

Sabbatical Leave Procedure	
Enabling Policy Statement; Executive Owner; Approval Route:	Our Colleagues - Chief People Officer - Operations Committee
Is the Procedure for internal use only (Non- disclosable) ?	Disclosable
Associated Policy Statements:	N/A
Authorised Owner:	Human Resources Director
Authorised Co-ordinator:	Associate Director (People Services)
Effective date:	04 July 2024
Due date for full review:	04 July 2027
Sub documentation:	See Appendix A for the Application form

Approval History

Version	Reason for review	Approval Route	Date
1.0	3 Yearly review and migration to the POPP structure	Operations Committee	04 July 2024

1. Purpose

This Sabbatical Leave Scheme has been developed as an essential feature of the University's commitment to strengthening the skills, knowledge and expertise of its academic staff.

2. Scope and Exceptions to the Procedure

2.1 All permanent academic staff employed by the University and its subsidiaries as defined under the Ordinances: [1 \(surrey.ac.uk\)](http://1.surrey.ac.uk) have the right to apply for sabbatical leave.¹

2.2 Applications from staff on teaching track will be considered on their merits.

2.3 This procedure does not form part of any employee's contract of employment. It may be amended from time to time with appropriate consultation with recognised trade union representatives.

3. Definitions and Terminology

Sabbatical leave is a release from duties for a specified period of time to further academic research or for career development in order to achieve objectives that have been agreed with your line manager as having demonstrable merit in line with Faculty, Department or University strategy.

The duties that a member of staff should undertake when on sabbatical leave are expected to directly relate to the stated and agreed aims of their sabbatical. Unless otherwise agreed Sabbatical leave is normally paid but may be unpaid if funding is obtained from sources other than the University.

4. Procedural Principles

4.1. Planning and Management of Sabbatical Leave

The PVC Education and Head of School are responsible for ensuring due consideration to the needs of staff when an application for a sabbatical is made. Line managers will be expected to take a proactive approach to the management of sabbatical leave to ensure that staff who wish to benefit from it apply for sabbatical leave at an appropriate time in their career. These discussions will occur as part of normal staff management meetings or through appraisal.

In reaching decisions on applications for sabbatical leave the PVC Education and Head of School will take into account the needs of the Faculty/Operating Unit and University; consider the process for granting this leave to ensure fairness is applied between colleagues; and consider the length and the purpose for which leave is requested.

4.2. Eligible reasons for a sabbatical

Whilst sabbatical leave is most likely to be used to develop and strengthen research and scholarship profiles, it can also be used to develop and support many other aspects of University activity.

¹ Ordinances dated March 2017 - means all persons holding appointments on both Research & Teaching Track and Teaching Track as Professors, Associate Professors, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers of the University, and other persons or holders of appointments as the Council, on the recommendation of the Executive Board may from time to time stipulate have the right to apply for sabbatical leave.

Sabbatical leave will normally, but not exclusively, be granted for one of the following purposes:

- the pursuit of research or scholarly work either within the University or elsewhere, *e.g.* through visiting institutions, facilities or libraries in other parts of the UK or abroad;
- the pursuit of research or scholarly work which necessitates studying for a particular defined period;
- the undertaking of a Fellowship awarded by an external body whereby the individual retains his/her salary, with the award providing for like for like replacement of teaching resource during the period of the award;
- the completion of a book or substantial monograph;
- the undertaking of a temporary position with another institution in this country or overseas;
- the undertaking of an exchange position with another University or higher education institution or with a person working in a government department, industry or commerce;
- the pursuit of experience from other leading-edge institutions *e.g.* in innovative teaching techniques, professional or management practice (such experience must be clearly separate from the necessary professional and skills training which individuals are expected to obtain through their Faculty/Operating Unit, or the University, in order to fulfil their normal duties and responsibilities);
- secondment to an external professional body which is in the career interests of the individual and to the benefit of the University;
- the release of an individual for a specific project which is of value to the University.

4.3. Staff Eligibility for sabbatical leave

There is no automatic entitlement to sabbatical leave. An academic member of staff with at least three years' continuous service and who has successfully completed probation with the University of Surrey is eligible to apply for a period of sabbatical leave. Only one period of sabbatical leave will be granted to a member of staff over a five-year cycle. Staff are encouraged to discuss any plans for a sabbatical as part of their annual appraisal.

