



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
NEW UNIVERSITY

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Policy

Academic Sabbatical Leave Policy

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Note: Hyperlinks have been provided for ease of reference. For other documents please see the Policies page on the main University website (<http://bucks.ac.uk/about-us/governanceand-policies/policies>) or visit the Research ethics and integrity webpage <https://bucks.ac.uk/research/research-ethics-and-integrity>

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This document has been designed to be accessible for readers. However, should you require the document in an alternative format please contact the Academic Registry.

Background

- 1 Academic Sabbatical leave is fundamental to university development and to the pursuit of excellence in research and education (teaching and learning) as stated in Impact 2022. The following policy and procedure is aimed to ensure that individuals' exercise of the right to academic sabbatical leave benefits not only their own career development but also the academic community of Buckinghamshire New University.

Purpose Statement

- 2 The purpose of the Academic Sabbatical Leave Policy is to enable the University to successfully achieve its vision and is underpinned by the Institution's Research Strategy and the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Strategy. Specifically, purposes are:
 - a To enable academic staff to have dedicated time to focus on research and pedagogical teaching activities.
 - b To ensure that academics are supported in their career development.
 - c To act as part of the reward and recognition scheme at the University.
 - d To respond and contribute to the Research Excellence Framework (REF), the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), Bucks Academic Framework (BAF), Bucks Behavioural Framework (BBF) and DRIVE for excellence values.
- 3 The aim of this policy is to enable members of academic staff to request a period of dedicated time in which they can focus upon specific elements of their job role.
- 4 Sabbatical Leave is considered to be a privilege of an academic career and is not a contractual entitlement.
- 5 The University actively encourages applications in line with the guidelines. Periods of Sabbatical leave will enable the individual to develop personally whilst delivering clear outputs that are of benefit to the University.
- 6 Where appropriate, Sabbatical Leave may be used to undertake research or scholarship, to obtain experience in another organisation or learn about a new teaching programme or technique.

Applicability and Scope

- 7 Academic members of staff engaged in teaching and research, or teaching and scholarship, are eligible to apply for Sabbatical Leave.
- 8 During probationary periods employees will not be eligible to apply for Sabbatical Leave.
- 9 Academics in their final year of service will not normally be eligible to apply for Sabbatical Leave.
- 10 As a guideline, normally Sabbatical Leave may be taken for one semester after 3 years (6 semesters) of service (i.e. leave to be taken in the 4th or later years).

- 11 Three years qualifying service is not a pre-requisite to taking this leave.

Definitions

- 12 'Sabbatical Leave' is defined as a form of paid leave which is free from all teaching and administrative duties, to undertake research or other appropriate study related to an individual's academic or professional field.
- 13 'Qualifying service' is employment as an academic, excluding periods when the academic does not teach, for example parental leave, external secondment, sickness absence (not related to a disability), research fellowships or funded projects (where teaching ceases) and unpaid leave.

Duration and Timing of Leave

- 14 Sabbatical Leave will normally be approved for 1 semester and exceptionally for up to a maximum of 2 semesters.
- 15 Sabbatical Leave periods should normally begin at the start of the academic year. The leave should not normally straddle 2 semesters.

Application

- 16 Sabbatical Leave should be a planned process. The intention to request Sabbatical Leave should be discussed in an employee's PDR or related objective setting activities.
- 17 Applications must be submitted to the relevant Head of School 12 months prior to the start of the proposed leave in order that all applications can be duly considered and, if granted, ensure that all necessary arrangements are in place to cover all remaining duties including Postgraduate Research (PGR) supervision and project commitments.
- 18 Eligible members of academic staff must submit an application in accordance with the University guidelines, using the appropriate application form. Guidelines for the application process are available for managers.

