

GUIDELINE FOR THE UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC LEAVE POLICY RELATING TO RESEARCH LEAVE

Background

This guideline accompanies the University wide academic leave [policy](#) and [guidance](#). The guideline was developed following a review by Research Committee of the use of the academic leave policy for research leave and is intended for use by school academic and research leaders to support the governance and transparent implementation of the [University academic leave policy](#) with a focus on **academic leave for research**.

Academic Leave Policy

As noted in the [academic leave policy](#), academic leave is

1. An opportunity for professional development that would not be possible within the normal course of the academic year and in the context of research leave that it enables 'staff to advance high quality research'.
2. A period of leave **may be applied for** after six semesters for one semester's leave or after six years for one year's leave.
3. The policy *provides a right to apply for leave, not an automatic entitlement to be awarded academic leave*.

Guideline for Academic Leave for Research

Governance and Reporting on the use of Academic Leave for Research

1. School Research Leads are to report on process, applications and outcomes relating to *academic leave for research* on an annual basis to School and Faculty Leadership teams and Faculty Vice Deans Research and Innovation are to bring the reports to Research Committee. School Research Leads will be responsible only for the use of academic leave for research and not for other forms of professional development.
2. A summary report will be submitted to University Executive by Research Committee.

Advertising, applying for and implementing academic leave for research

1. **Advertising.** Ensure there are clear and visible School arrangements for advertising the opportunity to apply for academic leave for research by adopting a visible and transparent annual presentation of the approach and consider aligning the advertising of academic leave for research with leave for other opportunities.
2. **Proactive encouragement of applications.** School Research Leads are encouraged to work with Heads of School and Heads of Divisions/Departments to take a proactive approach to identify eligible colleagues to be encouraged to apply for academic leave for research.
3. **Transparency.** Ensure transparency and consistency in criteria for any additional academic leave arrangements which the School operates (e.g. for colleagues at the end of major leadership positions), which may be awarded in recognition of completion of other responsibilities rather than through the annual application process.
4. **Flexibility to optimise the use of academic leave for research.** Consider building in more flexibility by (i) specifying that applications can be made up to three years in advance, and (ii) that applications for part-time leave will be considered (e.g. to enable the applicant to combine part-time academic leave with another significant research or leadership commitment).

- 5. Consider introducing additional flexibility.** To facilitate (i) shorter periods of leave (less than one semester) either within the academic leave policy or as a separate mechanism for a specific research focused activity defined by the School (e.g. to lead preparation of a major collaborative research funding application identified as a priority by the School; or to enable a focused research leadership placement at one of our international strategic partners or other high ranking research universities) (ii) releasing time of those who hold senior management responsibilities or of researchers who are fully funded from external research awards and who have not been able to make use of academic leave for research (e.g. through introducing deputies and co-leads for these groups of staff to enable the PI to take a period of leave to accelerate a complimentary research activity such as developing a new funding application, or accelerating impact associated with their current portfolio of research projects).
- 6. Responsibility for arranging cover for other duties.** Applicants should be expected to identify and suggest how their other duties might be covered while on academic leave, but arranging cover is a joint responsibility between the applicant and their Head of Department/Division/School.
- 7. Application process.** A common [University template](#) for the application should be used in each School. Applicants should provide a statement of the plan for the research leave as the basis for the decision. A section identifying their other duties, and how these might be covered while on leave can be included.
- 8. Decision making.** Each Faculty agrees the criteria and decision-making process and communicates this as part of the application guidelines. The Faculty will consider whether academic leave is the most appropriate way of supporting the research plan to 'advance high quality research' as per the intention of the academic leave policy (see above). This decision will take account of the quality of the application and whether the activity could be delivered without a period of research leave by drawing on the other forms of research support provided by the Faculty. Hence plans to apply for academic leave should be discussed as part of PDR reviews and developed with reference to the [statement of research contribution expectations](#) for all researchers. The decision-making body may decide whether to award, award but defer to a later period (e.g. because of capacity constraints within the department), or decline.
- 9. Academic leave mentor.** Schools should consider arranging a mentor for the leave period if appropriate as part of the condition of award.
- 10. End of award report.** As a requirement of the award of academic leave. To be received and considered by the academic leave decision-making body and the line manager as part of the annual report on the operation of the academic leave scheme.

Template Application Form

All applications should include as a minimum the following information.

- Name
- Role Title
- School
- Department/Division
- Length of proposed leave
- Dates of proposed leave
- Outline of proposed project/programme of work
- Objectives of the proposed project/programme of work
- Timeline of the proposed project/programme of work
- Expected Outputs from the period of leave

- Outline of duties (including teaching, PGR supervision, administrative) to be covered during the period of leave and suggestions of how these will be covered
- Summary of the outcome of previous periods of research leave
- Details of any external funding obtained/applied for to support the period of research leave