Approval will be based on the merits of the proposal put forward. However, in all cases, an application for sabbatical leave must meet the following criteria:

- Contain objectives that support the University and Faculty or Department Strategic goals.
- Outline a plan for the proposed use of time and other resources, which identifies inputs to the sabbatical leave.
- Identify the anticipated outcomes of the sabbatical leave; these need to be measurable and to relate to the objectives of the leave.
- Support the professional development of the individual member of staff.

The PVC Education and Head of School will consider applications for Sabbatical and when doing so will look at the merits of the application together with the impact on work allocation to other academics within the School/Dept.

4.4. Length of Sabbatical Leave

There is no link between the length of a period of sabbatical leave and an individual's length of service with the University. It is more important for the length of the period of sabbatical leave to be relevant to the leave required to achieve the objectives of the sabbatical. In normal circumstances, however, a period of sabbatical leave is unlikely to exceed one semester at any one time.

4.5. Changes to Sabbatical Leave once Approved

There may be occasions where, because of changing circumstances i.e. changes in staff, the approval of sabbatical leave has to be withdrawn to ensure business needs are met. In such cases this will be discussed with the member of staff within a minimum of 12 weeks prior to the commencement of the sabbatical leave; if no resolution can be found notice will be given that approval has been withdrawn. Any expenses incurred in planning a sabbatical, such as travel will be reimbursed if approval is withdrawn.

The member of staff has the right of appeal against such a decision, in line with the process outlined in Section 4.9.

If it becomes clear during the course of the period of sabbatical leave that the criteria and outcomes of the leave are unlikely to be met, the member of staff is expected to alert the Head of Faculty/Operating Unit as soon as possible and where possible renegotiate the objectives/outputs. If there is any cause for concern regarding the use of the sabbatical leave by the Head of Faculty/Operating Unit this should be raised with member of staff and appropriate action taken to address the concerns.

Difficulties or unforeseen circumstances which may occur during the period of sabbatical leave and impact on the staff member's ability to meet the objectives set should be discussed with the Head of Faculty/Operating Unit who will judge whether the sabbatical leave should continue. This course of action will also be followed if it is judged by the Head of Faculty/Operating Unit that, following the updates on progress, it is clear that the objectives will not be achieved.

The University reserves the right to break the sabbatical leave if there is a change in business need such as a reduction in teaching cover. This will be discussed with the individual concerned as necessary.

4.6. Funding Arrangements

Applications for sabbatical leave will normally be granted on the basis of the individual member of staff retaining their full salary. Individuals are encouraged to seek external funding, wherever appropriate, to cover the costs of replacement staffing during their absence and any additional costs associated with their leave. This funding would normally provide a contribution to part, or all, of their own salary costs or to the costs of replacement staffing. However, at no point will an individual's remuneration exceed their normal university salary.

It is recognised, however, that opportunities for obtaining external funding are fewer in some disciplines than others. Therefore, where an individual is unable to raise the necessary funding to cover replacement staffing costs during their absence, the PVC Education and Head of School will be responsible for making the necessary resource available.

Should additional funding still be necessary to meet the costs of the sabbatical, in circumstances where an individual is unable to obtain any external funding assistance and the resources within the Faculty/Operating Unit are insufficient for replacement cover, it will be the Head of Faculty/Operating Unit's responsibility to apply for such additional funding from internal sources which are available at that time or to ensure that the costs of the sabbatical are met within the existing staffing budget.

If funding cannot be identified the University reserves the right to refuse or withdraw approval for sabbatical.

Full contributions to USS will also normally be maintained during the sabbatical leave period.

4.7. Staff Terms and Conditions whilst on Sabbatical Leave

Terms and conditions of staff on sabbatical remain unchanged. Existing local arrangements for requesting annual leave and sickness absence will apply.

All staff are required to have an annual appraisal and arrangements should be made between the line manager and the member of staff to ensure this is in place.

Staff are required to adhere to the terms of their contract regarding the University Intellectual Property Code and should inform the University of any potential conflict of interest.

During the sabbatical period staff are expected to keep in touch with their line manager and with the University. This would include: regularly checking work emails; keeping informed of news and events within their Faculty/Operating Unit and across the University; maintaining regular contact with their line manager; providing their line manager with a mid – term and end of sabbatical report of achievements against agreed objectives.