Authorisation

- 19 Applications will be considered by the Head of School. In deciding whether to agree an application the Head of School will consider the expected outcomes from the Sabbatical Leave and the ability of the School to provide the necessary cover to minimise the impact. They will also take into account the effectiveness, in terms of outcomes delivered, of any previous period of Sabbatical Leave taken.
- 20 The Head of School will make a recommendation and refer the application to the Director of Research and Enterprise, depending on the content of the work to be undertaken during the Sabbatical Leave.
- 21 If the proposed period of leave exceeds one semester or if there are resourcing implications, the application must be approved by the Vice-Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor will review the application and the stated outcomes and will determine whether the application is to be

approved. In reaching their decision the Vice-Chancellor will also consider whether there are appropriate cover arrangements and if the necessary funds are available to provide external support, if it is not possible to cover all of the applicant's duties within the School.

Remuneration

- 22 Sabbatical Leave will be paid with all contractual payments continuing normally during the period.
- 23 If the Sabbatical Leave involves the member of staff working for another organisation on a paid basis, then the leave will be without pay.
- 24 The cost of the Sabbatical Leave, including expenses, should be agreed in advance of the leave and will normally be funded from existing sources within the School. The Head of School will liaise with their Finance Business Partner to ensure finances are in place to cover the Sabbatical Leave. External sources may also provide funding for periods of Academic Sabbatical Leave.

Cover

- 25 Teaching and administrative responsibilities should be covered in the School through the redistribution of work. This should be discussed within the School between the Head of School, the applicant and any affected colleagues. The position of continued support for PGR Supervision must be agreed in advance. Where the applicant has teaching or other duties in another School, discussion must take place with the relevant Head of School to arrange cover during the leave. Since Clinical Academic staff may also have commitments to the NHS it is critical that early and detailed discussions take place with appropriate staff in the clinical location where clinical commitments are based.
- 26 In exceptional circumstances, Heads of School may discuss recruiting additional staff to assist with covering the duties of a member of academic staff taking Sabbatical Leave with the University HR Business Partner. This will be assessed by the Vice-Chancellor who will determine if there are available funds through the vacancy requisition process.
- 27 The Head of School will agree details of contact with the member of staff during leave and confirm arrangements for return, such as updates and expected commitments on return.

Responsibilities of the Academic Staff member

- 28 Prior to the commencement of Sabbatical Leave it is the academic staff member's responsibility to ensure that their contact details are up to date so the University can communicate with them while they are on leave.
- 29 The expected outcomes during the proposed leave must be detailed in the application form. If the application is approved these will become the agreed outcomes between the employee and the University for the period of Sabbatical Leave.
- 30 Within two months of returning from Sabbatical Leave, the member of academic staff must submit a progress report to their Head of School. The report form must be completed

according to the guidelines provided. It should report on the expected outcomes on the application form and will be considered by a relevant University committee.

Monitoring and Review

- 31 Sabbatical Leave that is granted through this policy will be recorded on each employee's record, so it can be monitored for equal opportunities purposes.

Related University policies

Note: Please see the Policies page on the main University website (<http://bucks.ac.uk/about-us/governanceand-policies/policies>)

- Career breaks
- Special Leave

Appendix I: Academic Sabbatical Application Form

Please complete & discuss with your line manager, referring to the guidance and eligibility criteria in the Academic Sabbatical policy.

EMPLOYMENT DETAILS			
Employee name		School / Directorate	
Job title		Continuous Service Date	
Grade		Contract hours	
Duration of or sabbatical			
Start date		End date	
Please give below your reasons for requesting a sabbatical:			
Please indicate the specific outcomes you will achieve during your sabbatical:			
I confirm that I have read and understood the terms of the Academic Sabbatical Leave policy.			
Applicant Signature		Date	
Consideration by HEAD OF SCHOOL			
APPLICATION APPROVED / REJECTED (Delete as appropriate)			
Rationale for approval / rejection of request: (NB: consideration to how the post will be covered)			
Agreed arrangements for sabbatical period (if supported):			
I confirm that I have read and understood the terms of the Academic Sabbatical Leave policy.			
Head of School signature		Date	

Consideration by DIRECTOR OF ENTERPRISE AND RESEARCH			
APPLICATION APPROVED / REJECTED (Delete as appropriate)			
Rationale for approval / rejection of request:			
Signature		Date	

Please return a copy to the Human Resources Directorate.