



Academic Leave Policy

1. Purpose

The University recognises the need to encourage and support academic staff to become increasingly research active, and there is a strategic aim for all academic staff to be engaged with research by 2020.

The Academic Leave Policy sets out a means of managing and supporting staff to take time out from their normal duties as part of planned and agreed research or other academic projects that will benefit the University as well as the individual. Applications will be considered on merit and within **available resources** as agreed with the Head of School.

2. Scope

- 2.1 Academic Leave is defined as a continuous period of paid leave, normally up to one semester and not more than twelve months in duration, during which a member of academic staff is released from normal duties in order to complete an agreed programme of work as part of a planned research or professional practice project

Examples include:

- ☐ Completing a commissioned book, major research paper(s) or non-textual (e.g. performance) output of REF-able quality.
- ☐ Engaging in collaborative research work.
- ☐ Undertaking major field-based research including data gathering.
- ☐ Developing a major research funding bid.
- ☐ Research into major teaching innovations resulting in published output(s).
- ☐ Research within a business or other professional organisation that results in published output(s) (e.g. setting up a record label) or recognisable professional outputs for research activity.

- 2.2 Academic Leave is only available to those staff on at least 0.2 FTE academic contracts who have been employed by York St John University for a minimum period of three years (including any probationary period), although consideration will be given to exceptional cases where the period of employment is less than 3 years.
- 2.3 Leave will not normally be granted within five years of any previous period of Academic Leave unless it is fully-funded from sources outside of the University.
- 2.4 Academic Leave will not normally be granted in order to complete doctoral or other professional qualifications.
- 2.5 The purpose of Academic Leave and related outcomes should be in line with the strategic aims of the University, in particular relating to the Academic Strategy and associated key performance indicators.

- 2.6 Heads of School should make provision in the annual planning cycle for staff to take Academic Leave. Alternatively, the cost cover for staff taking Academic Leave will be met from within existing School budgets, existing staff workloads, through external funding e.g. Research Councils or from the annual HEFCE QR allocation as appropriate. Any requests for additional staffing to cover the period of leave shall be submitted to the Executive Board for approval.
- 2.7 Academic Leave should be of benefit to both the individual and the University and, as such, staff will normally be expected to remain in employment with York St John University for at least the length of time that they were absent, on completion of the leave period.
- 2.8 The University will not normally meet the costs of overseas or other travel associated with periods of Academic Leave (paid or unpaid) unless the costs are approved as part of the original application for leave, are fully justified and fully supported by the Head of School. Staff will be expected to secure external support to cover such costs or to cover them personally. Evidence must be provided that external support has been sought prior to the University considering any contribution towards such costs.
- 2.9 This policy does not concern requests for unpaid Academic Leave, as these are dealt with through normal HR processes

3. Procedure

- 3.1 Applications for Academic Leave must be discussed with the Head of School **at least one academic year in advance** of the proposed start of the period for leave.
- 3.2 To support planning requests for leave under the scheme applications must be submitted to the Head of School by the end of November prior to the start of the academic year in which leave is sought.
- 3.3 When considering applications for Academic Leave the Head of School shall require evidence that the proposed outcomes are appropriate and that dates for their achievement have been set and agreed. Heads of Research should be consulted for advice and consideration of the research proposal and research targets prior to submission to the Head of School.
- 3.4 Applications are to be submitted to the Head of School for consideration, who will need to confirm that resources are available to cover teaching and other duties during the period of leave.
- 3.5 When considering the merits of applications for Academic Leave, particular attention will be paid to:
- ☐ The relevance of the application to the development needs of the individual and the strategic priorities of the University.
 - ☐ The planned outcomes of the period of leave, target dates for their achievement, and an evaluation of the likelihood that the proposed outcomes are realistic and will be achieved.
 - ☐ The record of the applicant in meeting staff development and/or research objectives in the past.
 - ☐ Arrangements to cover the duties of the member of staff concerned including any additional provision needed to support PGR students.
 - ☐ Evidence that possible sources of funding other than the University have been applied for. **Note that applications will be rejected if there has not been any attempt to bid for external funding where it is known to be available**

4. Expectations and outcomes

- 4.1 A copy of the agreement should be sent to Human Resources to record Academic Leave arrangements.
- 4.2 Although the leave will be self-managed, to help monitor progress against outcomes a schedule of updates between the individual and their line manager will be agreed through the application process. Any issues with regard to progress would then be discussed with the Head of School to see what support can be put in place to ensure activities are on track.
- 4.3 Staff granted Academic Leave will be required to submit a report to the Head of School within three months of the end of the leave period.
- 4.4 Staff undertaking Academic Leave are expected to continue supervision of their PG research students. In cases where this is not possible (e.g. where leave is being spent overseas for extended periods of time) it is the responsibility of the staff member to liaise with the relevant Head of Research to assign temporary supervisory arrangements during their period of leave.

Appendix 1 – For information - previous Research Leave Policy

RES-09

York St John University

York St John University Research Leave Policy

The University acknowledges the role of research leave in the delivery of quality research outputs and supports the use of research leave for staff recognised as capable of meeting external benchmarks for research.

There is clearly a need to quality assure the approach to research leave which will require sensitive mechanisms in place during the leave period to ensure that the outputs are achieved at the agreed level and within the stated time frame.

The faculties are well placed, through QR funding and by having a clear knowledge of research requirements within their respective subject areas, to judge the appropriateness of a request for research leave and agree targets for successful applicants. It is envisaged that faculties would utilise the PDR process, Faculty Research Committee and Faculty Management Group to ensure that targets set are being met.

The PDR approach for research active staff would ideally include both the subject lead and the Faculty research professor or research co-ordinator. The processes underpinning research leave requests should be fair and equitable but it is also recognised that certain research active staff may be in a better position than others to deliver quality research outputs in a time frame that achieves greatest impact for the university.

It is envisaged that the duration of research leave would normally range between one to six months and that this would be agreed by the Faculty Dean. With respect to university research leave allocation no more than one period of leave ought normally to be awarded to any individual in a three year period. This time constraint would not be applicable to externally funded research leave.

The details of staff taking research leave and progress reports should be routinely fed back to the Faculty Research Committee and an annual summary forwarded to the Research Committee and forwarded, by the Faculty, as a contribution to the University AER in time for the first academic session each year.

Approved by the Academic Board on 24 June 2009.

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