

School of Social Sciences

Academic Teaching & Scholarship Leave Policy & Procedures

Academic Teaching & Scholarship Leave Policy for Staff on Teaching and Scholarship and Teaching Contracts

The purpose of Academic Leave

Academic Leave is paid leave which allows T&S staff with an open-ended contract¹ an opportunity for undertaking activities that might not always be possible within the normal course of their academic duties. The aims are to provide a regular opportunity for periods of focussed activity and to provide a foundation for future endeavours. T&S Academic Leaves need not cover an entire semester, but activities must be of sufficient scope that they are not practical to complete alongside normal duties. Activities such as secondments and unpaid leave are subject to separate arrangements and are not covered by this policy.

Eligibility and School policy

The School supports the principle of academic leave as a vital part of an academic career and as a way to improve individual and collective profiles. Academic Leaves express the core academic principle of collegiality: staff not on Academic Leave cover the workload of those who are, so that the latter can benefit from enhanced time to work on professional development activities which would not otherwise be possible.

Staff awarded Academic Leave are expected to devote themselves to a concentrated and uninterrupted period to realise their Academic Leave plans. We expect Academic Leave plans to be more ambitious in terms of teaching and scholarship work and outputs than is possible in a normal teaching semester. To that end staff on academic leave can expect to have significant reductions in teaching, marking and routine administration duties. In turn,

¹ Externally-funded staff members are not eligible due to the nature of their contracts.

colleagues on Academic Leave should ensure that other internal or external activities do not distract from achieving planned outputs.

Academic Leave is not a right owed to academic staff following given periods of service. Rather, following sufficient service, colleagues earn the right to apply for Academic Leave. These are likely to be awarded if the plans are robust enough and if the contribution made to the Department's collective workload has been sufficient to merit the leave requested. Probationary service counts as qualifying service, as do temporary periods of academic service prior to a permanent appointment, where service is continuous. Maternity/adoption leave as part of a period of continuous service will also count, as will absence for reasons of ill health. Time on bought-out research leave counts towards eligibility to apply for academic leave. However, in the interests of collegiality, the amount of such time that can be counted towards eligibility is normally restricted to one period in seven (i.e. one semester in seven semesters or one year in seven years). Due account will be taken of circumstances where bought-out time has been largely devoted to managerial, rather than research, pursuits. Externally funded research staff are not eligible due to the nature of their contracts. Academic leave will not normally be granted to members of staff in their last year of service.

Staff who are eligible to apply, as above, but whose current post/appointment is underpinned by (fixed term) temporary external funding explicitly designed to resource teaching obligations within the School/Department (e.g., a research buy-out), may also apply provided additional resource can be made available, or re-allocated, to meet the existing teaching obligations. In such cases, the line manager will advise the member of staff.

A member of the School's academic staff who is eligible under the above policy and who has completed a minimum period of three years' service in a leadership role (HoD and Director) may be granted an additional semester of academic research leave (i.e. over and above that to which s/he is normally entitled to apply). However, this is not an entitlement and will only be awarded at the discretion of the Head of School.

The standard rule for eligibility is: one semester of Academic Leave after six semesters of full time teaching and administration². The maximum period is one year, based on 12 semesters of normal duties. Given the lack of history of Teaching & Scholarship academic leave and the potential resource implications, it is suggested that in addition to typical expectations of single and double semester academic leave that shorter periods of academic leave may be also be appropriate for tackling specific T&S projects. Therefore, academic leave measured by weeks and months as well as taken across the year in smaller chunks may on occasions be more appropriate and productive for T&S academic leave.

Academic Leaves run from 1st August to 31st January (Semester 1); and 1st February to 31st July (Semester 2) for six month Academic Leaves and one calendar year for 12 month Academic Leaves, i.e., 1st January to 31st December. In some instances where departmental teaching terms do not match the norm it can be adjusted accordingly to support effective resourcing.

² Further guidance is available in the [University of Manchester academic leave policy](#).

Applications and related expectations

The required format of the application is given in Appendix 1.

There are no set outputs defined for Academic Leave. Rather these will vary according to disciplinary (and sub-disciplinary) norms and according to the stage of their careers when the Academic Leave falls. Academic Leave plans and their associated outputs should be ambitious, and clearly above the norm for an equivalent period of normal duties. Some examples of scholarship outputs are listed in Appendix 2. For those on Teaching and Scholarship contracts, planned activities and outcomes could be linked to pedagogical research, intensive work around the development of teaching in some form, or published research and/or scholarship in their field. Applicants should be guided by the ultimate goal, i.e. to enhance teaching and the student experience. In all cases, clear outputs should be identified and their significance explained.

