Guidance for applicants regarding eligibility for Research Sabbaticals in SEED

Eligibility and School Policy

The School supports the principle of the research sabbatical as a vital part of an academic career, and as a way strategically to improve individual and collective research profiles. Sabbaticals express the core academic principle of collegiality: staff not on sabbatical cover for those who are in terms of workload so that the latter can benefit from enhanced research time. Staff awarded sabbatical leave are expected to devote themselves to a concentrated and uninterrupted period of *research*. We expect sabbatical plans to be more ambitious in terms of research work and outputs than is possible in a normal teaching term. To that end they will not normally be expected to undertake teaching or marking; similarly, they will not normally be expected to take on routine administration duties. Equally it is important that colleagues on sabbatical leave do not allow external activities that are not research focused to eat into their time.

Sabbaticals are not a right owed to academic staff following given periods of service. Rather, following sufficient service colleagues earn the right to apply for sabbaticals. These are likely to be awarded if the research plans are robust enough, and if the contribution made to the department's collective workload has been sufficient to merit research leave (see note on workload points below). These contributions must be calculated taking into account the effect of research leave earned from research grants, the effects of maternity leave, and the consequences of authorized absences and illness.

There is sometimes a misunderstanding about what 'sabbatical leave' entails. It does *not* automatically entitle recipients to entirely cut themselves off for a whole semester or more. It involves a significant reduction in teaching and administration in SEED. There is an expectation that staff on sabbatical will still continue to be involved in the life of the School in some way and in the delivery of its services – albeit at a much reduced level – during the period of the sabbatical. In particular, there is an expectation that staff will continue to supervise post-graduate research students (PGRs) while on sabbatical, and will in particular take steps to ensure the sabbatical does not undermine the supervisory experience of first year PGRs, for whom the availability of academic staff and the frequency of meetings are critical components of successful PGR progression. In addition, staff responsible for the management of Research Centres and/or who have responsibility for the supervision or mentoring of research staff need to ensure these responsibilities can be carried effectively throughout the period of the sabbatical. Staff on sabbatical can also be expected, with reasonable advance notice, to be available for consultation on strategically significant issues or where their particular skills and experiences are particularly valuable to the School. Finally if modules a staff member has taught are being examined during that member's sabbatical (including resit papers or resubmissions) they should normally attend examination boards, as required.

Very rarely, sickness or other unforeseen circumstances among staff may necessitate that a HoD requests a member of staff to help out at short notice during their sabbatical. If this occurs the staff member affected will be able to reclaim the lost time, either during their next sabbatical or sooner.

The standard rule for eligibility is: one semester of research sabbatical leave after six semesters of full time teaching and administration.

There are no set outputs defined for sabbaticals. Rather these will vary according to disciplinary (and sub-disciplinary) norms and according to the stage of their careers when the sabbatical falls. Outputs should be ambitious, above the norm for an equivalent teaching period. So long as research funding is conducive to the applicant's research we would expect to see appropriate bids either in the plans leading up to, or from, the sabbatical.

Research sabbaticals are awarded by the School in a resource neutral manner i.e. colleagues agree to cover teaching and administration duties of those who are on sabbatical (although the School encourages those going on sabbatical to seek funding which will allow extra cover to be provided).

Applicants are expected to have had an informal discussion with their Head of Discipline to inform them of their intended application. A statement of support will be requested from the Head of Discipline by the RSM after the application deadline, and HoDs will be asked to give a clear indication that the sabbatical can be taken in a resource-neutral manner.

Research sabbaticals run from 1st August to 31st January; and 1st February to 31st July.

Research Sabbatical: application, submission and approval process

Step 1: Once a Call has been issued, applicants must submit their applications to the Research Support Manager (RSM) by the designated deadline.

Step 2: The RSM checks each application to confirm the applicant is technically eligible to apply for a research sabbatical. The RSM then seeks a supporting statement from the HoD which should confirm that the sabbatical is resource-neutral and does not impose additional costs on the Discipline in question. The statement should also contain a statement on the applicant's relative workload, preferably using the SEED workload model

Eligible applications are reviewed by Sabbatical Committee in March. The Committee is chaired by the Director of Research on the basis that: i) the Call relates to research sabbaticals; ii) the School has a commitment to use research sabbaticals to strategically improve individual and collective research profiles. The Committee consists of the Head of Discipline from each of the four disciplines or their nominated representative and is supported by the RSM.

The Committee considers the quality of each applicant's research case and makes recommendations as to whether there is a case for a research sabbatical or not. It will liaise with individuals if there is a need for them to improve the quality of their research case. Once a final decision has been made regarding the case for research sabbatical, the Heads of Disciplines will be informed. All successful applications will have the workload history of applicants noted by the Committee. The history may be something a HoD considers when negotiating the timing of sabbatical leave, and the precise nature of the teaching and admin relief, with successful applicants.

Step 3: The timing of the research sabbatical is negotiated and agreed on by the individual member of staff and the HoD in light of discipline specific workloads no later than the end of April. It is the responsibility of the Head of Discipline to ensure the sabbatical can be taken in a resource-neutral manner.

Step 4: A final recommendation is forwarded to the Head of School who signs off the sabbatical process by the end of May. A formal letter is issued to sabbatical holders by the Faculty HR office.

