

# Flexible Time Off

*Effective January 1st 2022*

## Overview

Time off work is super important for maintaining a healthy work/life balance. At Camunda we encourage managers & leaders to set an example by taking time off when needed and ensuring their direct & indirect reports do the same. Returning to work with a fresh mind and recharged batteries enables you to do your best work. A tired mind can lead to burn out.

For this reason, you have **flexible time off** at Camunda. FTO is in addition to (1) your locally recognised public holidays and (2) your required statutory vacation for your country / agreed contractual vacation (whichever is the larger of the two). FTO gives you the ability to take additional vacation days so long as business continuity is maintained. More information on this can be found in the section below - "A Camundos guide to FTO".

In practice, this means you don't have to ask for permission when planning a vacation. However, you should over-communicate and inform your manager and peers to make sure that you and your team's responsibilities are covered.

We have a flexible working environment and want our team members to lean into taking ownership & having a [manager of one mentality](#) when considering taking FTO. There are crucial roles at Camunda that could impact the business negatively if everyone is out of the office at the same time. We expect teams to plan along with their manager, especially during holiday seasons. Over-communication and planning is always most ideal when scheduling your time-off.

You can use your flexible time off for anything you like, including resting, taking a break from work, taking care of yourself, taking a vacation, volunteering in your local community, focusing on further education eg Bildungsurlaub in Germany, etc. FTO is when you will be away from your desk for 4 or more hours eg taking a half day.

You do not need to use your flexible time off to do things such as household chores, personal errands, going to a doctor's appointment, going to the gym, taking a nap, or helping a loved one e.g. anything that takes less than 4 hours / a half day. What's important is planning and communication with your team and manager. If you have an urgent or high-priority task that you can't get done, let your team or manager know so that you can coordinate how that task will get done.

In many countries, there are statutory requirements for paid time off. To remain compliant, and also to ensure that you are taking sufficient time off work for you, **everyone at Camunda is strongly recommended to take at least 30 days FTO per year\***. If you manage people, make sure to check on this as well.

*\*If your contractual obligation states more than 30 days per year, we encourage you to at least take your contractual minimum.*

## Public holidays

In addition to Flexible Time Off, each region also has public holidays, which are defined in Hibob. You are not required or expected to work on a public holiday\*. In fact, we highly encourage you to take your public holidays off work. If you need to take time off on another day, then use your flexible time off to do that. We always encourage taking more time off, not less.

It's most likely that everyone in the same jurisdiction will take the same public holiday off. Please be sure to coordinate with your team to ensure proper coverage during your time off, if coverage is required.

*\*For roles that have on-call / Customer Support responsibilities, if you cannot take the public holiday on the date in which it falls, please be sure to take a day in lieu if you are unable to take the full public holiday off.*

## Can I observe public holidays from another jurisdiction/country?

You should follow the public holidays as dictated by your contracted location. For example: If you are employed in Ireland, you should observe public holidays as given by the Irish employment law.

If you live in a country with public holidays determined by local jurisdiction, we encourage you to take the public holidays associated with your contracted jurisdiction. Should you want to observe a public holiday that is outside of your jurisdiction (in addition to local ones), you can still take those days off using our flexible time off policy.

## A Camundos guide to FTO

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As we all work in a remote first environment across 20 plus countries & in multiple time zones, it can sometimes be difficult to know when and how to plan time off. Here is some advice and guidance on how this can be done in an easy and collaborative way.

- a. We have a "just tell" flexible time off guidance. This means that:
  - You do not need to ask permission to take time off unless you want to have more than 21 consecutive calendar days (including weekends and public holidays) off. The 21-day "just tell" limit is per vacation, not per year.
  - If your planned leave exceeds the 21 calendar days (including weekends and holidays), please make sure to reach out to your Manager & [People & Organisation Partner](#) for a special request.
  - What we care about are your results, not how long you work. **While you don't need to ask approval for time off, it shouldn't be at the expense of business getting done.** Please coordinate with your team before taking time off, especially during popular or official holidays, so that we can ensure business continuity. We want to ensure we have adequate coverage and avoid situations where all/most of the team is taking time off at the same time. Having a manager of one mindset will help you to personally determine when the right/wrong time to take FTO may be.

