount.

Phase Two: October 1, 2014 - September 30, 2015

- **Managing vacation accrual is an ongoing process.** Vacation is accrued on a monthly basis, and it's part of everyone's responsibilities to ensure that you're using your allotted time and staying within accrual limits. Employees will need to work with managers to plan vacation and keep their vacation balance below the allowable maximum.
- On September 30, 2015, any excess vacation days will be again be removed and forfeited with no further notice.

Phase Three: October 1, 2015 Forward

- Effective October 1, 2015, a system cap will be implemented through eHR, and **employees will no longer be able to accrue additional vacation time above the limit.**

YOUR VACATION PLANNING GUIDE



- For example, if an employee is allowed 15 vacation days per year, and accrues the maximum of 30 (2 years' worth), they will not accrue additional vacation until their total is under 30 days. Should they use one vacation day, they will only be able to accrue one day before the system caps out at 30 again.

Access up to date vacation balances is available in eHR.