Step 5: Research sabbaticals take place (normally 12-18 months after HoS has signed off the process)

Deferment of sabbaticals
On occasion Heads of Discipline may request that approved research sabbaticals be deferred for management reasons. Details of deferments are recorded by the Research Support Manager and taken into consideration when reviewing future applications.

Appeals
An appeal against the decision of the Sabbatical committee can be made to the Head of School who is not on the Sabbatical Committee.

What should a Research Sabbatical application include?

Applications should clearly state the following information (**please note that all these information headers must be addressed)**

- Period since last sabbatical
- Summary of the results of previous sabbatical period, focusing on achievements and specific outputs
- Research basis for the sabbatical
- Intended outputs and deliverables at end of sabbatical (including plans for impact activities)
- Administration and teaching workloads in recent years - it is a requirement that applicants report their annual workload scores since their last sabbatical (where available), in relation to the relevant discipline average. Workload information is usually available from HoDs. **Where workload scores are not currently calculated by HoDs some clear relative measure of a person's workload should be given in a sabbatical application.**
- Note that the RSM will ask the HoDs to provide a supporting statement **upon receipt of the sabbatical application**. This HoD statement should *explicitly* confirm the accuracy of the reported workload scores.
- Implications of sabbatical for administrative, teaching and PGR responsibilities
- Funding applied for / to be applied for
- How the proposed sabbatical meets the strategic interests of the School
- Preferred timing of sabbatical

The School has a commitment to use research sabbaticals to strategically improve individual and collective research profiles. Sabbatical Committee therefore pays particular attention to the research case made in the application and to what the sabbatical can be expected to yield. The emphasis here should not be on the quantity of outputs but on providing a reasoned case for how the activities proposed will help ensure high quality outputs that enhance the individual's research profile as well as that of the School.

The Committee will note the 'workload history' of applicants. A sabbatical offers additional time for research. If an applicant has had below average workload compared to their disciplinary colleagues it will be necessary to explain why additional time is required over and above currently available research time.

Staff members who have had research buy-outs, long-term illness, maternity leave or other periods of authorised absence in the years leading up to their sabbatical application will not be penalised for having relatively low workload. Nor will early career staff who have deliberately been given lower workload points to enable them to start their academic career effectively.

Staff on probation (typically recent appointment) should indicate on the application whether the period of request for sabbatical leave falls within their probationary period.

Please see below for an anonymous example of a successful application:

Sabbatical Application of XXX for 2nd Semester, 20XX

Summary of results of previous sabbatical period (use the headings 'peer review publications', 'research funding', 'knowledge transfer/impact' and 'other', as applicable)

During my last sabbatical I wrote and submitted a grant application to the ESRC's Professorial

Fellowship Scheme. This application was successful and the Council awarded me £156,000 over three years to investigate xxx.

I also completed a book manuscript (now in press with Oxford UP) and published a single authored review essay related to my intended Fellowship research in *World Development*.

Does the requested period of sabbatical leave fall within your probationary period (to be completed by staff currently on probation)

Period since last sabbatical (normally six semesters):
My last sabbatical was in XXX (October to December XXX).

Administration and teaching workload in recent years (ensure that you report your annual workload and the annual average for your discipline in the relevant academic years): I am one of the staff with the highest teaching and administration load in the Institute. My last two years workload average has been XXXX points, compared with the Institute average of XXXX points.

PhD students:
I am currently co-supervising 8 PhD students (five of whom I am the first supervisor).

Administration: I am in my third year as the programme director for the M.Sc. XXXX. Also, I am the co-director for the Centre for XXX, in my second year. I also site on Senate (4x a year), the University Student Discipline Committee (4x a year) and the Simon Fellowship Committee (1.5 days per year inc shortlisting and interviews).

Teaching: I convene two compulsory masters modules taken by over 150 students each annually. I teach 25% of these one semester modules and moderate all the marking. I also supervise and first mark 30 masters dissertations per annum.

Administration and teaching implications of absence (state how your various existing teaching and administrative commitments will be covered by colleagues):
While on sabbatical I will continue to undertake supervision of the 5 PhD students who I am first supervisor for (names and years required here) and co-direct the centre. I will arrange to undertake all my annual teaching commitments in semester one. Although in the second semester there is limited demand on programme directors, there will be a need for cover for the directorship of M.Sc. XXX. I shall be talking to colleagues, especially the deputy programme Director, regarding cover while I am away. I shall be in contact electronically to offer advice and support to whoever is covering the directorship in my absence. I will attend the relevant summer exam boards since my 2 first semester modules are compulsory ones for two cohorts of degree students.

Research basis for the sabbatical:
xxxxxxx

Deliverables at the end of the sabbatical:
xxxxxx

Funding applied for/ to be applied for:
Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

How the sabbatical meets the strategic needs of SEED

Among SEED's Research Priorities are (a) generating <u>research outputs/publications</u> of the highest *quality* in 'visible' journals and books; (b) improving <u>research income</u> in a challenging funding environment, *especially funding that covers salary and overhead costs*; and (c) increasing the School's international <u>reputation</u> for high quality, influential research activity. My sabbatical plan contributes to these priorities in the following ways: