



Queen Margaret University  
EDINBURGH

# Sabbatical Leave Policy

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| <b>Policy Summary:</b>           | The Sabbatical Leave Policy provides guidance on undertaking sabbatical leave at QMU. |
| <b>Policy Owner:</b>             | Human Resources   |
| <b>Approved By:</b>              | Executive Board: October 2013   |
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## **1.0 Aims and Objectives**

The aim of this policy is to provide managers and staff with guidance on sabbatical leave arrangements to ensure that these are undertaken fairly and consistently across Queen Margaret University and in accordance with equality and diversity principles.

## **2.0 Scope of the Policy**

This policy applies to all cases of sabbatical leave within Queen Margaret University.

## **3.0 Monitor and Review**

Human Resources is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and supporting procedures and will conduct reviews at appropriate intervals.

Any individual who feels they have been unfairly treated or discriminated against as part of secondment arrangements should contact Human Resources.

## **4.0 Equal Opportunities**

Queen Margaret University is committed to equality of opportunity for all staff and it is the responsibility of all QMU employees to promote “equality and diversity” in the application of this policy ensuring that there is no discrimination on the grounds of disability, race/ethnic origin, sex/gender, age, religion, marital/family status, dependency, sexual orientation, political opinion, and economic or social status.

## **5.0 Responsibility for this Policy**

Human Resources.

Any changes to this policy and supporting procedures will be made in consultation with appropriate bodies.

QMU reserves the right to update HR Policies in line with new or updated Employment Legislation.

## **6.0 Definition of Sabbatical Leave**

Sabbatical leave is defined as a period of time during which an employee is free from all teaching and administrative duties in order to further research or scholarship which is in alignment with the University’s strategic objectives.

Sabbatical leave is not an automatic entitlement. It is granted in cases where it would be beneficial to the University, School and the individual’s career development to undertake the research or scholarly activity in a concentrated way over a limited period of time.

QMU fully supports sabbatical leave as a key tool to our academic development and with the purpose of providing a corporate benefit to the institution. Sabbatical leave should enhance the scope, range and quality of our research and scholarship as well as giving individual staff the opportunity for personal and professional development.

Staff who are undertaking sabbatical leave are relieved of all administrative duties within the School for the duration of the sabbatical. Holders of external research grants are expected to continue to administer them during the period of sabbatical leave. Staff will be relieved of all teaching duties with the possible exception of supervision of research postgraduates/PhD students.

## **7.0 Purposes of Sabbatical Leave**

Sabbatical leave is reserved for a period of research and scholarship.

Examples of uses of sabbatical leave include:

- Undertaking research or scholarly work.
- Library-based research.
- Visiting institutions in other parts of the UK or abroad.
- Completion of a book or other publications.
- Writing up research projects or other publications.
- Research leading to the preparation of applications for grant funding.
- Developing the commercial potential of research.

Sabbatical leave should be used exclusively for the pursuit of research and scholarship for which it is granted.

## **8.0 Duration of Sabbatical Leave**

Sabbatical leave will not normally exceed the duration of one semester, other than in exceptional circumstances where it can be shown that the undertaking will require longer than this.

The Dean of School will agree precise dates for the beginning and end of sabbatical leave.

## **9.0 Eligibility**

Members of academic staff are eligible to apply for one semester of sabbatical leave after a minimum of three years continuous service.

Sabbatical leave may be granted on more than one occasion during the course of employment. In cases where the employee is requesting a second or subsequent period of sabbatical leave, the Dean of School should be satisfied that previous periods of sabbatical leave have resulted in the realisation of agreed outcomes and objectives. Following a period of sabbatical leave, an employee must have returned to their substantive post for a period of at least two years before they are eligible to make a request for a new period of sabbatical leave.

Academic research staff, whose normal duties are to undertake research projects, are not normally eligible to apply for sabbatical leave.

## **10.0 Application Procedure**

Normally proposals for sabbatical leave should emerge initially from PER discussions between the employee and their line manager.

Employees should provide as much notice as possible of their intention to request a period of sabbatical leave.

Where an employee is considering an application for sabbatical leave, they should discuss this with the Head of Division in the first instance. The Head of Division should indicate the viability of the proposal for which the sabbatical leave is sought.

The employee should submit an application in writing to the Dean of School. The application should set out the basis of the sabbatical leave, including clear objectives, tangible outcomes and how these are relevant to the individual's role and the School strategy.

The Dean of School should arrange to discuss the sabbatical leave proposal with the employee and the Head of Division. Consideration should be given to links with the School's operational plan, cover required for the employee's period of leave, how the sabbatical leave might be beneficial to the REF submission and any other relevant points.

The Dean of School may need to take into account the number of staff away on sabbatical leave at any point in time. The Dean of School may also need to seek agreement from the Vacancy Approval Panel that cover for the sabbatical leave may be recruited before they are able to confirm approval of an application for sabbatical leave.

When the Dean of School has considered a request for sabbatical leave they should write to the employee confirming whether the sabbatical leave has been approved or declined. Where the request has been declined the Dean should outline the reasons why this has not been granted.

When the Dean of School has decided to approve a request for sabbatical leave, they should provide written confirmation to Human Resources, including the start and end dates of the leave period and the purpose of the sabbatical leave. Human Resources will write to the employee confirming arrangements for their sabbatical leave.

There is no right of appeal for sabbatical leave requests which have been declined.

## **11.0 Maintaining Contact**

HR encourages the line manager and employee to keep in touch during the sabbatical leave period. Employees and line managers may find it helpful to discuss the amount of contact they wish with each other prior to the employee commencing the sabbatical leave. Suitable methods of contact, e.g. telephone, email, etc, should be confirmed. They should also discuss reasons for making contact, e.g. to keep the employee informed of team developments.

## **12.0 Sabbatical Reports**

On return from your sabbatical leave, you should submit a written report on the outcomes of your sabbatical leave to the Dean of School. The report should be submitted within three months of returning from sabbatical leave.

The report should indicate achievements obtained against the targets established in the original proposal, showing how the objectives have been met. The report should also include any challenges or difficulties encountered. Outcomes such as publications, grant applications or new research possibilities should be incorporated.

The employee should also include a development plan of how the experience will be progressed and built upon during the employee's return to their normal duties.

A copy of the sabbatical report should be sent to Human Resources to be filed in the employee's personal record.

## **13.0 Terms and Conditions of Employment**

Employees who are on sabbatical leave remain on their full terms and conditions of employment and are normally entitled to be paid their full salary. Pension and national insurance contributions will be maintained.

Where the staff member undertakes a project, which means that they receive remuneration from an outside body, the staff member's salary will be adjusted accordingly after consultation with the staff member, the Dean of School and Human Resources.

Employees who are on sabbatical leave continue to accrue annual leave at their normal rate. This can often lead to a build up of accrued annual leave. The line manager and employee should plan in advance of the sabbatical leave how the employee's annual leave will be used. Employees who are on sabbatical leave should continue to request annual leave via Employee Self Service.

It may be more feasible for the employee to carry forward annual leave into the following leave year, however, employees must take at least the minimum holiday entitlement, as noted in the Working Time Directive (28 days per year for full time staff), in each holiday year.