Academic Leave is awarded by the School in a resource neutral manner i.e. colleagues agree to cover teaching and administration duties of those who are on Academic Leave. Applicants are required to have had an informal discussion with their Head of Discipline to inform them of their intended application. A recommendation of support will be requested from the HoD.

Expected Duties

It is important to recognize that 'Academic Leave does not mean recipients should expect a complete removal from all academic duties in the School. There is an expectation that staff on Academic Leave will 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 Academic Leave.

The expected duties during academic leave, should include:

- Doctoral supervision. However, where possible adjustments should be made during academic leave (or within the post-academic leave workload allocation) for staff with a large number of doctoral students.
- Staff must therefore be contactable whilst on academic leave.
- Staff are expected to continue to manage the funded research projects which they lead (PI or Co-I).
- Staff should be available for consultation on strategically significant issues subject to advance notice.
- If modules a staff member has taught are being examined during that member's Academic Leave (including re-sit 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 Academic Leave. If this occurs the staff member affected will be able to reclaim the lost time, either during their next Academic Leave or sooner.

- Staff should be relieved from other teaching and administrative duties where possible, including academic advising. It is possible to grant “one semester’s leave” distributed over two semesters, but with appropriate reduction in workload over the whole year, if this is the most effective structure for both the applicant and Department/ School.

Deferral and Accumulation

Academic leave may be deferred so that more than a semester of leave might be applied for. In most cases, deferring leave in order to accumulate leave will not be sanctioned. However, applications to do so will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and will include situations such as maternity leave, externally funded research leave or serving a term of office in a leadership role in a School, Faculty or the University.

Procedures

Assuming the eligibility criteria have been met, the responsibility for “managing” academic leave applications and evaluating post-leave reports rests with the appropriate Department, which is required to report to the School Director of T&L as described in the following School procedures:

- School, via the Departments, should ensure that staff are supported to plan and develop high quality academic leave proposals through discussion in PDR and mentoring.
- Proposals from staff who are employed on Teaching-Focussed, or Teaching and Scholarship contracts, would normally enhance the quality of the Department's and/or Schools teaching and student experience, contribute to the University's strategic priorities (<https://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/vision/>) and be consistent with the objectives of the post, as described in the relevant job description.
- The recommendations for leave rest with the HoD.
- Applications and HoD recommendations will be submitted, via the Research Support Manager, to the School Teaching and Learning Committee (STLC) for approval and record keeping and then to SPRC for recording.
- The academic is required to submit a post-leave report within 3 months of the end of the leave period to the Research Support Manager.
- Post-leave reports will be reviewed by the HoD and submitted to STLC (via the Research Office) for final sign-off by STLC.
- A written evaluation of the academic leave period should be provided to the individual by their HoD. Both report and evaluation should then be submitted to STLC via the School Research Manager for School records and “sign-off” at STLC. An unsatisfactory post-leave report can provide the basis for refusing future

academic leave applications. If such a situation arises, the Department/School will provide support to enable an improved research performance before the submission of another application.

Advance applications

Advance applications will be considered where this is to enable an academic to plan the logistics for their leave to involve an extended stay outside the UK in line with our internationalisation strategy. Logistics can include one or more of the following: external funding for a fellowship, arrange an institutional visiting position, coordinate with a leave application being made by their spouse/partner, arrangements for taking their children etc.

Timeline and Documentation

Each Department should adopt the following procedures (adapted for local needs):

- As near as possible to the start of each Academic Session, the Research Support Manager will invite eligible members of staff to apply for academic leave. They will provide details of (or links to) the University Policy and Procedural documents, a copy of the School Policy & Procedures (this document) and timetable for both the local/Department application process and the evaluation of post-leave reports. Colleagues inform HoDs of their intention to apply for academic leave. To increase the probability of departments being able to cover teaching obligations, staff who are employed on Teaching and Scholarship contracts should consider applying for Academic Leaves, if possible, one year earlier.
- Applications are submitted, using the application form provided in Appendix 1 and accompanied by a current CV, to the Research Support Manager for eligibility check.
- When eligibility is confirmed, applications are passed to HoDs for consideration by the Department and, if appropriate, provisional approval of the application.
- Applications are then forwarded to STLC (via research office) for approval, the decisions go to the next SPRC for recording.
- HoDs are notified of outcome from STLC by the Research Support Manager.
- The PA to the HoS will then send letters to applicants with the decision.
- Staff may appeal the decision of the STLC – in the first instance this should be done by writing to the Head of School.

Post-Academic Leave Report

Recipients of Academic Leave must also provide a brief *Academic Leave Report* within 3 months of return to academic duties. The date for post-academic leave reports will be agreed in advance. The report should be submitted to the Research Support Manager who will send

to the HoD for review the HoD then submits to SRC (via the Research Office) for final approval and sign-off.

The length of the report should be consistent with the duration of the leave (normally within the range of 500 to 1,000 words, or ~1-2 pages). The report should include the following information: name and department; dates of leave period; location(s) of leave; objectives given in the original application; a statement of how far these objectives were achieved; a list of outputs or activities arising or planned; and any other information of interest. Colleagues on Academic Leave will be sent advance reminders by the Research Office of when Academic Leave reports are due. All reports are submitted to Faculty. An unsatisfactory Academic Leave report will normally compromise an individual's future eligibility for Academic Leave.

APPLICATION FORM FOR ACADEMIC LEAVE for T&S Staff

To be submitted, along with a current CV, to SoSS-Research@manchester.ac.uk.

Please refer to the University Policy on Academic Leave prior to completing this application (<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=7>)

Name of Applicant:
Commenced employment at Manchester University on:
Dates of academic leave taken since joining the School:
<i>A statement describing your ongoing scholarship activities. This should be a one-page (approximately) description of the scholarship activities that you are currently undertaking with a particular focus on how this activity contributes to the enhancement of the Department's/School's teaching and student experience.</i>
<i>An outline of the project or programme of work. This should contain a brief, one-paragraph outline of your long-term research or work agenda, highlighting those aspects you intend to work on during the academic leave period (the short-term agenda).</i>
<i>A statement of the objectives of the proposed project. This should be a one-page (approximately) description of the scholarship activities that you intend to carry out during the period of academic leave. Further, explain in a couple of short paragraphs how an extended period with focussing on this work, and with minimal time spent on other activities, will contribute to your professional development and how it will enhance the Department's and/or Schools standing in teaching and student experience in relation to the University's strategic priorities.</i>

<p>An indication of the expected outcomes and a realistic timetable of what it is hoped to achieve during the period of leave. <i>Provide a list of outputs (see Appendix 2), with approximate dates, that you expect to produce during your academic leave period. The post-leave report will be expected to contain evidence that these outputs have been delivered. While it is accepted that research plans may alter during the period of academic leave, it is expected that overall deliverables will be similar to the ones originally proposed.</i></p>
<p>Details of your teaching, supervisory, administrative and other duties. <i>Provide a list of current duties and “suggestions” of how these can be covered by other colleagues, if necessary.</i></p>
<p>A summary of any previous academic leave from this University (or its predecessors), which must include any outcomes. <i>Provide the dates of previous leave with outcomes listed aside, and explain why it is essential to have academic leave now as opposed to one year later. This may come from your summary report, which you handed in following your previous academic leave period.</i></p>
<p>Details of any external funding obtained/applied for.</p>

I confirm that I have discussed the implications for teaching and PGR supervision with my Head of Department and any other relevant colleague:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

HoD Declaration:

I confirm that the plans activities and outputs have been agreed and the application has my support:

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2

Outputs and Outcomes

As a guide for interested applicants, below are examples of projects which would be seen to enhance the quality of the Department's and/or Schools teaching and student experience, the creation of communities of practice, and to contribute to the University's strategic priorities.

- ✓ Significant research that would contribute to major teaching innovations.
- ✓ Developing income generation activities related to teaching and learning (e.g. translation of research into teaching practice).
- ✓ Incubation projects linked to innovative approaches to teaching and learning.
- ✓ Examining and disseminating innovative approaches to teaching, learning and assessment.
- ✓ The production of significant open access educational resources which benefit SoSS students or significantly enhance the University's standing.
- ✓ Designing of curriculum review and development of new academic units that require a sustained period of preparation not normally available.
- ✓ Co-production of materials with external partners e.g. course handbooks/text books/resources.
- ✓ Addressing particular areas of concern related to feedback data such as aspects of TEF, student satisfaction, employability, WP, etc.
- ✓ Teaching exchange with relevant international partner institutions.
- ✓ Developing recent and relevant experiences particularly for those teaching on vocational courses with professional accreditation e.g. a sustained period in industry/practice (with a focus on student employability or real world case-studies and industry collaboration).

The updating of teaching material (e.g. new lecture slide, course videos, assessment questions, etc.) would not be considered normally a project requiring academic leave. The distinction for an academic leave application is that the scope or depth of the activity merits a dedicated period away from normal duties. Applicants must show how and why the activities cannot be achieved as part of normal duties and expectations. Therefore, consistent with research academic leave, we would expect academic leave plans to be more ambitious in terms of work and outputs than is possible under normal circumstances.