

School of Law

Guidance on Applying for Academic Leave

The School regards a programme of academic leave for research purposes as an important part of its strategy to encourage and develop high quality research output. The School has operated a programme of academic leave for research purposes for many years. This guidance is specific to the School and will be applied by the Research Strategy Group (RSG) when considering applications for academic leave. The University generic Academic Leave Policy (available at: <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=7>) will be considered by RSG, but the School policy will take primacy in the decision-making process.

Academic members of staff whose contract includes responsibility to undertake research can make a written application to have one semester without teaching and administrative responsibilities, on the basis of a particular project which is likely to have significant research output as a result.

It is strongly encouraged that applications for periods longer than one semester are linked to a funded proposal for research leave or for buy-out in relation to a particular research project for which financial support has been obtained.

The nature, frequency and management of academic leave, and the processes by which applications may be made, will be as follows:

- academic leave provides time solely for the purpose of undertaking research activity, with the production of high quality research outputs as the primary objective;
- academic leave will provide release from all teaching and administrative duties (other than ongoing contractual research responsibilities and PGR responsibilities) during the semester in which leave is taken, and reduced responsibilities within the whole session in which the semester falls;
- the normal expectation will be that staff are eligible to apply for academic leave on the basis of one semester every six semesters (i.e. one semester's leave following three academic years without leave); or one whole academic year after six years without leave. NB: a period of leave is calculated as 6 months (though applicant must be contactable and may be required to attend to some operational duties). There will normally be no counting forward or backward and the strict model of eligibility described above will be applied.

- Academic leave applications will be considered once a year and will be calculated annually.
- Eligibility to apply for leave does not mean leave will be granted - academic leave **is not available as of right** and past records of leave may be taken into account in reaching any decision;
- Approval of leave will be on the basis of:
 - the quality of a research leave plan/proposal;
 - the timeliness of the proposal to career path; and
 - the strategic interests of the School, to be judged by the Head of School, through consultation with SMT and RSG;
- the proposal/plan for academic leave should contain, where possible:
 - a statement of objectives;
 - evidence for the attainment/maintenance of high quality research;
 - School or other resources required (as appropriate);
 - approach/practice to be undertaken;
 - location of leave;
 - details of direct collaborative/institutional links/arrangements (as appropriate);
 - links to any current or future funding proposals;
 - links to departmental/research group plans;
 - synergy with School research centres/groups;
 - deliverable published outputs;
 - an indication of how leave will contribute to the School's research targets, particularly having regard to future REF requirements.
- before making a formal application, applicants are *required* to liaise with colleagues who are likely to be affected by your absence (e.g. colleagues with whom you teach particular modules) with a view to identifying potential problems (e.g. teaching cover). You must consider the need for teaching cover including possible alternative teaching arrangements.
- the success of the academic leave will be considered by the Head of School, in consultation with RSG and approved by SMT, through review of a written report on the research activities undertaken against the initial proposal and of specified deliverable outcomes achieved; this report should normally be produced within two months of the end of the academic leave (even though the outputs may not have been published by that time);
- staff who have completed a period of academic leave will normally be expected to present their work at a staff research seminar during the following semester / academic year;

- unsuccessful periods of academic leave may prejudice subsequent applications;
- the academic leave system does not preclude individuals taking externally-funded research leave that normally provides for teaching cover;
- the management of teaching and administrative cover for individuals on academic leave is the responsibility of the Head of School, through consultation with RSG and SMT;

The deadline for applications is **2 September 2016**. Applications must be electronically submitted to the **Louise Gorton** (louise.gorton@manchester.ac.uk).