Academic Sabbatical Leave Policy
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1. Introduction

1.1. The purpose of the Academic Sabbatical Leave Policy is to enable the University to successfully achieve its vision to be a ‘World-Class Civic University’ and is underpinned by the Institution’s Research Strategy and the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy.

- To enable academic staff to have dedicated time to focus on research and pedagogical teaching activities.
- To ensure that academics are supported in their career development.
- To act as part of the reward and recognition scheme at the University.
- To respond and contribute to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF).

1.2. The aim of this policy is to enable members of academic staff to request a period of dedicated time in which they can focus upon specific elements of their job role.

1.3. Sabbatical Leave is considered to be a privilege of an academic career and is not a contractual entitlement.

1.4. The University actively encourages applications in line with the guidelines. Periods of sabbatical leave will enable the individual to develop personally, whilst delivering clear outputs that are of benefit to the University.

1.5. Where appropriate, Sabbatical Leave may be used to undertake research or scholarship, to obtain experience in another organisation or learn about a new teaching programme or technique.

2. Scope and Eligibility

2.1. Academic members of staff engaged in teaching and research, or teaching and scholarship, are eligible to apply for Sabbatical Leave.

2.2. During probationary periods employees will not be eligible to apply for Sabbatical Leave.

2.3. Academics in their final year of service will not normally be eligible to apply for Sabbatical Leave.

2.4. As a guideline, normally Sabbatical Leave may be taken for one semester after 3 years (6 semesters) of service (i.e. leave to be taken in the 4th or later years).

2.5. At the end of a term of appointment as a Head of Academic Unit, the Head is eligible for one semester of sabbatical leave.
3. Duration and Timing of Leave

3.1. Sabbatical Leave will normally be approved for 1 semester and exceptionally for up to a maximum of 2 semesters.

3.2. Sabbatical Leave periods must begin at the start of a semester, either semester 1 in September or semester 2 in January/February. The leave should not normally straddle 2 semesters.

4. Application

4.1. Sabbatical Leave should be a planned process. The intention to request sabbatical leave should be discussed in an employee’s PDR or related objective setting activities.

4.2. Applications must be submitted to the relevant Head of Academic Unit 12 months prior to the start of the proposed leave in order that all applications can be duly considered and, if granted, ensure that all necessary arrangements are in place to cover all remaining duties.

4.3. Eligible members of academic staff must submit an application in accordance with the University guidelines, using the appropriate application form. Guidelines for the application process are available for managers.

5. Authorisation

5.1. Applications will be considered by the Head of Academic Unit. In deciding whether to agree an application the Head of Academic Unit will consider the expected outcomes from the Sabbatical Leave and the ability of the Academic Unit to provide the necessary cover to minimise the impact. They will also take into account the effectiveness, in terms of outcomes delivered, of any previous period of sabbatical leave taken.

5.2. The Head of Academic Unit will make a recommendation and refer the application to the Faculty Dean of Research or Dean of Undergraduate or Postgraduates, depending on the content of the work to be undertaken during the sabbatical Leave. The Faculty Dean can agree with, or overturn, the Head of Academic unit’s recommendation.

5.3. If the proposed period of leave exceeds one semester or if there are resourcing implications, the application must be approved by the Faculty Pro-Vice-chancellor. The Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor will review the application and the stated outcomes and will determine whether the application is to be approved. In reaching their decision the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor will also consider whether there are appropriate cover arrangements and if the necessary funds are available.
to provide external support, if it is not possible to cover all of the applicant’s duties within the unit.

5.4. Application for a period of Sabbatical Leave from a Head of Academic Unit at the end of their period of appointment will be decided by the Faculty PVC.

6. Remunerations

6.1. Sabbatical Leave may be paid or unpaid. If paid, all contractual payments will normally continue during the period of academic sabbatical leave.

6.2. If the Sabbatical Leave involves the member of staff working for another organisation on a paid basis, then the leave will be without pay.

6.3. The cost of the Sabbatical Leave, including expenses, should be agreed in advance of the leave and will normally be funded from existing sources within the Academic Unit or Faculty. External sources may also provide funding for periods of academic sabbatical leave.

7. Cover

7.1. Teaching and administrative responsibilities should be covered in Academic Units through the redistribution of work. This should be discussed within the Academic Unit between the Head of Academic Unit, the applicant and any affected colleagues. The position of continued support for Post Graduate Supervision must be agreed in advance. Where the applicant has teaching or other duties in another School/Institute, discussion must take place with the relevant Head of Unit to arrange cover during the leave. Since Clinical Academic staff may also have commitments to the NHS it is critical that early and detailed discussions take place with appropriate staff in the clinical location where clinical commitments are based.

7.2. In exceptional circumstances, Heads of Academic Unit may discuss recruiting additional staff to assist with covering the duties of a member of academic staff taking Sabbatical Leave with the Faculty HR Manager. This will be assessed by the Faculty Pro-Vice-Chancellor who will determine if there are available funds.

7.3. The Head of Academic Unit will agree details of contact with the member of staff during leave and confirm arrangements for return, such as updates and expected commitments on return.

8. Member of Academic Staff’s Responsibilities

8.1. Prior to the commencement of sabbatical leave it is the academic staff member’s responsibility to ensure that their contact details are up to date so the University can communicate with them while they are on leave.
8.2. The expected outcomes during the proposed leave must be detailed in the application form. If the application is approved these will become the agreed outcomes between the employee and the University for the period of Sabbatical Leave.

8.3. Within two months of returning from sabbatical leave, the member of academic staff must submit a progress report to their Head of Academic Unit. The report form must be completed according to the guidelines provided. It should report on the expected outcomes on the application form and will be considered by a relevant Faculty committee.

Associated Documents:

- Flow Chart Academic Sabbatical Leave Application Process (PDF, 65KB)
- Policy Guidance for Managers (PDF, 434KB)
- Staff Guidance for the completion of the Progress Report Form (PDF, 379KB)
- Application Form (Word, 29KB)
- Academic Sabbatical Leave Report Form (Word, 20KB)