zalaris

Employee Central: Benefits and Time Management

Following my colleague Christine's article on Employee Central, which covers the majority of Employee Central topics, this article focuses on the feature groups called "Benefits" and "Time and Attendance Management".

In this release, there are 5 (3 Admin Opt-in and 2 Universal) updates in EC Benefits and 20 (15 Admin Opt-in, 5 Universal) in Time and Attendance Management. All of them are fully available to start using in the 2020-H1 release.

In addition to these new features, there are a small selection of notable fixes in benefits (9) and in Time Management (20). These fixes address errors in the application, incorrect data handling/calculations, user interface and automated jobs.

Stephen Burr
*Head of Professional Services*

Benefits

There are a couple of uses of the Intelligent Services Centre (ISC) to help automate benefits enrolments for both new hires and rehired employees. While there is a demo available for the rehire process, I didn't find it particularly useful. It is worth noting that based on the eligibility and benefit configuration or for manually enrolled benefits, a benefit exception is created if required.

Both of these automated benefits enrolment scenarios are Admin Opt-in changes, as is the handling of the new tax regime in India introduced in the 2020 budget.

The first of the two universal changes (that every customer will get automatically) is unusual in that it actually removes data, namely the; **Benefits** section on the **Benefit Overview** page. This is being applied in order to improve the performance of the page for the end-user.
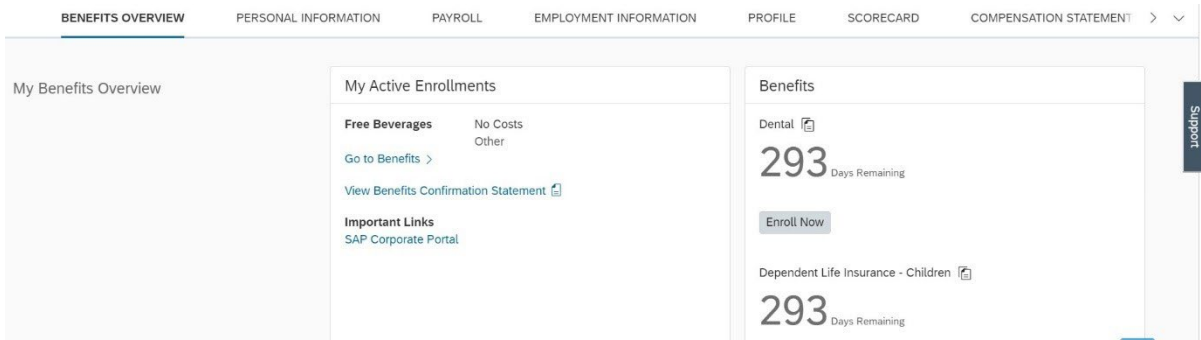
Benefits section shown (currently)
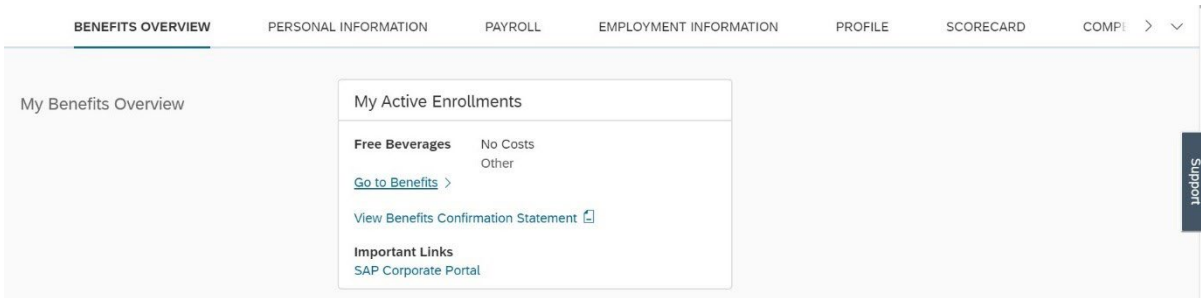
Benefits section removed in 2020-H1 release

Secondly, a single enrolment ID will be assigned rather than a new enrolment ID being created on each opt-in or opt-out action. Now, these actions will simply create time slices on the same enrolment record which an administrator can view. If you have a process that imports benefits of type Allowance or Reimbursements, then be sure to include the enrolment ID in the file.

Time and Attendance Management

There are many changes for time management in this release. To take full advantage, please ensure that you review all of the Admin Opt-in options, but let's begin with a look at the Universal options.

Automated Periodic Updates of Time Accounts (demo)

You can now schedule a job to update time accounts periodically, which means that you no longer have to monitor and update manually. The frequency is configured on the Time Account Type, the logic from a business rule and there is a new screen, **Review Periodic Time Account Updates** on which you can check the balances for all employees for whom the periodic update has been performed. From this screen, you can search using filters, click through to see more detail and download.

