



**Maynooth University
Human Resources
Office**

Sabbatical Leave Scheme

Regulations Concerning Sabbatical Leave for Academic Staff

Author: Human Resources
Date: 22nd December 2015

Maynooth University Sabbatical Leave Scheme Regulations Concerning Sabbatical Leave for Academic Staff

1. Sabbatical Leave General Principles

- 1.1. Maynooth University considers Sabbatical Leave for the purpose of research and study to be of fundamental importance to academic life. It is regarded as an integral part of the employment relationship between the University and its permanent academic staff. Such leave contributes to ongoing staff development by providing individuals uninterrupted periods for research and for updating their theoretical knowledge and methodological expertise, while also facilitating the achievement of the objectives of the University's Research and Teaching Strategies. It also supports the University mission to have an international reputation for teaching and research, and its commitment to collaboration and engagement with other higher education institutions, industry and civil society.
- 1.2. Sabbatical Leave provides the staff member relief from all teaching, supervision / examining duties and administration, so as to enable him / her to engage in research on a full-time basis for an agreed time period¹. Maynooth University encourages staff, where appropriate, to spend a significant portion of any period of sabbatical outside Ireland as it establishes international relationships and networks.
- 1.3. Sabbatical Leave is understood to encompass leave which is funded from personal, University, or external sources; all applications for such leave must be dealt with in accordance with the terms of this document.
- 1.4. Sabbatical Leave can be approved only on the basis that it does not impose undue burdens on students, colleagues or the University generally during the period in which it is taken.
- 1.5. All applications for Sabbatical Leave must be supported in writing by the Head of Department / School.
- 1.6. A member of staff will not be granted Sabbatical Leave for periods in aggregate greater than 12 months in any seven year period. Such period will date from the time when the member of staff first becomes eligible for Sabbatical Leave. Pro rata adjustments in accordance with Clause 2.1 and 2.2 below will apply in respect of cumulative periods of not more than 6 months.
- 1.7. The University facilitates applications for six month periods which can be taken more frequently, with less personal inconvenience and departmental disruption. The maximum duration of the Sabbatical Leave will not exceed twelve months in any seven year period.
- 1.8. In normal circumstances, staff will not be eligible to apply for Sabbatical Leave within two years of the normal retirement age from the University.
- 1.9. The Human Resources Office will maintain an up-to-date register of all staff granted Sabbatical Leave which will include details on the duration of the period of leave and the financial arrangements made with the University.

¹ For the sake of clarity a staff member availing of Sabbatical Leave may provide occasional lectures in a host institution so long as such activity does not conflict with the achievement of the objectives of the research plan approved prior to the commencement of the period of Leave. The settlement of any taxation or other financial issues arising from occasional teaching is the responsibility of the staff member, who must also inform the NUI Maynooth Human Resources Office.

2. Service Requirements, Eligibility and Duration of Sabbaticals

2.1. A member of staff will be eligible to apply for Sabbatical Leave as follows:

Minimum Continuous Service (<i>Since conclusion of last leave of absence if applicable</i>)	Duration of Proposed Sabbatical Leave
3 Years	6 Months
6 Years	12 Months

The continuous service has to be accumulated prior to the commencement date of the sabbatical leave. The time spent on sabbatical leave will not count as qualifying service for subsequent leave applications.

2.2. The President may, following consultation with the Sabbaticals Board, depart from the above arrangements where there are circumstances which, in the opinion of the President justify such departure. In particular, the President may depart from the above arrangements where the leave in question is supported by external funding.

2.3. The duration of periods of externally funded research leave, will not normally exceed twelve months, and must be approved by the President or his / her nominee. Normally the cumulative duration of any sequential periods of leave, including an externally funded period, will not exceed 24 months.

3. Taking of Sabbatical Leave

3.1. Sabbatical Leave will coincide with a single academic year: (1 September to 31 August) or a six month period (either 1 August to 31 January or 1 February to 31 July). In exceptional circumstances a period of the leave extending over a calendar year may be approved².

4. Provision for Replacement

4.1. The University has decided that, where practicable, the member of staff availing of Sabbatical Leave will be replaced on a full-time basis during the appropriate period of the academic teaching year. The reasons for this decision are as follows:

- (i) The critical importance of the teaching function;
- (ii) There should be no disruption or reduction in teaching programmes, assessment of students, and supervision of graduate students during periods of sabbatical leave availed of by staff;
- (iii) Other staff members should not be required to assume significantly greater duties during periods of sabbatical leave availed of by colleagues.

4.2. It is the responsibility of the Head of Department / School or his / her nominee to arrange for the appointment a suitable replacement for the staff member wishing to avail of Sabbatical Leave. All substitution arrangements must be agreed by the Head of Department, the Faculty Dean and the Director of Human Resources.

