

James Watt School of Engineering

Policy on Sabbatical Leave

Eligibility

This policy applies to all academic members of staff who have completed at least four years of qualifying service at the University of Glasgow. Qualifying service refers to periods when the individual has actively taught or contributed to academic activities and excludes times on external secondments, sickness absence, unpaid leave, or research fellowships. In exceptional circumstances, periods of externally funded fellowship activity may be recognised where they have made a substantial contribution to the School's research objectives. Staff who have previously taken sabbatical leave must have demonstrated an appropriate outcome from that leave, such as significant research publications, successful grant applications, or other professional achievements.

Sabbatical leave is not an automatic entitlement. Applications will be considered on their merits and their alignment with the strategic priorities of the School, College and University. Applications supported by the School Executive Board (SEB) will be submitted to the Vice-Principal and Head of College for final approval. The number of sabbaticals supported each year will be very limited, taking account of the School's staffing profile, teaching requirements and wider institutional priorities.

Relationship to University Policy

This policy should be read in conjunction with the University of Glasgow's [Academic and MPA Grade 6 and Above Leave Policy](#), including the provisions relating to **Study Leave**:

This School policy sets out the local arrangements, application process, assessment criteria and prioritisation framework that will apply within the James Watt School of Engineering.

Definition

Sabbatical leave is defined as a period of paid leave during which an academic is relieved from teaching, administrative duties, and other regular responsibilities. The leave is intended for the individual to focus on research, scholarship, or other professional development activities that are related to their academic or professional field.

While on sabbatical, the individual is expected to continue supervision of taught MSc or PhD students as agreed, with reasonable adjustments for communication and support during the leave period.

Note: Sabbatical leave should generally involve activities outside of Glasgow. Preference will be given to applications that include travel or study away from Glasgow, but applicants who have compelling reasons for remaining in Glasgow will also be considered.

Specific provisions for leadership roles

- **Head of School:** The Head of School may be granted sabbatical leave following completion of their term of office, in alignment with University provisions for senior academic leadership.
- **School Management Team (SMT):** In recognition of the significant leadership and workload responsibilities associated with the range of other engineering leadership roles, full members of SMT may normally be granted one semester of sabbatical leave following completion of at least one four-year term of office, subject to approval of a work plan and institutional requirements.

Policy

1. Duration and approval

Sabbatical leave may be granted for a period of one semester (either July to December or January to June) following at least four years of qualifying service at the University of Glasgow. Sabbaticals are subject to consideration by SEB and will be assessed against institutional needs and the merits of the applicant's proposal. Final approval for any period of sabbatical leave rests with the Vice-Principal and Head of College.

2. Performance & Development Review

Aspirations for sabbatical leave, including intended outcomes and activities, should be discussed during the annual Performance & Development Review (PDR). These discussions should help align the individual's professional development with both personal goals and institutional priorities.

3. Travel and research requirements

Sabbaticals are intended to support research and professional development through activities such as study, fieldwork or collaborations, ideally involving travel outside Glasgow. However, applicants with valid reasons for remaining in Glasgow (e.g. personal commitments) will also be considered.

Applicants are expected to identify and secure any non-salary funding required to support their proposed sabbatical activities, including travel, accommodation and research-related costs. Applications should clearly set out the funding arrangements that will support the proposed activity. The availability of external funding may strengthen the overall case for support where significant additional costs are associated with the proposed activity.

4. Teaching and administrative duties

Applicants are responsible for proposing reasonable adjustments to cover their teaching and administrative duties while on sabbatical. It is expected that applicants will remain in regular contact with the School to facilitate continued supervision of taught MSc or PhD students, as well as to support other essential academic activities during their leave.

5. Support from both Solid-Line Managers

The applicant must discuss their sabbatical proposal with both solid-line managers. For Research & Teaching staff, the Head of Research Division should take the lead in considering the academic merit, research plan and anticipated outcomes, while the Head of Teaching Discipline should consider the implications for teaching delivery and workload planning. For Learning, Teaching & Scholarship staff, the Head of Teaching Discipline should take the lead in considering the academic merit and anticipated outcomes, with the Head of Research Division consulted regarding any wider implications for School activities and resource planning. Both solid-line managers must confer and provide a joint recommendation to SEB before an application is considered.

6. Approval process

All sabbatical applications will be reviewed and assessed by SEB in accordance with this policy. Applications supported by SEB will be submitted to the Vice-Principal and Head of College for final approval.

7. Recording and reporting

Once approved, sabbatical leave will be recorded on the University's HR systems for tracking and administrative purposes

8. Post-sabbatical reporting

Within three months of returning from sabbatical leave, the applicant must submit a written report outlining the research or professional outcomes of their sabbatical, including any publications, grant successes, or other contributions that align with the University's strategic goals.

9. **No automatic entitlement to resume same courses**

Sabbatical leave does not guarantee the automatic resumption of teaching the same courses upon return. Course assignments will be determined based on the needs of the School, teaching priorities, and the availability of courses. While the individual may request to return to their previous teaching responsibilities, these assignments will be subject to availability and School requirements at the time of return.

Applications

- Sabbatical leave requests must be submitted using the University's **Application for Leave (Study Leave)** form, available from the School Office.
- The School will operate a single annual application round. Applications must be submitted by **31 January** in the academic year preceding the proposed period of sabbatical leave. This allows applications to be considered alongside workload allocation, teaching planning and wider workforce planning for the following academic session.
- Applicants should clearly outline the purpose of the sabbatical, the proposed activities, the expected outcomes, and how the proposal aligns with the strategic priorities of the School, College and University. Applications should include a work plan and details of anticipated outputs, such as publications, grant applications, professional development outcomes or other measurable benefits.
- Applications will be reviewed by SEB, taking account of the recommendations of the applicant's solid-line managers. Given the limited number of sabbaticals likely to be supported each year, SEB will identify the strongest cases for progression. Applications recommended by SEB will be submitted to the Vice-Principal and Head of College for final approval.

*School Executive Board
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