

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q1 Who can apply for On Leave Membership?**

**A1** Financial Law Society members who are taking unpaid leave, for example, maternity leave, parental leave, carer's leave, study leave or stress/sick leave from their employment for any period between six and 12 months.

**Q2 What is the benefit of On Leave Membership?**

**A2** During the member's period of On Leave Membership, payment of the member's membership fee is placed in abeyance from the expiry of the paid membership year until the expiry of the period of leave. At the expiration of the period of leave, the fee payable to renew membership is determined on a pro rata basis for the remainder of the relevant membership year. This fee is payable within one month of the expiration of the period of leave.

For example:

- An On Leave Member commences leave from 1 November 2013 for 12 months.
- The On Leave Member is not required to make any payment until the expiration of the period of leave and then only for a period of 7 months (November 2014 to June 2015).

The member's rights, privileges and benefits are not affected in any way. The member continues to receive all information disseminated by the Society, can stand and vote in elections (if applicable to the member's category of membership) and receives a 50% discount on the members' fee for Law Society CPD during the period of leave.

**Q3 What discount does an On Leave Member receive on the cost of Law Society CPD?**

**A3** An On Leave Member is entitled to a 50% discount on the usual member rate for CPD offered by the Law Society from the date the member commences leave until the member has earned the number of CPD points required by the Legal Practice. On Leave Members on parental leave for any period of the CPD year, 1 April to 31 March, should apply to the Legal Practice Board for a pro rata variation to their annual CPD requirements in accordance with the 'CPD Guidelines for Parenting Leave.'

**Q4 Does an On Leave Member receive a refund of membership fees already paid in advance of commencing leave?**

**A4** No. For example, if a member is granted On Leave Membership from 1 May 2013, the member is not entitled to a refund of the 2012/2013 membership fee for the months of May and June 2013.

**Q5 Does an On Leave Member receive a credit for membership fees already paid in advance of commencing leave?**

**A5** No. As shown in the example at A2, if an On Leave Member commences leave from 1 November 2013 for 12 months, the On Leave Member is not required to pay the 2014/2015 membership fee until the expiration of the period of leave and then only for a period of 7 months (November 2014 to June 2015). This member will have paid the full membership fee for 2013/2014 but On Leave Membership does not entitle the member to a credit to be carried forward for the period 1 November 2013 to 30 June 2014.

**Q6 How does a Society member apply for On Leave Membership?**

**A6** A Society member applies for On Leave Membership by completing an On Leave Membership Application Form which is available from the Society's website. The member will notify the Society of the reason they are applying for On Leave Membership. Where the member has an employer, the application must be supported by a letter from the member's employer confirming that the member is taking leave.

**Q7 When does the period of On Leave Membership commence and expire?**

**A7** The period of leave commences and expires on the dates specified by the Society member in their application.

**Q8 What if the Society member does not apply for On Leave Membership until after the Society member has commenced unpaid leave?**

**A8** Society members are required to apply for On Leave Membership prior to commencing unpaid leave.

However, if a Society member commenced unpaid leave of between 6 and 12 months prior to the introduction of On Leave Membership (27 February 2013) the Society member can apply for On Leave Membership from 27 February 2013. All other terms, conditions and privileges of On Leave Membership apply, including support of the application by the member's employer.

**Q9 Does an On Leave Member have to notify the Society when they are returning to work?**

**A9** Yes. Prior to the expiration of the On Leave Member's period of leave and at least four weeks prior to return to work, the On Leave Member is required to inform the Law Society in writing of the date of their return to work. The On Leave Membership ceases on the date specified by the member as their return to work date.

**Q10 What if the On Leave Member resigns from their employment prior to the expiration of the leave period?**

**A10** If the On Leave Member resigns but is not earning an income prior to the expiration of the leave period, the On Leave Membership is not affected. However, if the On Leave Member commences gainful employment prior to the expiration of the leave period, the On Leave Membership comes to an end on the commencement date of the gainful employment. The fee payable to renew Society membership is determined on a pro rata basis for the remainder of the relevant membership year and is payable within one month.