



Guidance on research leave

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1. College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences guidance on research leave

Preamble

The College recognises that research leave is an important part of the professional and intellectual development of its academic staff and can assist in maintaining the high calibre of research and scholarship for which the University of Edinburgh is renowned.

Purpose of this Guidance

This guidance is to i) define research leave and ii) give an overview of the eligibility, procedures and reporting parameters expected within Schools to ensure a fair and transparent process for staff applying for research leave.

It also

- Provides a framework within which Schools encourage and support staff to make the most of this valuable resource.
- Allows for management flexibility within Schools to address local needs and priorities, disciplinary norms around research methods and publishing practices and to protect both entitlement to apply for leave and accountability for use of this time.

Research Leave

Definition

This is paid leave for a period of time, defined locally within Schools, which allows for research and scholarship activities largely free of teaching and administrative duties associated with academic semesters.

Staff will continue to supervise postgraduate research students for whom they are first supervisors, although they may call on second supervisors to assist. Additional responsibilities may also be required, as stated in School research leave guidance.

Research leave is not an entitlement, but eligible members of academic staff may expect their application to be given fair consideration and not to be unreasonably refused. Applications are subject to the normal approval processes within a School¹. The granting of leave will have regard to the overall strategy of the School, the academic record of the applicant, the work to be undertaken, the outcome of any previous research leave taken and the ability of the School to accommodate the absence of the member of staff at the time requested.

Periods of leave align to University semesters or for a set number of weeks/months at a convenient time within the School calendar.

One period of research leave is permitted in respect of each service period of three to four years (refer to your School's guidance), with a typical maximum of one academic year of leave taken at any time. Eligibility for research leave should be accrued during periods of maternity and family-related leave. Moreover, in order to incentivise and reward external grants, it is strongly recommended that staff continue to accrue eligibility for research leave during periods of buyout on research grants.

¹ Please note that research leave applications for Heads of Schools require Head of College approval

There may be exceptional circumstances (e.g. a unique opportunity to visit another Institution or constraints on taking leave at a specific time) where these procedures may be relaxed at the discretion of the School.

It is also recognised that more frequent Research Leave does not imply more research time for staff overall, but rather a different approach to allocating research time.

Schools should ensure compliance with an external funder's terms and conditions relating to research leave in cases where staff have been awarded a personal research fellowship by an external funder

Aim

The aim of research leave is usually to provide a planned opportunity for academic staff to have periods of uninterrupted, focussed study that will develop and maintain research that is recognised by our peers as world leading and contributes to advances in knowledge.

Communications

During the period of research leave members of staff must be able to be contacted by the School, if required.

Accountability

Schools should put in place a framework for reporting on the proposed research outcomes and assessing that they have been met. The deadline should be appropriate to the nature of the research activity being carried out and the duration of research leave. For example, a written status report should be provided three months after completion of the period of research leave, to be discussed further during annual review.

Requesting research leave

Eligibility

Academic staff of grade 8 and above (specifically Lecturers, Senior Lecturers, Readers and Professors whose contribution spans research and teaching) may submit a request for research leave.

It is recommended that Schools set Autumn deadlines to receive applications for the following academic year for planning purposes. During research leave the University's contractual arrangements will apply i.e. the member of staff's salary and associated benefits will be maintained.

Responsibility

Schools are responsible for any financial implications relating to the granting of research leave. A School may decide to finance additional cover (e.g. for teaching activities) if it is in a position to do so and if such a decision fits with the School's strategy. However, it may decide that cover for these responsibilities should be provided by other colleagues within the School. In either case, decisions must be justified.

Application process

The detailed mechanism for application and approval should be decided by the School and made available to all staff (e.g. via School intranets).

Criteria

The following criteria should be considered in relation to applications for research leave:

- The applicant will have completed the relevant period of service as per School guidance
- Previous research leave has resulted in appropriate outcomes
- The objective for the period of research leave is to enhance the applicant's current research

profile with regard to the School's research strategy

- Arrangements to cover teaching and administrative duties should be discussed with line managers prior to application.
- Applications should be submitted to meet School deadlines for the following academic year

Procedure

- Each School should have a transparent and well defined process and criteria for considering applications
- Applicants must adhere to School guidance, application process and deadlines

An example of a research leave application form can be found in Section 2.

School Assessment

- Quality of the application, planned use of research and the potential to contribute to the subject area and overall School strategy
- Outcomes from previous research leave or agreed annual review objectives
- Where applicable, recognition where staff are experiencing or have experienced particular impediments to carrying out research, including because of caring responsibilities and EDI-related issues
- Other criteria as decided by the School

Reporting following Research Leave

It is expected that Schools will have robust reporting and monitoring processes for individuals following completed research leave. It is expected that research leave outcomes will be discussed as part of annual review processes. An example of a reporting form can be found in Section 3.

2. (Suggested) Application Form

CAHSS APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH LEAVE

Prior to completing and submitting this form to your Line Manager or Head of Subject Area/Group/Institute for their consideration, please read the School/College's research leave guidance.

SECTION A: (To be completed by the academic seeking research leave)

Personal details:

Name:	
Post:	
Date of appointment:	
School/ Subject Area/Group/Institute:	
Dates of period(s) of previous research leave:	

Proposed period of research leave:

From:	To:
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Please provide a full description of work to be undertaken during the leave period detailing the relevance to your School's research strategy and objectives set during annual review. Include a month-by-month timetable for the requested period of research leave, highlighting key milestones and outcomes.

Summary of Objectives/Expected Outputs:

These could include: a list of intended publications (with dates/name of journal/publisher), grant applications (with potential income generation values), development of new techniques, collaborations, knowledge exchange activities and impact etc. Please also record any potential difficulties/dependencies in achieving the above and your plans to mitigate/address them.

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Financial Assistance:

List any secured funding (partial or full funding) or other financial support that may be available to support your period of research leave.

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3. (Suggested) report template to be used following period of research leave

Name:	
Post:	
Date of Appointment:	
School/ Subject Area/Group/Institute:	

Within 3 months of the end of the research leave period, an initial report (no more than 2 sides of A4) must be submitted as per your School's procedures.

Please note: Further progress reporting will take place during annual research conversations or annual review.

Initial written reports should contain details of what was achieved during or as a result of the leave, including outputs and/or research funding applications generated or in progress.

1. Based on your original application for research leave, what outcomes did you plan to achieve from your period of research leave?

2. Outline the main activities undertaken during your period of research leave. Indicate which activities were planned and which were additional to your original plan of work.

3. Based on this period of research leave, how successful were you overall in achieving your goals? If you were unable to achieve any of the planned outcomes, describe why this was the case and which activities were undertaken in their place.

4. How will the outcomes from your research leave contribute to the work of the School?

5. Provide details of any teaching, supervisory and management/leadership responsibilities that you continued to provide during research leave