



UCL Sabbatical Leave Policy and Procedure

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy defines sabbatical leave, the parameters within which academic staff may access this leave and the process to be followed when applying for sabbatical leave.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The policy applies to all staff with an academic contract in the position of Lecturer, Associate Professor and Professor.
- 2.2 Requests for unpaid leave are out of scope, and should be considered in accordance with the [unpaid leave guidance](#).

3. Definitions

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 'Ordinary Sabbatical Leave' may be requested to assist staff to maintain the high calibre of research, scholarship, teaching and innovation for which UCL is renowned.
- 3.3 Returners Sabbatical Leave: To mark its commitment to gender equality in academic careers, research active academics returning from periods of Parental or Extended Carer's Leave (where any periods of these types of leave total more than 3 months

duration within a year), are automatically entitled to one term of sabbatical leave. This leave will enable staff to more quickly re-establish their research, education or enterprise activity.

- 3.4 'Qualifying service' is employment as a UCL Academic, excluding periods when the academic does not teach, for example parental leave (see 4.4), Returners and Ordinary Sabbatical Leave, external secondment, sickness absence (not related to a disability), research fellowships or funded projects (where teaching ceases) and unpaid leave.

4. Policy

- 4.1 Ordinary Sabbatical Leave may be granted for a period of one term after three years qualifying academic service with UCL, at the discretion of the relevant Head of Department (HoD). For the School of Life and Medical Sciences and the Institute of Education, the Director of Division or Institute, is referred to as HoD in this policy. The approved list of Heads of Departments can be found on the [UCL website](#). A Dean, Vice-Provost or Provost may also grant such leave for academic staff that they manage and any non-standard requests.
- 4.2 By the end of a period of sabbatical leave, academic staff are expected to produce tangible outcomes in furtherance of their research or teaching. A report that re-states the intended outcomes and confirms what has been achieved during each period of sabbatical leave must be submitted to the HoD within two months of return.
- 4.3 Departmental workforce planning should identify sabbatical leave priorities and the provision of cover for sabbatical leave. Ordinary sabbatical leave is granted subject to the requirement of the overall departmental needs and meeting the requisite criteria.
- 4.4 Normally Academic staff may apply for Ordinary Sabbatical Leave every 3 years, so there is a minimum of 3 years qualifying service before the first period of Ordinary Sabbatical Leave, and in future years, between the end of one period of Ordinary Sabbatical Leave and the start of the next. If someone is granted a 'Returners Sabbatical', the time on Parental / Extended Carers Leave and the 'Returners Sabbatical' is excluded from the 3 year period. For example:

An academic works at UCL for 2 years and then takes 5 months Parental Leave, followed by a 1 term Returner's Sabbatical. They must complete a further year of qualifying service before they may take a period of Ordinary Sabbatical Leave.

5. Procedures

Planning for Sabbatical Leave

- 5.1 HoDs must inform all staff of eligibility to apply for sabbatical leave as part of the induction process and of any particular arrangements to facilitate sabbatical leave.
- 5.2 An individual's aspirations for sabbatical leave and its intended outcomes should be discussed as part of the professional development discussion within the Appraisal process.
- 5.3 The Dean will discuss with potential HoDs their aspirations for sabbatical leave and will advise the Provost who will take these into consideration in proposing Headship appointments (and renewal of appointments) to Council.

Returners Sabbatical leave

- 5.4 Research active academics who wish to take a term of Returners Sabbatical Leave should meet with their Head of Department and complete the Sabbatical Leave Application form (appendix 1) (to document dates and expected outcomes) either prior to taking Parental or Extended Carers' Leave or within four weeks of their return from leave.
- 5.5 3 years qualifying service is not a pre-requisite to taking this leave.
- 5.6 This leave is normally taken for the next full term immediately after the absence, unless the returner asks to defer it to the following term.

Ordinary Sabbatical Leave Application

- 5.7 Ordinary Sabbatical leave requests should be made in writing using the Sabbatical Leave Application form (appendix 1).

Criteria

5.8 The following criteria will be considered in relation to applications for ordinary sabbatical leave:

- The applicant must have successfully completed their probationary appointment and has 3 years qualifying service (see 3.4 and 4.4 in this policy)
- Any previous sabbatical leave should have resulted in an appropriate outcome
- The period of sabbatical leave must have as its objective a clear outcome in furtherance of the individual's research or teaching
- The applicant must propose reasonable arrangements in relation to cover for teaching and administrative duties including interdisciplinary obligations
- Adequate notice to arrange cover is required, particularly where the academic is supervising students or teaches a specialised course.
- Costs

5.9 The relevant School Finance Team will be consulted regarding the cost of any sabbatical cover before agreements on sabbatical leave applications are reached.

Approval

5.10 Authority for approval of sabbatical leave and responsibility for arranging cover for teaching and administrative responsibilities etc. are vested in the HoD or Dean (in some Faculties and where the applicant is a HoD).

5.11 The Faculty of Life Sciences require the Director of Operations to sign-off all applications approved by the HoD. HoD's must seek Dean approval for non-standard requests e.g. where someone would not normally be entitled to request Ordinary Sabbatical leave or the leave requested is for longer than one term.

5.12 Once approved, the form will be emailed to HR Services hr-services@ucl.ac.uk to place on the employee's HR file. All employees who takes a sabbatical should record their leave dates on MyView.

6. Monitoring and Review

- 6.1 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.

7. Status of policy

- 7.1 This policy is not contractual and may be varied from time to time.

Employment Policy Team
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