



ROBERT GORDON UNIVERSITY ABERDEEN

Sabbatical Leave Scheme and Procedures

Approved by	The Executive		
Date approved	March 2016	Status	Approved
Policy owner	Vice-Principal (Research)	Impact assessed	Yes
Version	1	Date of next review	June 2019

Purpose

This scheme defines sabbatical leave; the parameters within which staff may access this leave; and the process to be followed when applying for sabbatical leave.

Scope

The policy applies to all academic research staff and all research active academic staff, on permanent contracts of employment. Entitlement to sabbatical leave is not automatic but is based on the merits of a proposal and how those fit with the strategic needs of the University, Faculty and School or Department at the time the application is made.

Definitions

Definitions for the purposes of the scheme

- Sabbatical leave is an absence whose purpose is to enable a member of academic/academic research staff to further his/her research. Thus, it is expected that the sabbatical will bring significant benefits to the individual and to RGU through higher quality research outputs or substantial increases in external funding;
- The university recognises that research can take a variety of forms according to the academic discipline. Research outputs include traditional publications such as books, articles, monographs, as well as patents and licences. The Research category also includes:
 - Entrepreneurial activities involved in knowledge or technology transfer and research impact.
 - Action research, client-focused research and practice based research
 - Income generation for research
 - Working with external agencies in research-user networks

General Conditions

- Sabbatical leave can be either fully or partially paid by the University. In all cases applicants are expected to explore fully options for external funding to support their sabbatical, prior to submitting an application;
- Sabbatical Leave is a form of leave which is normally free from all normal academic duties;
- Sabbatical leave is not an entitlement. However, provided that the qualifying conditions are met and the application is agreed by the Head of School, endorsed by the Dean of Faculty and approved by the Vice-Principal (Research), academic staff may reasonably expect to be granted sabbatical leave;

- In order to qualify for sabbatical leave a member of staff must have successfully completed their probationary period;
- Maximum entitlement to paid sabbatical leave will normally be six months in four years or one academic year in eight years (probationary service counts towards the number of years), in all instances service and entitlements refer only to continuous service with the Robert Gordon University;
- Periods of maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, shared parental leave and carers leave count towards these entitlements;
- Subject to its academic value and the staffing needs of the School, unpaid sabbatical leave may be granted more frequently but requires the same approval process;
- The period of leave includes any annual leave which has accrued during the sabbatical leave period.

Application procedures

- A member of academic staff who wishes to be considered for sabbatical leave must apply in writing to the Head of School, setting out specific goals and a plan of work for the proposed sabbatical leave. The application must be made in a format set for this purpose and must normally be submitted at least twelve months before the start of the proposed sabbatical leave;
- The application must contain a set of objectives and targets, which must be capable of objective verification, as well as a plan of work with milestones. These should be based on a discussion the applicant should arrange with the Head of School and with the Vice-Principal (Research);
- In considering the application, the Head of School must take into account how well the proposed sabbatical leave accords with the strategies and commitments of the University, the Faculty and School;
- In considering an application the Head of School should also consider the wider resource implications, including any backfill requirements to cover the member of staff's absence, before agreeing to the period of sabbatical leave;
- Prior to deciding whether or not to agree their support for an application for consideration by the Vice-Principal (Research), the Head of School must consult with HR to consider any contractual terms associated with the sabbatical and any direct or indirect implications arising;
- The application must then be endorsed by the Dean using the standard form;
- The application and endorsement by the Dean should then be sent to the Vice-Principal (Research) for final approval;
- The decision of the Vice-Principal (Research) is final and there is no appeal;
- All decisions to approve or reject sabbatical applications will be reported to the Research Committee;

- Copies of all paperwork relating to the application, whether approved or not, should be sent to the HR Department for retention in the individual's personal file.

Monitoring and evaluation

- During the period of sabbatical leave the individual will be required to provide informal updates on progress to the Head of School on a monthly basis. This may be by face to face meeting, telephone or by e-mail as agreed with the Head of School and by reference to the plan of work. A record of the issues covered and the actions/outcomes will be agreed and retained for EPR purposes;
- Immediately after returning from a period of sabbatical leave, the member of staff must submit a report to the Head of School copied to the Dean and Vice-Principal (Research), setting out what they have done and how this has met the objectives and targets agreed prior to the sabbatical. This will form part of the individual's EPR appraisal;
- A follow-up report must also be submitted to the Head of School, Dean and Vice-Principal (Research) six months later which should report on the resultant impact and results of the activities undertaken. This will form part of the individual's EPR appraisal;
- The Head of School shall provide the HR Department and the Research Committee with a copy of the report. The HR Business Partner shall consult with the Head of School on the action to take in the event of an unsatisfactory report being received.

Terms and Conditions

- Academic staff who meet the qualifying conditions may apply for up to six months of sabbatical leave on full pay;
- The actual period of sabbatical leave agreed will depend on the needs and strengths of the application submitted, its purpose and value;
- During the period of sabbatical leave, the individual remains an employee of the university on the normal terms and conditions of employment.
- During the period of sabbatical leave, the individual will not be permitted to take up any additional employment, or to provide any consultancy services to any third party unless this is part of an on-going agreement previously disclosed to and agreed by the university;
- The period of sabbatical leave will count (pro rata) as continuous and reckonable service for all relevant purposes;
- All other terms and conditions of employment will continue where appropriate, including commercial confidentiality, IPR etc.