

Academic Staff Research Leave Scheme

1. Introduction

The University recognises the value of research leave and has adopted a firm policy on the desirability of granting research leave and has approved the following regulations. In line with the Research Strategy 2015 - 2020 the University is committed to supporting staff pursuing high quality research, and will provide the opportunity for them to do so. The purpose of the **Academic Staff Research Leave Scheme** is to advance the pursuit of research and scholarship in the University of Stirling, to encourage and support mutually beneficial relationships with business and industry, and to provide significant development opportunities for individuals.

2. Definition of Research Leave

Research Leave is reserved for a period of research and scholarship. "Research and Scholarship" should be widely defined to embrace laboratory research, whether of an individual or collective nature, fieldwork, involving the gathering of data and liaising with outside professional bodies, library-based research and the writing up of research projects in a form suitable for publication. This definition includes research leading to the preparation of applications to outside grant-awarding bodies for substantial research grants. Applications to the Academic Staff Research Leave Scheme should only be considered if they demonstrate that the leave will be used to undertake a clearly defined piece of distinctive and excellent research with identifiable and substantial research output(s) consistent with the University's Research Strategy.

3. Purpose

Research leave should be used exclusively for the pursuit of the research and scholarship for which it is granted which may include developing and exploiting the commercial potential of research. Staff on research leave will be relieved of all administrative duties at Faculty and University level, with the exception of those tasks related to the supervision of research postgraduate students, and the conduct of funded research projects.

4. Eligibility

Research leave should not be regarded as a right in itself. The normal period of research leave is six months. Members of non-probationary academic staff whose contracts with the University require them to undertake research are eligible to apply for one six-month period of research leave to be taken after six **full** semesters (before the proposed start date) of completed service, and may be allowed to accumulate up to one year after twelve **full** semesters. For the purposes of this scheme a semester is defined as Autumn (Jul-Dec) and Spring (Jan-Jun). Once academic staff have completed probation, an application for research leave can be made, although the Dean of Faculty may exercise a degree of flexibility in bringing forward, or back, by one semester for leave to fit in with the time most appropriate to the colleague's research and the Faculties research plan. It is expected that staff should accumulate six **full** semesters' service between each successful application although flexibility in this may be argued by the Dean of Faculty. Length of service is not in itself sufficient to gain research leave, though it may

be considered by the Dean of Faculty as an additional positive criterion in an application after consideration of research-related criteria.

5. **Criteria**

Applicants for research leave should address each of these criteria in their applications. In deciding whether to recommend the approval of an application for research leave, the Dean of Faculty, with advice from Faculty research director, should consider the extent to which the application addresses the following questions, in the light of the career stage of the applicant, and in addition to any supplementary Faculty criteria:

1. Can the applicant demonstrate evidence of an excellent record of research achievement commensurate of their career stage, including the effective conduct of independent research, publication, success in developing research proposals which attract external funding, and initiative in developing knowledge exchange activities over the period since the last research leave ended?
2. Can the applicant demonstrate a track record of recruitment and successful supervision of PhD students, commensurate with their career stage?
3. Were the planned objectives of any previous period of research leave met?
4. Will the research leave lead to substantial research outputs; for example,
 - Will the proposed research activity lead to the completion of internationally excellent substantial research publications (e.g. monographs, journal articles); is there a clear plan to publication in the proposal?
 - Have any requests for external funding been made in conjunction with this proposed research activity? Will a component of the planned research leave include the preparation of proposals for funding for future projects, to be undertaken at the end of the applicant's research leave period?
 - How will this contribute/add value to the University's research strategy?
 - Are there other substantive and valuable research outputs that will be achieved?
 - Has the research proposal effectively presented clear pathways to impact?
5. Is the plan for the research given in sufficient detail in the application? Is the planned research commensurate with the period of leave requested?