- **Manager VETO**

- i. In order to aid & develop an overall understanding of the "just tell" guidance & associated culture change, your manager will be able to veto your vacation submission (similar to declining in the past) should they feel that your submission will impact business continuity, for example if you are scheduled to host a customer training session, are due to be available for on call or if you book popular time off in advance of a team conversation eg Christmas.
  - ii. A veto can mean a veto of "dates requested" not in principle "time off" and it should require a manager to find alternative dates with their report rather than have the ability to out-and-out cancel the request.
  - iii. A veto will be an exception, not the rule. We would hope that team members show individual accountability & empowerment when submitting time off.
  - iv. If a manager does veto your submission they should provide valid reasoning, similar to if they were to decline your request in the past policy.
- When taking time off make sure your manager is aware of your absence. Informing your manager can be done following the steps on how to record your time off below. Giving your manager and team members a heads up early helps them prioritize work and meet business goals and deadlines.
  - It can be helpful to take longer breaks to re-energize. If this is helpful to you, we strongly recommend taking at least two consecutive weeks of time off per year.
1. We don't frown on people taking time off, but rather encourage people to take care of themselves and others by having some time away.
  2. In addition, we encourage all team members to take time off for holidays they observe. Camunda embraces asynchronous communications, so calls can be recorded and watched later. No one should ever be expected to attend calls on days they are not working or on official public holidays. For a listing of official holidays by country, please see the predefined holidays in your HiBob time off calendar.
  3. Not taking vacation can be viewed as a weakness and people shouldn't boast about it. The company must be able to go for long periods without you. We don't want to lose you permanently by burning yourself out by not taking regular vacations. We care and encourage you to take the time off that you need. Ensuring your documentation in the handbook is up to date enables your team to help out whilst you're on leave, additionally it fosters our asynchronous working environment.
  4. You don't need to worry about taking time off to go to the gym, take a nap, go grocery shopping, do household chores, help someone, taking care of a loved one, etc. If you have urgent tasks, but something comes up or takes longer than expected, just ensure the rest of the team knows and someone can pick up the tasks (assuming you're able to communicate).
  5. Vacation must be submitted reasonably upfront, a good rule of thumb would be to give as much notice to your time off in relation to the length of time you wish to take off, for example if you take 2 days off, you would give 2 days notice. This is merely guidance and not an exact science, if it works for your team to provide less notice without impacting business continuity, that's fine.
    - [Mary Thengvall](#) "I encourage my team to think through their time off for the coming quarter (whether travel for conferences/events or holidays) as an exercise at the beginning of OKR planning each quarter. This allows us to plan for an appropriate workload for the quarter."
  6. You cannot submit vacation over the weekend for the next working day (eg. Monday or the day that follows a potential public holiday) or the entire week ahead, by doing this will disadvantage your team / manager as they will not be able to prepare in a timely manner for your absence. This guidance does not apply to unexpected/emergency circumstances/illness, we understand that these situations cannot be planned for.
  7. While we value this flexible approach to time off, we do want to emphasise that this approach is based on trust and adherence to our values. This premise of this policy works as a two way street. Some things that you should think of when booking time off are:
    - a. Me (you)

- b. My team
- c. Camunda
- a. Do I need to be available for customer interaction?
- b. Am I scheduled to be on-call?
- c. Do I have a project deadline?
- a. Who else is off on my team?
- b. Is my team equipped in my absence?
- c. Is my documentation up to date?
  - At a macro level, you should think of:
  - What are your personal business responsibilities for the time that you wish to take off?
  - Is my team supported during my time off?

## Recording time off

### When to do it?

Please record your time off for half days or longer (half day is usually 4 hours or more in one day).

As we work asynchronously, there is no need to record if you are planning to step away from your desk for an hour or two, but it is important that you update Slack and your calendar to reflect that you are not available at that time.

You can submit your time off as far in advance into the future as you like. There is no limit on submitting your time off ahead of time and you can change/update it at any time. We encourage you to submit your time off as soon as possible to create early awareness with your manager and team.

### How to do it?

Over-communicating your time off enables a positive FTO experience for both yourself & Camunda. It's important to communicate your time off on the following systems:

1. HiBob
  - a. Check out this [guide](#) on the steps required to submit time off.
2. Outlook
  - a. Automatic reply: Set up and auto reply with the dates that you will be OOO and who to contact in your absence.
3. Slack
  - a. Update your slack to status to show OOO, mention the dates & who to contact in your absence (this could be your manager or a team channel). Asking a channel is more efficient if available.

## FTO Check-ins

A core principle of this policy is to ensure that team members are taking adequate time off. We strongly recommend that you take at **least** 30 days of vacation per year.

On a quarterly basis the people team will send an email from the people operations team alias that will encourage you to book & plan for vacation. In parallel with this, the people team will be running a report from HiBob to check team members' vacation balances & planned vacations. If we note any concerns we will work with the P&O team and your line manager to develop an understanding of how we can help.

### What do we consider a concern?

Our aim is for team members to take at least 30 days. Should we see that after 6-9 months into the year that:

1. The team member has booked/planned less than 20 days off. We will encourage the manager to have a conversation with them about planning some time off.
2. The team member has booked/planned between 20-30 days. We will send an email reminder of our general guidance on at least 30 days being considered a healthy number of days leave.
3. The team member has booked/planned over 30 days and business continuity is maintained. No action taken.

## Vacation Carryover

Taking time off is important and we will be actively encouraging you to take time off throughout the year. We hope that this encouragement will result in limited vacation carryover. In the circumstances that carryover will arise we will be adopting a "use it or lose it" approach where it is statutorily applicable.

