

KNOWLEDGE BASE ARTICLE

How to Accept or Decline a Substitution



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Overview

When a colleague goes on leave, they can name you as the person who covers their work. Nothing becomes binding until you confirm it: every new substitution starts with the status **Waiting for confirmation**, and only you, as the substitute, can change it to accepted or declined.

This article shows where a substitution that is waiting for your answer appears in the **Substitutions** web part, how to accept or decline it, and what the other people involved see afterwards. It is written for the substitute. If you are the person who is going away, see [KB10332. How to Name a Substitute When You Request Time Off](#).

Before you start

- You need **Member (edit)** access to the SharePoint site that holds the absence lists, like every other user of the product. Your administrator sets this up once for the whole company.
- A page with the **Substitutions** web part must be available to you: a SharePoint page or the Microsoft Teams app, depending on how your company published it.
- The product does **not** send e-mail or Teams messages when someone names you as a substitute. You find out by opening the web part, so ask your colleague or your manager where it is published and check it from time to time.

Note

Substitutions come from two sources: a colleague can name you in an absence request (see [KB10350. How Absence Requests and Substitutions Work Together](#)), or a manager or the absent person can assign you directly (see [KB10337. How to Assign a Substitute to Your Direct Report](#)). You respond to both in the same way.

Find the substitutions waiting for your answer

- 1 Open the page with the **Substitutions** web part.
- 2 Select the **I cover** tab. It lists everyone you cover now or will cover later. If the **I cover** tab is the default tab of the web part, it opens by itself.
- 3 Look for rows with the status **Waiting for confirmation**.

The number on the **I cover** tab is a badge: it counts the substitutions that are waiting for **your** confirmation, so you can see at a glance that something needs your attention.

Each row shows who you are asked to cover (with the caption "You cover this person"), the tasks the absent person has handed over after **Responsibilities** (if they entered any), the period, the kind of substitution (**Temporary** or **Handover of duties**) and the status. An open-ended handover shows "from" and the start date instead of a period.

 Isaiah Langer Responsibilities: Key accounts: Contoso and Fabrikam	Dec 7, 2026 – Dec 18, 2026 Temporary	Planned
 Nestor Wilke Responsibilities: On-call duty for the support queue	Dec 21, 2026 – Dec 30, 2026 Temporary	Waiting for confirmation

The I cover tab with a substitution waiting for confirmation

Accept a substitution

- 1 On the **I cover** tab, find the row with the status **Waiting for confirmation**.
- 2 Check the person, the period and the **Responsibilities**. If the responsibilities are empty, agree the details with your colleague outside the product.
- 3 Select **Accept**.

The message "You accepted the substitution." appears above the tabs and the row status changes from **Waiting for confirmation** to a phase that depends on the dates: **Planned** if the period has not started yet, or **In progress** if it has. The badge on the **I cover** tab decreases by one. No comment is requested.

Decline a substitution

- 1 On the **I cover** tab, find the row with the status **Waiting for confirmation**.
- 2 Select **Decline**.

The message "You declined the substitution." appears and the row status changes to **Declined**. The product does not ask for a reason, so tell your colleague or manager why you cannot help; otherwise they will not know until they look at the web part.

Warning

The answer cannot be changed from your side. After you decline, the **Accept** and **Decline** buttons disappear from the row, and an accepted substitution can only be cancelled by the absent person. If you declined by mistake, ask your colleague or manager to assign the substitution again.

You can also accept or decline from the **Who covers whom** tab: the same buttons appear on the rows where you are the substitute. See [KB10348. How to Find Out Who](#)

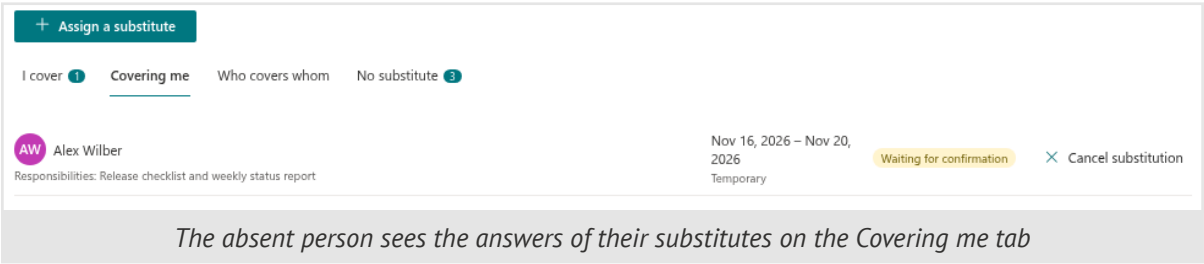
Covers Whom.

What the others see afterwards

Your action	Status of the substitution	What you see	What the absent person sees	What the manager sees
None yet	Waiting for confirmation	A row with Accept and Decline , and a badge on the I cover tab	A row on the Covering me tab with the status Waiting for confirmation	For a substitution tied to the absence, the absence stays on the No substitute tab with the status "Waiting for" followed by your name
Accept	Accepted , shown as Planned or In progress	The row stays on the I cover tab until the period ends, without buttons	The same row with the status Planned or In progress	An absence tied to this substitution leaves the No substitute tab: it is now covered
Decline	Declined	The row stays with the status Declined until the period ends, without buttons	The row stays on the Covering me tab with the status Declined	An absence tied to this substitution appears on the No substitute tab with the status "declined" preceded by your name, with an Assign button to

Your action	Status of the substitution	What you see	What the absent person sees	What the manager sees
				choose someone else

The **No substitute** tab is available to managers who have direct reports in Microsoft Entra ID, and it is covered in [KB10338. How to Find Absences Without a Substitute.](#)



When the period ends

A substitution leaves the **I cover** and **Covering me** tabs after its end date. You can still find it for 30 days on the **Who covers whom** tab with the filter **Ended**. A substitution without an end date (a handover of duties) stays active until the absent person cancels it.

If you do not answer, the substitution simply stays **Waiting for confirmation**. The manager keeps seeing the absence as not covered, so answer as soon as you know whether you can help.

Note

Accepting a substitution does not change the absence itself. The absence request keeps its own status, and it is shown in the Team Absence Calendar with the text "Covered by" next to your name while it is running. See [KB10342. How to See Who Is Away Today and Who Covers Them.](#)