

# Research Sabbatical Leave for Faculty Policy



**Policy owner:** UCD HR      **Approval date and body** 14 December 2021

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## 1. Purpose

As a leading international research intensive University, the conduct of research is an integral part of the work of every member of faculty.

Research Sabbatical Leave is an essential feature of the University's strategic objective to strengthen the skills, knowledge and expertise of permanent faculty. It also aims to contribute to the University's strategy by increasing the quality, quantity and impact of research, scholarship and innovation.

## 2. Definitions

**Research Sabbatical Leave** is defined as a form of leave to be undertaken to carry out research or scholarly work related to an individual's academic discipline. Such leave may be granted to a faculty member to engage in activity which will enhance their research/scholarly reputation and the national/international standing of the University.

Research Sabbatical Leave is granted for a specified period but not exceeding twelve months at any one time. In the case of one year leave the period of leave begins with the start of the Autumn trimester.

There are two types of Research Sabbatical Leave available. The expectation would be that every faculty member would have the opportunity to take, on average, the following:

- Six months Research Sabbatical Leave (inclusive of one teaching trimester) in every seven teaching trimesters (3.5 years) or
- One year's Research Sabbatical Leave (inclusive of two teaching trimesters) every 7 years.

In the case of six-months leave the period of leave should align with either the start or end of the teaching trimester covered by the leave application.

In the case of one year leave the period of leave begins with the start of the Autumn trimester.

The right to apply for Research Sabbatical Leave will not be affected by any previous period of, or application for, maternity, adoptive or parental leave.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to all permanent faculty members engaged in teaching.

## 4. Principles

- 4.1 By the end of a period of Research Sabbatical Leave, faculty members are expected to produce tangible outcomes in furtherance of their research or teaching. A report confirming what has been achieved during each period of Research Sabbatical Leave must be submitted to the Head of School within one month of return.
- 4.2 It is generally expected that colleagues will cover the duties of faculty members on Research Sabbatical Leave but it is accepted that the expertise of the faculty member on leave will not necessarily be replicated within the School and that in these circumstances replacement expertise may have to be brought in. In these circumstances the Head of School will need to factor this into the School's budget.
- 4.3 It is the responsibility of the Head of School, with assistance from the faculty member, to ensure that the delivery of the modules of the Faculty member on Research Sabbatical Leave meet the required teaching standards expected by the University and that in cases where a replacement Faculty member is sought that they are of at least the equivalent level of qualification of the course being taught.
- 4.4 The Head of School should also be satisfied that the staff member applying for leave will also be able to honour commitments to PhD research supervision and research contracts.
- 4.5 **Notice Periods & Timing of Leave:** To aid Heads of School with planning ahead and to integrate requests for Research Sabbatical Leave, it is recommended that faculty members should normally adhere to the notice periods outlined in Section 4.6 of this policy. The precise timing of Research Sabbatical Leave depends on the possibility of making satisfactory arrangements, between the Head of School, or their nominee and the faculty member for the work of faculty members on Research Sabbatical Leave to be carried on by their colleagues as part of their work in the School.
- 4.6 **Application Process**<sup>1</sup>: All applications for Research Sabbatical Leave may only proceed with the recommendation of the Head of School and approval of the College Principal and linked to the Faculty development process. Faculty should discuss the intention to apply for a research sabbatical with their Head of School at the earliest possible opportunity but no later than one teaching trimester<sup>2</sup> prior to the commencement intended for the research sabbatical. The Head of School will notify HR, in writing<sup>3</sup>, of the faculty member's intention to commence a research sabbatical at least three months in advance of the commencement of the research sabbatical.
- 4.7 **Criteria:** General University criteria for decision-making
  - Heads of School are expected to ensure that the number of faculty absent on Research Sabbatical Leave does not exceed what is appropriate to the School's size and needs;
  - The value and benefit of the proposed research to the applicant, the School, the College and the University;
  - The quality and consistency of the applicant's research outputs and scholarly achievements over their career, as well as teaching and contribution;
  - Successful research outputs from previous research leave (if applicable);
  - Operational requirements of the School.

## 5. Related documents

Research Sabbatical Leave Notification Form (HR website)

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<sup>1</sup> The Research Sabbatical Leave Financial Guidelines should be read in conjunction with this policy

<sup>2</sup> Summer is not considered a teaching trimester

<sup>3</sup> The Research Sabbatical Leave Notification Form is available on the HR website

## 6. Version history

Version	Date	Description	Author
1.0	June 2016	Creation of Policy Approved by the Governing Authority 20/12/16	UCD HR
2.0	March 2017	Clarification on process for notifying HR	UCD HR
3.0	May 2017	Policy updated to include reference to the Research Sabbatical Leave Guideline	UCD HR
4.0	09/06/2020	Policy moved to new template	S Raleigh
5.0		Replaced semester with trimester. Clarified the interaction between leave and the start / end of teaching trimesters.	P.Fitzgerald