It is worth noting that to utilise this universal feature, you need the permission Access Time Account Periodic Update and to configure the Periodic Time Account Update profile for the Time Account Type object.

It is worth noting that to utilise this universal feature, you need the permission Access Time Account Periodic Update and to configure the Periodic Time Account Update profile for the Time Account Type object.

Team Absence Calendar (demo)

In response to customer requests, from the Team Absence calendar, managers can now:

• Search for employees outside their immediate reporting hierarchy.

- View information for their indirect reports in addition to your direct reports.
- Display a monthly view of the calendar as well as the weekly view.

- See the name of the holiday and the absence type or leave type that an employee is taking.

These changes all help the day to day activities of employees and managers.
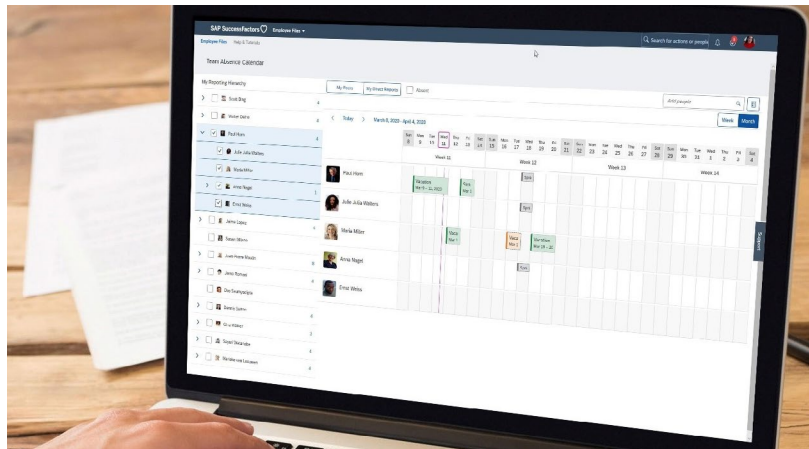

Team Absence calendar

Other Universal Changes

On the Time Accounts tab. in the Admin workbench, there is now the ability to reset the date filter without having to refresh the page.

Finally, employees can now see the next transfer date (that is, the date when accruals are transferred into entitlements) in the Employee Self Service (ESS) Time Off user interface. This change means that employees will now always be able to see the exact date on which their accruals will

be available as an entitlement. Previously this feature was only visible to the administrator via the Admin Workbench.

Flextime ([demo](#))

Flextime is great, but to avoid employees recording extreme working times, flextime bandwidth allows you to define the earliest possible start time and the latest possible end time that flextime can be recorded. This is specified via Manage Data and selection of the category of "Flextime Bandwidth" for a time segment.
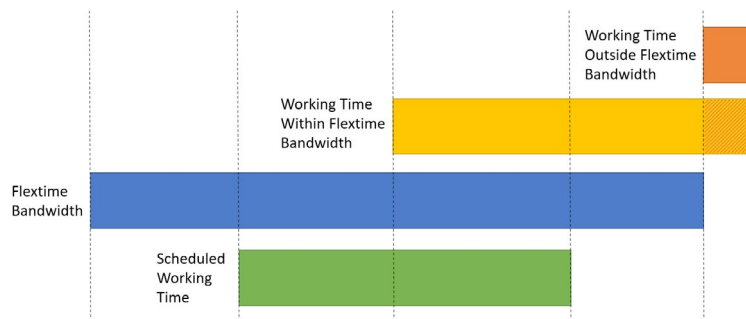
Flextime Bandwidth

Working with External Time Systems

All those customers using an external time scheduling system can now use an OData API (TemporaryTimeInformation) to import shifts to Employee Central, enabling it to act as the single source of planned working times. To use this function, set the visibility of the dayModel field to Editable under Configure Object Definitions TemporaryTimeInformation. Demo available here.

Also, when **importing time data**, you can categorise time as either **Attendance** (i.e. the employee is working) or **Break time** (i.e. the employee is on a break). If you don't assign something specifically in the file, you can set a default in the Default Import Attendance Time Type field.

Time Record Filters

Time records filters can now include time segments and across multiple weekdays. This feature means you could, for example, set up an employee to be paid at a higher rate on specific days or specific times.

Country-Specific

Australia: You can use the Advance Leave Payment option to pay one or more periods of an employee's net pay in advance when the employee has planned absence in subsequent pay **periods**. Demo available here.

Australia (and possibly others): When recording leave, new options for Half Pay Leave and Double Pay Leave have been introduced to enable you to be compliant with legal requirements in certain countries; for example, those of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). To activate this, you will have to use the normally hidden field "deductionFactor" (in the "Absence Counting Method" object) and populate it accordingly.

