

SABBATICAL LEAVE POLICY
FOR RESEARCHERS AND ACADEMIC STAFF

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1. Introduction

Swansea University (SU) recognises sabbatical leave as integral to research and can equally encourage the enhancement of teaching quality and innovation. SU is therefore fully committed, within available resources, to supporting applications for sabbatical leave, with or without pay, as part of the development of the research profile and programmes of staff.

This Policy provides a framework within which Schools and employees will operate. School Sabbatical Leave policies must comply with the requirements contained in it.

2. Definition of Sabbatical Leave

Sabbatical leave is defined as a period during which an employee is free from all teaching and administrative duties in order to further research or scholarship that delivers the University and School's strategic objectives. Sabbaticals can be funded by the university or via external sources and the member of staff remains a salaried employee of Swansea University during the sabbatical leave. Unpaid periods of absence are dealt with through the Leave of Absence Policy.

The only duties employees should be expected to undertake when on sabbatical leave are those directly related to the objectives of their sabbatical.

3. Process and Criteria

Only the Head of School and Director of Research, or an appropriate panel is authorised to approve sabbatical leave. The School will normally cover any incurred costs associated with the sabbatical leave, unless external funding is obtained. School Business Plans should address sabbatical leave priorities and any associated provision of cover.

All Heads of Schools must inform all staff of their eligibility to apply for sabbatical leave as part of the induction process and at regular professional review meetings. An individual's aspirations for sabbatical leave and its intended outcomes should also be discussed.

3.1 Eligibility

Entitlement to sabbatical leave is not automatic but based on the merits of a proposal, its specified objectives and its planned outputs and each applicant will be considered in relation to the following criteria when applying:

- The sabbatical leave must have clear objective(s) and outcomes and involve a programme of work of *direct* relevance to the individual's academic role
- There is a clear expectation that sabbatical leave should strengthen the implementation of the School's Research Strategy and its submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF). In particular, the person applying for sabbatical leave is expected to be eligible for submission to the REF
- Arrangements for covering existing teaching and administrative duties must be agreed with the Head of School or nominated other
- Normally the applicant must have successfully completed his/her probationary period OR applicants must have served satisfactorily as a member of the academic staff of the University for at least 3 years before a one semester/teaching block leave can be requested, and at least 5 years before a one year leave period can be requested
- Any previous sabbatical leave should have resulted in the realisation of its specified objectives outcomes, unless there were agreed extenuating circumstances in relation to this
- Adequate notice must be given to allow for the supervision of graduate students affected or where a specialist course is provided
- Consideration of applications should be in accordance with the University's Equal Opportunities Policy and in particular should be free from bias in terms of race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief and age

3.2 Application

The application for sabbatical leave is found on page 4 and should be completed by the applicant and approved by the appropriate Head of School or nominated other. Sabbatical leave will normally, but not exclusively, be granted for one of the following purposes:

- Undertaking research or scholarly work either within SU or elsewhere, e.g. through visiting institutions, facilities or libraries in other parts of the UK or abroad;
- Undertaking research or scholarly work which requires study for a particular defined period;
- Completion of a book or substantial monograph;
- Assuming a temporary position with another institution in this country or overseas;

3.3 Length of Sabbaticals

The length of the sabbatical is flexible and at the discretion of the Head of School or nominated other e.g. Director of Research or leave panel, and should be agreed with the employee. It should reflect the strategic significance of agreed outcomes.

4. Monitoring

Within 3 months of the end of the period of the sabbatical leave, employees will submit a written report. The purpose of the report will be to:

- Show how the objectives set out in the original sabbatical proposal have been met;
- Comment on any difficulties or opportunities encountered;
- Indicate outcomes such as publications and grant applications, together with any new research possibilities;
- Provide a development plan that will show how the work completed can be built upon.

Future applications for Sabbatical Leave will be considered in relation to these reports.

Failure to produce such a report will jeopardise further opportunities for the individual concerned to take periods of sabbatical leave or potentially disciplinary action.

In accordance with the University's commitment to equality and diversity the outcomes of decisions made on sabbatical leave will be monitored by the School Research Committee to ensure adherence to good practice and the principles of equality. Monitoring will take account of the number and length of periods of sabbatical leave granted, broad objectives and the achievement of agreed outputs.

Heads of Schools (or nominated other) are expected to monitor progress on an agreed timescale depending on the nature and length of the sabbatical against the proposed publication of papers and books in connection with the research undertaken during the period of leave.

Schools are required to keep a record of all sabbatical leave taken by staff, whereby both summary and detailed information are accessible if requested. In addition, a copy of the application forms and monitoring report should be forwarded to HR for record, consistency and equal opportunity purposes.

5. Failure to Follow Procedure

Any sabbaticals undertaken without following the stated procedure and not authorised by the Head of School (or nominated other) will be considered as unauthorised absence. Pay will be suspended pending a full investigation which may result in formal disciplinary action being taken.

Unsatisfactory progress may be reported to the relevant Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research), who may take appropriate action in consultation with the Head of School.

6. Appeals Procedure

Heads of School should be advised that decisions regarding sabbaticals should be applied as consistently as possible taking account of equal opportunities principles and policy. Any employee who believes that this policy is not being fairly applied may appeal to the appropriate Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research).

7. Policy Review and Assessment

This Policy should be reviewed every five years to ensure its continued currency and relevancy, taking into account changes in legislation and best practice.