To understand what will happen to current accrued vacation, please refer to FAQ #5 in the FAQ section below.

## Statutory Holiday Requirements

### Germany

New team members will be entitled to at least 20 vacation days. Contracts signed before this policy is shared are likely to indicate more, because we had a different (limited) FTO policy until 2021. These days will accrue from your start date. In general, team members must take their annual vacation days during the calendar year, otherwise it is forfeited. However, unused vacation days can be carried forward until the 31st of March of the next calendar year if the team member was unable to take the vacation due to operational or personal reasons.

### UK

Team members are entitled to at least [28 vacation days](#), this is broken down by 20 days standard annual leave plus 8 public holidays. These days will accrue from your start date. It is important for UK team members to utilise time off for public holidays as the total amount of annual leave is accrued here inclusive of public holidays. Under normal circumstances, there is no carryover for unused vacation days.

### USA

The [U.S. Fair Labor Standards Act \(FLSA\)](#) does not require payment for time not worked, such as vacations, sick leave or federal or other holidays.

### Singapore

Team members annual leave entitlement depends on how many years of service they have completed with camunda. Team members' years of service begins from the day they start work with Camunda. Details can be found [here](#).

### PEO

[Remote.com](#) & Velocity Global will be responsible for vacation carry over & compliance. On Camunda's side we will be actively encouraging you to take at least 30 days vacation per year or your contractual statutory obligation, whichever is the higher of the two.

## FTO & Sick Leave

Sick leave is not covered by the policy and must always be communicated as sick leave to your Manager / the People Team.

General guidance on sick leave can be found [here](#).

### FAQ's

1 Q: Why are we implementing global FTO?

A: At present we have multiple annual leave policies, this is creating internal inconsistencies. In order to avoid confusion and mistakes we feel that adapting a consistent approach that is in line with the tech market will enable camunda to offer a stronger team member experience for both new & existing team members.

2 Q: What is the benefit of FTO to current non US team members?

A: Global FTO allows team members flexibility to take more time off than their statutory / contractual allocation. Taking time off work should present you with flexibility, with FTO you can take time off for whatever reason you want and best of all you don't have to worry about how many days you have left.

3 Q: What is the benefit of FTO to Camunda from a company perspective?

A: As we scale and enter new countries of employment we are presented with unique rules and regulations with regards to time off. Adapting a global FTO policy enables us a one size fits all approach for our global scaling. Having a fair & consistent benefits approach is our aim, inconsistencies can result in team member disappointment.

4 Q: How will we actively encourage you to take time off?

A: Our leaders will lead by example in taking frequent time off. Additionally the people team will actively review taken/booked time off at points throughout the year to ensure that team members are enabled to take time off. If we have concerns we will work with the functional leaders to gain further understanding.

5 Q: What happens to my banked / accrued vacation?

Any carryover that will be accrued before 31/12/21 will be available to use in HiBob until the 31/03/22, after this time any leftover vacation will be stored in HiBob until a time at which you leave Camunda. At this point you can use your stored vacation towards your notice period or receive a payment in your final salary. Going forward (2022-2023) we will operate a "use it, or lose it" guidance for annual leave. FTO enables you to take more than your contractual amount which mitigates the need for saving vacation days for extended vacations. This change will come into place when this policy launches on the 1st of January 2022. As of January 1st 2022 you will begin to accrue a new contractual vacation balance. Should you have any days remaining at the end of 2022 you can bring them forward into 2023, up to the end of March. If you have not taken them by the end of March they will be lost. A core principle of FTO is to ensure we have very limited cases of carryover. German legislation discourages carryover and encourages an environment where full leave entitlements are taken. At times throughout the year the people team will work with you & your manager to encourage the taking of FTO.

*How will this work in HiBob?*

From January 1st 2022 you will have an option of FTO & Vacation in Hibob. FTO will have an unlimited balance & vacation will have the # of days that you have accrued / carried over.

Should you wish to book time off, please feel free to use either FTO or Vacation as an option.

After the 31st of March 2021, the vacation option will be removed and the remaining balance will be stored in the bank.

Going forward you will then use FTO as your leave option.

6 Q: Will we continue to offer a set number of vacation in new team members contracts?

A: Going forward we will have the local statutory vacation amount in new team members contracts. This ensures our compliance. Team members will then be able to take above this amount as part of our FTO policy. When we announce this policy we will work on updated contracts for new team members. Team members with >20 days in their current contracts will have that amount of vacation plus FTO e.g. 30 days vacation plus FTO.

7 Q: Will FTO impact my compensation?

A: FTO will not have an impact on your compensation. If you take time off in addition to your local statutory requirements / contractual obligations, you will be paid in full.

- ***FAQ's will continue to be iterated on as we receive feedback from team members. If you think of one, please add it as a suggestion and tag [Ross Hendrick](#).***