Staff should be available for meetings with their line manager if required. This can be either face to face, telephone conference call or via video call.

4.8. Application Procedures

Applications for sabbatical leave should be made directly to the Executive Dean of Faculty. Applications should be made using the form at Appendix A. The Head of Faculty is responsible for approving sabbatical leave application. In making a decision there are a number of factors to be considered, however in doing so the ability to meet business needs will take priority.

All applications for sabbatical leave must include clear objectives and measurable outputs that are to be achieved through the period of sabbatical leave.

The Human Resources Department is responsible for co-ordinating and administering sabbatical leave applications. HR will ensure that the necessary documentation and authorisation are in place and that appropriate salary and contract adjustments are made.

4.9. Appeals

An individual whose application for sabbatical leave is refused by the Head of Faculty/Operating Unit has a right of appeal to the decision. They should notify the Director of HR in writing, clearly setting out the grounds of their appeal within 10 working days of any decision.

The employee must be specific about the grounds of their appeal, which will effectively form the agenda for the hearing. Appeals may be raised on one or more of the following grounds:

- Decision - the evidence did not support the conclusion reached or is inconsistent with other decisions within the University.
- New evidence - which has genuinely come to light since the sabbatical decision was made.

Where new evidence is raised, further investigations may need to be carried out which may require the Appeal Hearing to be delayed pending the outcome of these investigations and to give the employee an opportunity to consider any new information obtained.

The Director of HR, or their delegate, will arrange a meeting of the Appeals Committee at the earliest convenient date. This should normally be within one month after the matter has been formally raised with the Director of HR.

The Director of HR, or nominated deputy, will establish the Appeals Committee which should comprise:

- As Chair, a senior academic manager independent from the case*;
- An HR representative

*Senior managers are defined as staff at Grade 6 level or above

The individual raising the appeal will be informed of the composition of the Appeal Committee. Should they have any concerns these should be raised with the Director of HR who will consider the employee's concerns and may reconstitute an agreed panel.

The Appeals Committee will invite the employee in writing to attend an appeal meeting, informing the employee of the entitlement to be accompanied by a colleague or trade union representative.

The decision of the Appeals Committee shall:

- a) Confirm the original decision; or
- b) Revoke the original decision and reach a different decision.

The decision of the Appeal committee shall be final and there shall be no further right of appeal.

4.10. Right to be Accompanied

The employee can be required to choose an alternative representative if the chosen work colleague/trade union representative is unavailable for the scheduled hearing and will not be available for more than five working days.

The work colleague/trade union representative may make representations and sum up the employee's case but is not allowed to answer questions on the employee's behalf.

4.11. Plus Salary Exchange Scheme

If by taking unpaid leave your salary reduces below the National Minimum Wage or the NIC Lower Earnings Limit you will automatically be suspended from the PensionPlus Scheme. You will be able to rejoin once your earnings meet increase above these levels.

Should you have any questions, please contact the Pensions Department.

5. Governance Requirements

5.1. Implementation: Communication Plan

The procedure was embedded when first published and is available on SurreyNet (HR Procedures Page) for all staff to access.

5.2. Implementation: Training Plan

The procedure was embedded when first published. Further support will be provided to colleagues implementing the procedure when required.

5.3. Review

This procedure will be reviewed every 3 years or sooner if required by a change in legislation or practice.

5.4. Legislative Context and Higher Education Sector Guidance or Requirements

N/A

5.5. Sustainability

This procedure is deemed to have little to no impact on sustainability.

6. Stakeholder Engagement and Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment was completed on 01 May 2024 and is held by the Authorised Co-ordinator.

Stakeholder Consultation was completed, as follows:

Stakeholder	Nature of Engagement	Request EB Approval (Y/N)	Date	Name of Contact
Governance	Review of V1.0	N	19/01/24	Kelley Padley
H&S	Review of V1.0	N	24/01/24	Matt Purcell
Sustainability				

Appendix A

Application Form

Please submit an up-to-date CV clearly showing your name along with this completed form, once support secured from Head of School /Department (see end of form) to HR operations hroperations@surrey.ac.uk

Name of Applicant: _____

Date of application: _____

Please note that Sabbatical Leave is normally only available for one semester. Please specify the exact start and end date in the box provided, using the relevant semester dates published by the University.