² Heads of Departments may, from time to time, through its approved and documented workload management model facilitate member(s) of the department to be exempt from teaching for a semester. This arrangement does not constitute Sabbatical Leave and therefore the exemption is confined to teaching activities only and the staff member will be expected to be normally available on campus. The Head of Department must retain a register of staff availing of this arrangement and notify the Human Resources Office. Staff who have availed of this arrangement should make reference to it if they subsequently apply for Sabbatical Leave.

- 4.3. Replacement Lecturers / Assistant Professors, under the above arrangements, will be appointed on specified-purpose contracts, explicitly noting that the purpose of the contract is to replace the member of staff on sabbatical leave³, and will be paid at such rates as are approved from time to time by the University Executive based on the funding available to the University.

5. Funding of Substitute arrangements

- 5.1. Subject to Clause 6 below, each person availing of Sabbatical Leave shall be subject to a salary deduction, in respect of the period of leave being availed of by the staff member concerned⁴. The following rates of deduction will apply: Professors (35% of gross salary), Associate Professors (30%), Lecturers / Assistant Professors / Assistant Lecturers (25%). The deduction will be spread over the period of the Sabbatical Leave. The salary deductions from all staff on sabbatical leave will be used to cover the costs of substitute staff appointed to undertake teaching for the departments / schools from which staff will be on leave. The total cost of all replacement Lecturers / Assistant Professors for staff on Sabbatical Leave should not impose an additional financial burden on the University.
- 5.2. Where Sabbatical Leave is approved in respect of a staff member, that staff member will confirm the financial arrangements with the Bursar, on such terms as may be required from time to time by the University. In this regard, and in line with existing practice, the University will assume the cost of pension contributions in respect of the staff member availing of Sabbatical Leave.

6. Externally Funded Research Leave

- 6.1. The University encourages all academic staff to apply for funding for research leave to external awarding bodies, e.g. Research Councils, Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), EU programmes, Fulbright programme and other sources⁵.
- 6.2. Where an application for external funding has been successful, and the staff member has not already submitted an application for Sabbatical Leave, the staff member will apply for Sabbatical Leave in the normal way. Late applications for Sabbatical Leave on foot of late notification of grants of external funding will be accepted at the discretion of the Chair of the Sabbaticals Board.
- 6.3. Where the award from the external agency is sufficient to cover the cost of a Replacement Lecturer / Assistant Professor appointed in accordance with Section 4 above the staff member availing of sabbatical leave will not be subject to any salary deduction in respect of the substitution cost involved.

Where the award from the external agency is not sufficient to fully cover the cost of a Replacement Lecturer / Assistant Professor appointed in accordance with Section 4 above the staff member availing of sabbatical leave will, be subject to a salary deduction in accordance with Section 5 above only to the extent of the shortfall between the amount to be provided by the external agency and the substitution cost involved

³ Where a Head of Department, based on the expertise available, re-allocates work within Department so that the replacement lecturer / assistant professor does not directly take over the work of the staff member on sabbatical, the internal transfers of work must be fully documented and reported to the Human Resources Office.

⁴ This requirement may be varied by the President for staff who have a written agreement with the University that a salary deduction will not be required for an approved sabbatical period following completion of a term of office as Head of Department, Dean, Vice President or other relevant office within the University.

⁵ University funds that have been allocated to individual general research accounts (e.g., through the Research Incentivisation Fund or similar) may be used to contribute to the cost of approved research leave on the same basis as external award funding.

- 6.4. Where the award from the external agency is related to a research project of less than three months duration, and where the period of leave can be organised so as to not impact on the teaching programme of the department the University may grant a short period of paid research leave of absence which will not be a period of Sabbatical Leave. If it is not possible to organise a short period of paid research leave without impacting on the department teaching programmes the applicant will be granted a standard sabbatical of six or twelve months as appropriate in accordance with the terms of this scheme.
- 6.5. "Substitution cost" refers to the cost of substitution as determined by the standard rates approved by the President or his nominee, as provided for in Section 4 above.