Germany, Mexico, Columbia, Spain, Poland, and Australia: Country-specific employee time fields are now available in the Report-Story in People Analytics.

Germany, Mexico, Poland, Columbia, Spain and Australia: These countries have country-specific EmployeeTime objects named EmployeeTimeXXX. In this release, the rule assignment restriction for the EmployeeTimeXXX object applies to info, warning, and error messages. You have to be using People Profile 3 (PP3) to be able to utilise.

Other Admin Opt-in Changes

You can now activate "**Extra Time Types**" that can record additional time information without falling foul of collision checks on concurrent times for an employee. The time types are created in the usual way via Manage Data but with a classification of "Extra". To use the extra time type in a time valuation, create an extra time type group.

Self-service for eligible employees to **request a payout for unused leave accounts**. The process can have approval steps, and a home page tile is also available. A demo is available here.
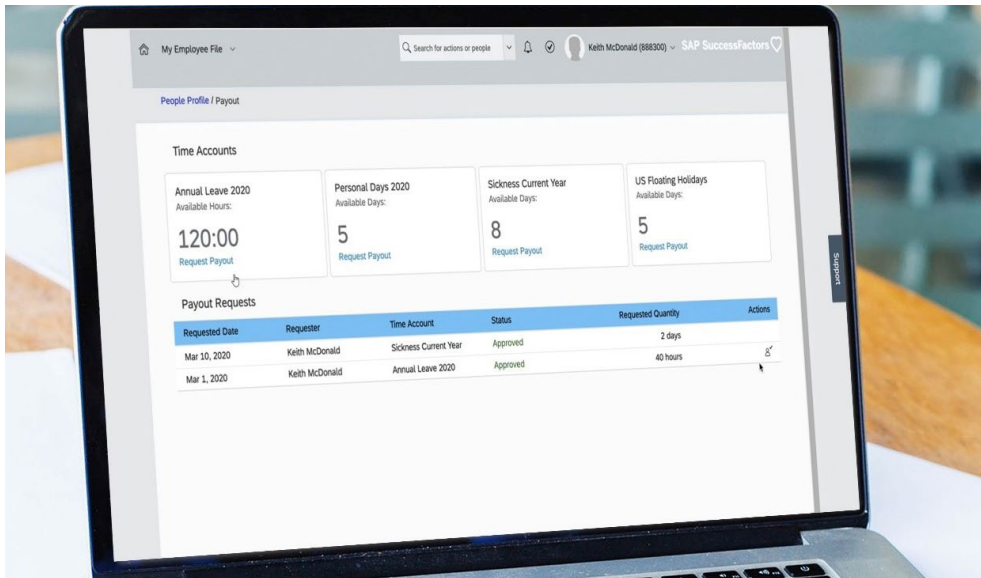
Time Account Request Payout

Admin alerts and warning messages based on time valuations can be created. These are visible to the employee in the Time Sheet. These are set up as part of the Time Valuation object configuration via Manage Data.

From the Time Workbench screen, it is now possible to e**dit and delete any manual adjustments or periodic update corrections**. You need view and edit permission for the Time Account object in order to be able to use this function. In addition, if the Time Account Detail object is set to Secured, then you'll need to make a couple of other settings too (see the note box in the release notes).

Conclusion

With each release, the capability for Employee Central Time Management to handle the complexity of scenarios that exists in different organisation and countries is increasing. I think there is also great value in enabling external time management systems to work efficiently and effectively with Employee Central, so it is great to see a couple of enhancements in this release that do that.

As the first bi-annual release, I think this is a solid set of changes which evolve both areas. The Universal features are welcomed, and the Admin Opt-in ones are not hard to utilise if applicable and of benefit to your organisation. As always, dig deeper into the release notes for more information, demos and links to SAP Help:

• Benefits release notes
• Time and Attendance Management release notes

How Can We Help?

Zalaris excels in delivering comprehensive HR and payroll services across the Northern Europe, UK, the Baltics and Poland. Our industry leadership position, however, goes beyond the borders and constraints of other providers to enable what matters most to our clients: maximising the value of human capital through excellence in HR processes.

- **Scoping Services** - for if you are thinking of moving to the HCM Cloud but are unsure of where to start.
- **Support Services** - for if you are already using SAP SuccessFactors and want a flexible support partner.
- **Release Management Services** - for if you are struggling to take advantage of the quarterly innovations in SAP SuccessFactors.
- **Business Process Services** - for if you are looking for operational support with your HCM processes.
- **Training Services** - for if you are not getting the most out your SuccessFactors system.