6. **Eligible Activities**

The following are illustrative of research outputs which are considered 'substantial' and therefore eligible for the Research Leave Scheme:

- At least two research papers/articles publishable in high quality referred international journals;
- A research monograph (authored, co-authored);

- The submission of a major RCUK or similar research proposal, commensurate with the career stage of the applicant;

These are *examples* of substantial output and not strict definitions of eligible output. Other substantive research outputs which are in keeping with the University and faculty research strategy may also be eligible. In keeping with all assessment, the application must clearly demonstrate the value of these outputs and the likelihood that they will be achieved. If an applicant is unsure then advice should be sought from the faculties Director of Research or Dean of Faculty.

Other related outputs which enhance research reputation (for example, conference presentations, seminars, unpaid secondments or fellowships, policy briefings, the membership of research funding consortia) will strengthen applications, but are not sufficient research outputs to support an application in themselves.

7. Research Resources

Where teaching assistance is bought in to cover the research leave period of an academic member of staff this cost will be met by the Faculty unless external funding has been secured to cover this cost.

Research resources are distinct from the resource implications of being granted research leave. They are defined here as the resources necessary for the actual conduct of research, for example, travel and subsistence expenses, conference fees, library fees, research support, and so on. The applicant must show that he or she has identified appropriate means of covering these research resources. Applications to the Research Leave Scheme should state whether the conduct of the research in question is dependent on the success of supporting applications for research resources.

Please note that:

- i) Staff on probation are not entitled to take research leave until they have successfully completed their probationary period*
- ii) Semesters of leave granted under other schemes e.g. Leave of Absence, do not normally count towards entitlement to research leave*

To achieve a balance between individual and faculty needs, the period of leave will normally begin one month after the end of the previous semester. Where leave is granted for two consecutive periods, it will be for twelve months normally beginning one month after the end of the previous semester. Precise dates for the beginning and end of the research period should be agreed at faculty level, and notified to HR & OD services. It is assumed that, normally, research leave will cover a period during which teaching and administrative duties would otherwise have been undertaken. This principle will also be applied in the exceptional circumstances where applicants are involved in courses of twelve months' duration, and where, for example, the period of leave might run from the middle of one semester to the middle of the next.

8. Absence

Staff who require to be absence from the University (paid or unpaid) continue to accrue semesters of service for research leave purposes.

If a member of staff falls sick during a period of Research leave agreed under the University Scheme, the period of research leave will not normally be extended. The absence will, however, be taken

into account when considering the subsequent Research Leave Report, particularly where expected outputs have been adversely affected by the absence.

9. Staff on Fixed-Term Contracts

Fixed term staff who have six continuous semesters of service are eligible to apply subject to the proviso that research leave will not be granted for the last semester of a fixed term contract.

10. Retirement and Resignations

Applications to take research leave immediately prior to retirement or resignation will not normally be agreed, unless an exceptional case can be made for the benefit to the university.

11. Research Leave Applications

Applications for research leave should be made using the appropriate current standard University form available from the HR and OD website and be accompanied by an up to date curriculum vitae which should contain precise details of the applicant's ongoing teaching, research, supervisory and administrative commitments.

12. Process Steps

- i. Submission is to the Dean of Faculty whose role will be to evaluate and approve or reject the application. (If the applicant is a Dean of Faculty please go to iii). The Dean of Faculty will arrange for internal peer review, in accordance with the faculties peer review policy. At this stage questions concerning the research record of the applicant, the viability of the proposed research scheme for which the research is sought will be examined in detail and adjusted if necessary. The Dean of Faculty will work with the faculty Research Director who will advise on the extent to which the proposed work is in accordance with Faculty research plans.
- ii. If, for any reason, a Dean of Faculty is unable to support an application, this should be fully discussed with the member of staff.
- iii. Where the applicant is a Dean of Faculty, the application for Research Leave should be forwarded to the Senior Deputy Principal for consideration. Applications for research leave from Dean of Faculty need to be reported to Court in order to ensure that appropriate cover within the relevant Faculty is made. Notification of such applications will be made via HR & OD services to the Secretary of Court.
- iv. The Senior Deputy Principal has the authority to reject applications which are considered to be weak or inappropriate.
- v. Very exceptionally, out of cycle applications may be considered where the member of staff is, for example, going abroad and has to apply for external grant funding
- vi. Alterations to a research proposal which has already been approved may be necessary due to unforeseen circumstances, either immediately prior to the period of research leave, or during it. In either case, the member of staff must notify their Dean of Faculty **immediately**, and this information should then proceed speedily along the same route as that outlined for applications

