# SCHOOL POLICY ON INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH LEAVES (SABBATICALS)

Research leave serves the major functions of providing time for successful research in a research-led university, and of providing a window through which external research funding may be attracted. It both develops the career of an individual and satisfies the University’s policy objectives, including that of research excellence. On both these counts it is imperative that it is granted to staff who can use it effectively at a level consonant with the goals of the University and the research strategy of the School. The fulfilment of these criteria is a necessary trigger for research leave, but it is not a sufficient one. The School Research Committee needs to be persuaded that such a leave, if granted, would not have a negative impact on the ability of other colleagues in the Division not on leave to fulfil their own research goals.

**In support of the premises above, the following policy has been established**:

**1. UNIVERSITY RESEARCH LEAVE**

1. Each permanent member of the academic staff of the School is entitled to apply for 1 period of University Research Leave, normally after 6 periods of teaching (including those completed on temporary or probationary contracts at the University of Manchester, and also including periods of maternity leave (cf. 4.1)). A ‘period’ may be either a semester or a year, but a pattern based on semesters is to be regarded as the norm. Part-time staff will have normal entitlement.[[1]](#footnote-1) A rota will be kept by heads of division, in conjunction with the Research Office.
2. This entitlement to apply may be varied as to timing by up to 2 semesters (prior to or following the sixth) in the management interest. Such variation should be regarded as unusual. Variation by one semester at the request of the candidate may be approved in exceptional circumstances, for example where it is necessary to take advantage of permissions to do fieldwork or for similar reasons; in such cases, it is expected that an early leave will be balanced by a commensurately later leave thereafter.
3. Approved examples of outcomes from a period of IRL include work on or completion of: journal articles, chapters of a book, a book, major research grant applications, scores, exhibitions (etc.). Please consult your UoA co-ordinator for further advice. In addition, major progress on an Impact Case Study may constitute all or part of an outcome for an IRL application. The ICS must be recognized and approved by the Associate Director for Research (Impact).
4. Failure to submit a satisfactory report (i.e. a report deemed not to have met the proposed objectives) at the end of the period of research leave and to complete appropriate research publications (or to deliver other equivalent outputs) shall normally be a bar to the granting of the following period of University Research Leave. See paragraph 7, below. Entitlements to leaves beyond that will be subject to careful scrutiny of the candidate’s track record up to the point of application (see point 5.4 below).
5. Those on teaching-only and research-only contracts are not eligible for consideration for leave.
6. Those granted University Research Leave/Externally Funded Leave will be expected to continue to supervise their research students (or make alternative arrangements acceptable to the School’s Postgraduate Committee); to continue to serve on PhD panels (in person or remotely), except by agreement with the HoD; and to be available to discuss teaching and administrative duties relevant to the first semester after a return from leave. There is no obligation to continue to serve on the SALC Peer Review College.
7. Those on leave should make it clear to the School where they will be during the leave period.
8. The expectations outlined in 7 and 8 above do not apply to those on unpaid leave.
9. If the need arises for any variation to the content of a leave, made after approval has been given, permission must be sought from the Director of Research, via the divisional research coordinator. In general, applicants are advised to be realistic about what they can achieve during the course of a sabbatical, and to discuss this with their divisional or departmental research coordinator.
10. In keeping with the SALC policy on grant buy-out, a candidate may, after consultation, use some or all of his/her period of institutional leave to work on outputs relating to an externally funded research grant. This must, however, be agreed in advance with the relevant Head of Division and specified within the sabbatical application. If the grant is awarded after a leave application has been approved, a formal request to use the sabbatical in this way must be made to the Head of Division and Director of Research.

**2. EXTERNALLY FUNDED RESEARCH LEAVE**

1. University Research Leave may be prolonged by external funding in a manner to be agreed by the candidate and the Research Committee on the terms offered by the funder.
2. Such external funding may also be applied for (with the support of the head of division) at times other than those indicated by leave entitlement, where the funder does not require a matching period of institutional leave. In such cases, heads of division must be satisfied that the external funding achieved is adequate to the costs of replacing the member of staff for the period in question. Such external funding must normally be sufficient to cover the entirety of the member of staff’s duties, not just teaching hours – i.e. it must enable the appointment of a full-time temporary teaching fellow.[[2]](#footnote-2) When approving applications for such external funding outside the normal rota, due regard must be paid to the effect on other members of staff, the teaching programme, and the balance of responsibilities.
3. No application for external funding will be acceptable unless it is notified to the Chair of the Research Committee, and has the support of the head of division. For cases of dispute, see below, paragraph 8.
4. As stated in the University Leave Policy, periods of externally-funded leave *will* contribute towards future entitlement to institutional leave, subject to the limit that "the amount of such time that can be counted towards eligibility is normally restricted to one period in seven" (University Policy). (Periods of sick leave or maternity leave contribute in full towards future entitlement.)