Start date of leave DD/MM/YY

End date of leave DD/MM/YY

Eligibility

State here the period of time since your previous period of Sabbatical Leave or since your date of appointment. Give exact dates.

Confirm here that you have consulted the above Sabbatical Leave Procedure and understand the eligibility requirements for a period of sabbatical leave.

Yes/No

Fit to school/departmental, faculty and University Research Strategy

Explain here how your Sabbatical Leave is in line with, and will advance, the school/departmental, faculty and University Research Strategies. Do not exceed 100 words.

Your external research profile

External research evaluations (RAE, REF, external peer review of grant applications to RCUK, EU) are an increasingly important indicator of academic performance. Evaluation of your Leave application will take into account your track record of outputs (publications, compositions/performances) and of external funding applications. This can be in terms of consolidating an existing profile or building up a developing profile. Part of the evidence for this will include a minimum performance rating of “successful in meeting expectations” in the research section your most recent appraisal form. Please complete the following table.

Number of...	t	Explanatory notes
Single-/co-authored books		
Compositions/performances		
Edited/co-edited books/special issues		
Peer-reviewed journal articles		
Chapters		
International conference papers		

Number of external funding applications submitted in the last two years (including outline bids)		
Value of external funding applications submitted in the last two years (including outline bids)		
Number of external grants awarded in the last two years		
Value of external grants awarded in the last two years		

Objectives

State here the Objectives of your Leave. These must be expressed in terms of SMART objectives – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound. Do not exceed 150 words.

International collaboration and/or exchange visits/fellowships

State here whether your Leave would involve such collaborations, including details of periods to be spent abroad. Note arrangements such as fellowships at domestic or overseas universities and/or research institutions. Fellowships need not be paid or include other emoluments but where they are this should be noted. Do not exceed 100.

Deliverables

Indicative outputs from Research Leave include: preparation of a substantial bid (minimum £100k) to an external research sponsor for submission during Leave or within four weeks of the Leave ending; publications (see below); formation of external research partnerships and/or postgraduate student exchange arrangements (where this involves overseas institutions this must be done in liaison with the Associate Dean International and the University's International Office); periods of placement in a research organisation culminating in development of a shared programme of research; other outputs directed to scholarly development such as the design of a new modular syllabus, PGT programme, or administrative process significantly facilitating core teaching business.

For publications, the following information is required.

Journal articles

List each article you plan to submit. For each article, the name of the journal (the journal must be on your School/Department's Top Journals List or an account provided of why submission to another journal is warranted); the provisional title of the paper; the intended submission date; an indication of the timeframe associated with the journal in the event that the article is accepted; alternative journal titles should the journal first attempted reject your submission.

Books

List each book you plan to submit. For each book, the name of the publisher; whether a proposal has been put to the editor and, if so, whether advice has yet been received; if the book is for a series, the name of the series and of the series editors; the expected length (in pages) of the book; the nature of the book (monograph, edited collection, textbook etc.); the expected submission date.

Other

The writing of chapters in edited collections is discouraged as a formal deliverable supported by Research Leave. Where such output is intended, provide the name of the editor(s), the provisional title of your contribution, the name of the publisher, the intended date of submission, and your case for submitting a chapter to an edited collection.

The 'other' category may also include reports. These are acceptable publications only where they are a requirement of an external research sponsor, such as a government department or business organisation. Indicate whether the publication is confidential to sponsor. A case where the principal output is reports is unlikely to succeed and reports should only be proposed as Research Leave outputs where conventional publications are also included amongst outputs.

Commissioned works, software, compositions, and performances may also be put forward as intended deliverables. Provide details including the sponsor; whether the sponsorship monies have been channelled through the University (e.g. as an approved University Consultancy, research contract or Other Services Rendered); date(s) of performance; and where reviews are likely to appear in the case of compositions and performances. If the output is software, state the software house, licensing arrangements and intended market; confirmation that the licensing arrangement has been subject to formal approval via the University's Intellectual Property procedure. Only software output intended for academic or equivalent research applications will be regarded as an acceptable deliverable for the purpose of Research Leave applications.

Head of School/Department sign-off

Confirm here that your Head of School/Department has approved your Leave request.

Yes/No

Head of School/Department statement [the HoS/D should state here the reasons for recommending this case