Timetable and Critical dates for Autumn 2018 / Spring 2019 applications:

	DATE
Process opens for applications	w/c 11 September 2017
Deadline for applications to be submitted to the Dean of Faculty.	Friday 3 November 2017
<p>Dean of Faculty, Faculty Research Director and external assessor to the Faculty meet to consider applications.</p> <p>Where the application is supported by the Faculty, the Dean of Faculty must provide their evaluation of the applicant's research proposal, along with details of arrangements made for the teaching of the applicant's courses and supervision.</p> <p>Applicants whose applications are not approved at Faculty level and who disagree with the Dean of Faculty's evaluation can seek review of their application by the Deputy Principal (Research). Applicants should forward their application to HR & OD.</p>	<p>Between Monday 6 November 2017 – Thursday 30 November 2017</p>
Faculties to upload all research leave applications to the BOX file	Thursday 30 November 2017
Outcomes and feedback communicated to all applicants	by Friday 8 December 2017

13. Research Leave Reports

Research Leave Reports must be submitted on the standard University form **within four weeks of return to normal duties**. The forms are available from HR and OD website. The reports are approved in the same way as applications by the Dean of Faculty. Each report should, therefore, be evaluated, approved and signed by the Dean of Faculty. It will be the responsibility of the Dean of Faculty to ensure that a report is forthcoming within the stipulated time. Approved reports should then be saved to the BOX file for submission and review by Deputy Principal (Research).

In cases where a research report is deemed to be inadequate, and where it is established that the inadequacy is much more than the matter of report, but is a question of non-productivity, the member of staff will be required to meet formally with her/his Dean of Faculty and an attempt should be made to facilitate the successful completion of the project for which the leave was granted.

If, after investigation, no successful solution is forthcoming, the Senior Deputy Principal may take a firm decision to withdraw future research leave for the member of staff. A member of staff may seek to have this decision reversed by applying to the Research Committee, where an ad hoc sub-committee may be set up to consider such cases.

14. Remuneration during Research Leave and Annual Leave Arrangements

Normally staff on research leave will be entitled to full pay. However, where staff undertake a project which means that they receive remuneration from an outside body, different rules will apply. In such cases the level of stipend from the University during research leave will be determined by the Senior Deputy Principal after consultation with the member of staff involved and the Director of HR and OD department, as appropriate. The Senior Deputy Principal will take into consideration the level of remuneration obtained from elsewhere, the cost of living, cost of fare(s), unavoidable commitments at home, etc. The aim in fixing the level of 'home' salary will be to ensure that University funds are not paid out in cases where substantial profit from the research arrangements might accrue.

In most cases of research leave, superannuation and national insurance contributions will be maintained at the University's expense. However, when staff receive remuneration from an outside body during a period of research leave, the position with regard to superannuation and national insurance contributions will be determined at the same time as the level of University stipend is agreed.

Financial assistance may be available within the University for Travel Arrangements and applications should be made to the Dean of Faculty.

15. Dean of Faculties Allowance

In the absence of a Dean of Faculty on research leave, the Dean of Faculty allowance will be payable to any Acting Dean of Faculty appointed by the Senior Deputy Principal.

The allowance normally paid to Dean of Faculties ceases during their research leave when another member of staff takes over as Dean of Faculty.

16. Leave of Absence – Academic Staff

Leave of Absence, other than research leave, for periods of teaching or research elsewhere, or certain other purposes, can be granted by the Senior Deputy Principal upon the recommendation of the Dean of Faculty concerned. The level of stipend and the position of superannuation and national insurance contributions during such leave will be determined by the Senior Deputy Principal after consultation with the member of staff involved and the Director of HR and OD. Leave of Absence will not normally count towards entitlement to apply for research leave.