(<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=7>)

**3. UNPAID LEAVE FOR RESEARCH**

1. Unpaid leave is the only means of total buyout from all University duties which is available in the absence of external funding.

1. Full buyout leave will involve the forfeiture of 100% of salary for the period for which leave is sought. The University will not normally contribute employers’ costs (including USS) during the period of absence, and provision for this will have to be made in the buyout or by arrangement within the School if the Head of School and head of division agree to waive this requirement.
2. Unpaid leave for research can only be granted with the support of the head of division and the approval of the Head of School. It is not a contractual entitlement.
3. Partial unpaid leave is not normally a possibility, and will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

**4. LEAVE FOR PURPOSES OTHER THAN RESEARCH**

These matters are dealt with in accordance with University policy.

**5. APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCEDURES**

1. Potential applicants should take the opportunity of the PDR system to discuss ways in which the University Research Leave scheme might be appropriate to their career development and how it might be extended by externally-funded research leave, and to obtain assistance in developing their proposals. Advice may also be sought from the divisional Research Coordinator.
2. A rota of eligibility to apply is kept by the Division, in consultation with the research office. Each year during May, the research office sends Memo 1, above, to heads of division. Applications for University Research Leave should be made in the academic year penultimate to that in which entitlement falls.[[3]](#footnote-3)
3. When agreement is reached in principle about eligibility to apply, the research office sends Memo 2 to the relevant members of staff.
4. The candidate then applies for University Research Leave, using the Research Leave Application Form. The application is submitted by e-mail to the research office, where it is logged and prepared for transfer to the head of division. For each candidate for leave within each division, the research office provides the head of division with the application, a copy of the previous application for research leave, plus the report on the previous period of leave (assuming this was granted and taken). The head of division, together with the research coordinator and such other staff as the division deems appropriate, makes an initial assessment of the application. This group considers the proposals for leave, both in their own terms and against the track record of the applicant, taking due account also of the teaching programme.
5. If further information is required from the applicant, it should normally be sought by the research coordinator at this stage.
6. The research coordinator then passes the materials to the School Research Director, together with a recommendation from the division. Here might be included the case for any variation in the semester in which leave is taken, or other local reasons for an unusual application.
7. A subcommittee of the School Research Committee scrutinizes the leave applications, paying particular attention to any identified by the divisional groups as requiring consideration. All applications are given formal approval by the School Research Committee at its December meeting, but most cases will not require close scrutiny or discussion.
8. If approved, the research leave is taken at the time agreed.
9. If, despite point 5 above, the Research Leave Subcommittee feels that further correspondence with the applicant and/or the division is necessary, this is done through the divisional research coordinator.
10. The School’s Research Support Manager will write to successful applicants confirming the period of leave.

**7. REPORT**

7.1 Those granted periods of University Research Leave and Externally Funded Leave must submit a report to the Director of Research at the end of the period of leave (i.e. on the first day of the semester following the period of leave), indicating the extent to which the objectives outlined in their application have been fulfilled. This will be considered by the School Research Leave Subcommittee which may request further information, or confirmation of the completion of incomplete outputs, before finally approving reports. Failure to submit a satisfactory report will ultimately constitute grounds for the refusal of the following leave. The Research Support Manager will write to relevant colleagues at the end of the period of leave (whether that is the end of the institutional leave or of matching externally funded leave) to request submission of a report. Reports written for external funding bodies may simply be copied for the purposes of report to the School.

**8. CASES OF DISPUTE**

8.1 Where there is disagreement between a colleague and his/her head of division about any matter relating to the granting of research leave, and attempts to resolve the matter within the division have not been successful, the case may be made to the Head of School directly by the colleague, who may include a statement of support from any senior colleague. The head of division must be informed by the colleague of his/her intended application, and should write to the Head of School stating his/her objections and, where possible, making an alternative proposal. The Head of School will consider each case on its merits. His/her decision will be binding.

# Updated 25th July 2018

1. Someone on a 50% contract who teaches for six semesters at 50% of the time, with the teaching spread across both semesters, then maybe awarded leave for one semester, which, of course, continues to be 50% of the time (and salary). However, in cases where someone on a fractional contract does all his/her teaching in one semester, with the other semester free of teaching, to keep with the spirit of the scheme leave entitlement would normally take the form of a 50% reduction in the teaching load for that year. This might mean teaching a half load across the full semester, or teaching for half the semester. The specific arrangement would have to be agreed with Head of Division. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. It is not a requirement that such an appointment be made, but that the available money be sufficient for it. A division might choose to spend the money on a larger number of teaching hours, to compensate for the loss of other activity from the colleague on leave, rather than to make a single appointment. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. That is, those identified in June 2013 will be considered for institutional leave in 2014-15. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)