7. Applications

- 7.1. Notification of the call for applications will be sent to all academic staff and the Heads of the academic departments / schools at least four weeks prior to the closing date. Applications shall include the following information:
- (i) an outline of the proposed programme of research and where it is to be undertaken;
 - (ii) the aims and objectives of the proposed programme;
 - (iii) a summary of the outputs and outcomes that the applicant expects to achieve;
 - (iv) an outline of the expected benefits for the department / school and University;
 - (v) the funding arrangements agreed with the Head of Department to ensure that there will be no disruption or reduction in teaching programmes, assessment of students, and supervision of graduate students during the period of sabbatical leave;
 - (vi) the dates of previous periods of Sabbatical Leave or other periods leave, however funded, and any reports pertaining to achievements linked to the previous Sabbatical;
 - (vii) a brief resume of research and teaching achievements over the previous five years where the application is for a Sabbatical of 12 months duration, or over the previous three years where the application is for no more than six months.
- 7.2. All applications must have the prior written approval of the relevant Head of Department. In situations where there is more than one application from an academic department, the Head of that department will be required to provide a recommended ranking of the applicants. Applications from incumbent Heads of Departments will require approval in writing from the relevant Faculty Dean.
- 7.3. All applications for Sabbatical Leave⁶, including applications from staff with external awards of funding, will be considered by the Sabbaticals Board. The Sabbaticals Board will include the President (or his / her nominee (Chair)), the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice-President for Research, the Faculty Deans, and the Director of Human Resources (or his / her nominee). The Human Resources Office will provide administrative support for the Sabbaticals Board.

In considering applications, the Sabbaticals Board will have regard to:

- a) the research track record of the applicant,
- b) the quality of the proposed research plan and whether the anticipated research outputs merit the period of sabbatical leave sought by the applicant, and
- c) evidence of achievements and outcomes arising from any previous periods of Sabbatical or other Research Leave.

⁶ The terms and conditions of posts of responsibility within the University may include provision for a period of Sabbatical Leave after a number of years in office; such Sabbatical Leave will be granted if and only if there is a satisfactory research plan, and therefore candidates for such periods of Sabbatical Leave must apply in the normal way.

Additionally it will be guided by the following principles:

- preference will be given to applicants who have not previously availed of Sabbatical Leave;
- preference will be given to staff members who are at an early stage of their academic career and who wish to enhance their academic expertise;
- preference will be given to applicants whose leave, if approved, will be supported by external funding;
- the awards of sabbatical leave will be spread as evenly as possible over all academic departments, having regard to department size.

7.4. The Sabbaticals Board, having considered the applications, shall forward recommendations to the President for decision. The Human Resources Office will notify the decisions to the applicants, the relevant Heads of departments / schools, the Academic Council, and the relevant committee of the Governing Authority.

7.5. Requests for feedback from applicants will be responded to by the Chair of the Sabbaticals Board.

7.6. Unsuccessful applicants for Sabbatical Leave may appeal the decision in writing to the President, stating the grounds for appeal. The decision of the President on an appeal shall be final.

8. Reporting and Other Matters

8.1. On return from Sabbatical Leave, the staff member will, within one month of his / her return, prepare and submit a report to the Human Resources Office who will forward it to the Head of Department, the Sabbaticals Board, and the President for their consideration. The report will demonstrate the extent to which the objectives set out in the original application have been met. Such reports will be retained by the Human Resources Office and may be considered in the assessment of future applications for Sabbatical Leave.

9. Statutes of the University and Directions / Regulations of Governing Authority

9.1. These Regulations are subject to the Statutes of the University and to any directives issued, or regulations made, by the Governing Authority.

Sabbaticals Board Terms of Reference

1. The Sabbaticals Board will be appointed by the President to oversee the implementation of Maynooth University Sabbatical Leave Scheme.
2. The Sabbaticals Board will consider all applications for Sabbaticals and will have regard to:
 - a) the research track record of the applicant;
 - b) the quality of the proposed research plan and whether the anticipated research outputs merit the period of sabbatical leave sought by the applicant, and
 - c) evidence of achievements and outcomes arising from any previous Sabbaticals.

Additionally it will be guided by the following principles:

- preference will be given to applicants who have not previously availed of Sabbatical Leave;
 - preference will be given to staff members who are at an early stage of their academic career and who wish to enhance their academic expertise;
 - preference will be given to applicants whose leave, if approved, will be supported by external funding;
 - the awards of sabbatical leave will be spread as evenly as possible over all academic departments, having regard to department size.
3. The Sabbaticals Board, having considered the applications, shall forward recommendations to the President for decision. The Human Resources Office will notify the decisions to the applicants, the relevant Heads of departments / schools, the Academic Council, and the relevant committee of the Governing Authority.
 4. The Sabbaticals Board will review the reports submitted by staff following their period of Sabbatical Leave and shall make any observations or recommendations to the President as the Board may deem appropriate.
 5. The membership of the Sabbaticals Board will be:
 - the President or nominee (Chair);
 - the Vice President for Academic Affairs;
 - the Vice-President for Research;
 - the Faculty Deans, and
 - the Director of Human Resources (or nominee).