

ACADEMIC LEAVE POLICY - ASSOCIATED PROCEDURES

1. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

1.1 Application

A member of academic staff wishing to be considered for academic leave should submit a written application to the Head of School for consideration. The application should include:

- a) an outline of the project or programme of work
- b) a statement of the objectives of the proposed project
- c) a realistic timetable of what it is hoped to achieve during the period of leave
- d) an indication of the expected outcomes (e.g. journal articles – including an indication of the likely journal(s), a book, a computer program etc).
- e) details of the applicant's teaching, supervisory, administrative and, where appropriate, clinical duties
- f) a summary of any previous academic leave from this University (or its predecessors), which must include any outcomes.
- g) Details of any external funding obtained/applied for.

Potential applicants should take the opportunities offered within the School, for example performance and development review procedures, to discuss ways in which the academic leave scheme might be appropriate to their career development and to obtain assistance in developing their proposals. They should also discuss with colleagues potential arrangements for providing cover for their teaching and administrative/service duties during the proposed period of absence.

If, exceptionally, a member of staff has difficulty in obtaining the support of his or her Head of School, he/she may wish to talk to the Head of Faculty Human Resources, who can act as mediator in an attempt to resolve any difficulties.

1.2 Authorisation

Faculties and Schools will ensure that applications for academic leave are judged on their merit and that a transparent and clearly defined process is in operation. They will establish their own timetable and appropriate committee procedure for the handling of applications, in accordance with the following guidelines:

- 1.2.1 Each School will have established, with the approval of the School Board, an appropriate panel which considers leave applications, and this will include non-professorial representation. The frequency of these meetings should be publicised within the School.
- 1.2.2 ***Applications should normally be submitted in accordance with timescales determined by the School to allow for full consideration of the academic merits and the resourcing implications of the application and, where necessary, for the operation of the appeal procedure (see Associated Procedures).***

- 1.2.3** After consideration by the panel, there may be a number of applications which in themselves merit an award of academic leave but which cannot all be accommodated at any one time. In such circumstances the Head of School will have to prioritise, taking due account of the views of all affected colleagues. The School Board will advise on the prioritisation criteria and other general aspects of School policy. The School's prioritisation criteria will be explained to the applicants concerned.
- 1.2.4** It is the responsibility of the Head of School, after considering the advice of the panel and/or School Board, to recommend applications for academic leave to the Dean for approval.
- 1.2.5** Final approval of academic leave arrangements will not normally be cancelled by the University other than in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.2.6** If an academic leave application is rejected the applicant will be given a written statement of the reasons for rejection. Where appropriate s/he will also receive advice from the Head of School or another designated senior colleague as to the steps that would need to be taken to increase the likelihood of a successful application.
- 1.2.7** Where an applicant's circumstances change after the granting of academic leave s/he may choose to apply for a deferral. In such a case the academic grounds for leave could be carried forward but the arrangements for teaching, administrative/service and supervisory cover would have to be re-negotiated.

1.3 Auditing

The Faculty Research Committee is not expected to be involved in the managerial process of considering academic leave applications. The Committee, however, will have an important auditing role as it will regularly review the way in which the academic leave scheme is working. For this purpose, each School will submit an annual report detailing the applications for academic leave, those granted, and a summary of assessments of individual reports (see paragraph 1.5) on periods of academic leave completed during the year in question. The Committee may wish to view a sample (of their own choice) of academic leave reports.

1.4 Insurance

Staff travelling overseas can apply for cover on the University's insurance. Forms may be obtained from the Faculty Finance Office.

1.5 Reports

All staff taking Academic Leave are required to submit a short report to the appropriate School panel on what has been achieved during the leave period. The length of the report should be consistent with the duration of the leave. All reports must include the following information:

- name and School
- dates of leave period
- location of leave
- a brief recap of the objectives given in the original application
- a statement of how far these objectives were achieved
- any other information of interest
- a list of publications arising or planned.

The report should be submitted within three months of return. The School will determine any action to be taken in the event of an unsatisfactory outcome.

2. APPEAL PROCEDURE

- 2.1** Where an academic leave application is rejected or amended, the applicant may appeal to the Dean, who may delegate to the appropriate Faculty Committee. An appeal should normally be made in writing within 10 working days of the rejection or amendment. Both the Head of School and the applicant should have the right to appear before the Committee to put their respective cases.
- 2.2** It is expected that most cases will be resolved at Faculty level. However, in recognition that there may be exceptional cases where resolution proves impossible, there should be provision for further consideration at University level. In such cases appeal may be made to the Vice-President for Research. The decision of the Vice-President for Research, advised by the Director of Human Resources, shall be final and binding on all parties.
- 2.3** Documentation for any appeal should consist of a copy of the original application, the written statement of the reasons for rejection and any additional statement that the applicant wishes to make in support of the appeal.
- 2.4** Appeals should normally be considered within one month of receipt, and the outcome normally conveyed to the applicant, in writing, within five working days of the decision being made.

3. TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS

- 3.1** There are currently two former university policies and a number of locally agreed policies covering Academic Leave; this policy will replace all of these agreements.
- 3.2** The policy will come into effect on 1st January 2008. On this date entitlements to apply for Academic Leave will be recalculated and those with qualifying service under the new arrangements (i.e. with more than 6 semesters or 6 year's accrued service) will be entitled to apply again.
- 3.3** It is recognised that in a number of schools, for operational reasons, it will not be possible to approve all applications immediately. Therefore length of qualifying service since the previous period of academic leave should be the deciding factor when determining the order of entitlement to apply.
- 3.4** As this could mean a member of staff who is newly entitled may gain leave before a member of staff who has been affected directly by the change of arrangements sensitivity is required in dealing with this.
- 3.5** The accrual of entitlement in the case of deferral described in section 6 e) of the policy will apply.

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