



University of  
St Andrews

## University funded research impact leave for academic staff

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<b>Purpose</b>	The purpose of this policy is to support and enable academic staff to further their research, leading to the highest quality of research outputs and/or significant impact in the wider community.

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of Research Impact Leave is to contribute to the University's Strategy by supporting and enabling academic staff to further their research and/or engagement, leading to the highest quality of research outputs and/or significant impact outside academia.
- 1.2 At St Andrews, research is and needs to be a continuous activity, built into the academic life of all St Andrews academic staff and generating a culture of research-led teaching.
- 1.3 Research Impact Leave is an important and valued aspect of St Andrews' support for academic research. It is not an automatic entitlement, but granted against an ambitious case for support and a record of high quality, and/or potentially high quality, research performance and impact outside academia.
- 1.4 Permission to go on leave carries no automatic commitment by the University to contribute to, or meet, travel or other expenses. The period of leave itself, if granted, will however be paid.
- 1.5 Final approval for Research Impact Leave is determined by the Vice-Principal (Research, Collections and Innovation) once the Research Impact Leave Application Form has been completed by the individual academic and the Head of School.

## **2. Purpose**

- 2.1 The purpose of this document is to define the arrangements for University funded Research Impact Leave for Academic Staff including approval process and timelines. It should be noted that accrual rates are devolved to Schools, albeit with a cap of 1 semester every 4 years.

## **3. Scope**

- 3.1 This policy applies to education and research academic in the category of Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Reader or Professor or in such other category as the Senate and Court on the recommendation of the Master may, from time to time, determine. Research Impact Leave does not apply to Education Focussed or Research only colleagues nor those on Graduate Tutor Contracts. Education Focussed colleagues may be eligible for [Education Development Leave](#).

## **4. Eligibility to apply**

- 4.1 Eligibility to apply for Research Impact Leave is subject to the following considerations, including the provision in 3.1 above.
- 4.2 Employees may apply for Research Impact Leave after completing a certain number of semesters/years continuous service (as a member of academic staff) at the University of St Andrews. The number of semesters/years will be specified in the School guidance, and will not exceed eight semesters/four years.
- 4.3 The period of Research Impact Leave which can be granted is dependent on the length of continuous service. A maximum of 2 semesters' continuous, university-funded, Research Impact Leave can be taken at any one time.

- 4.4 Calculation of how much Research Impact Leave can be granted to a member of staff will be on a continuous basis, that is, periods of Research Impact Leave, Sickness Absence, Maternity/Adoption/Paternity and Shared Parental Leave will not be discounted in reckoning continuous service.
- 4.5 Periods of unpaid leave of absence will normally be discounted when calculating the period of Research Impact Leave for which a member of staff is entitled to apply. The accrual of service for paid Research Impact Leave purposes will be maintained during unpaid leave of absence for the purpose of holding a recognised fellowship (e.g. Leverhulme Research Fellowship).
- 4.6 Research Impact Leave starts and ends on the dates published in the University Calendar for semesters unless agreement on any variation is reached with both the Head of School and the Vice-Principal (Research, Collections and Innovation).
- 4.7 Research Impact Leave is not normally granted to a member of staff known to be leaving the University's employment at the end of the period of leave (such as retirement) or if a resignation is received after the granting of leave, the Research Impact Leave will normally be rescinded.

## **5. Semester Dates**

- 5.1 Semester 1 leave commences on week 1, Martinmas semester.
- 5.2 Semester 2 leave commences on week 1, Candlemas semester.
- 5.3 For 2 semesters continuous leave the inter-semester break or summer break will be included as appropriate.

## **6. Application Timetable**

- 6.1 Applications must be submitted to Vice-Principal (Research, Collections and Innovation) by:
- a) **Semester 1 Leave**  
Applications must be submitted by **31 December**.
  - b) **Semester 2 Leave**  
Applications must be submitted by **30 April**.
- 6.2 Applicants will be notified of the outcome within 4 weeks of the closing date.
- 6.3 The right to apply for Research Impact Leave does not imply that such leave will be granted. Research Impact Leave is not an automatic entitlement.
- 6.4 Schools are expected to develop and publicise local guidance and processes relating to considerations in deciding which Research Impact Leave applications to put forward. We recognise that Schools may behave differently in terms of the frequency, and this should be clear and transparent within each School, stated in school level staff handbooks and induction materials.

- 6.5. The Vice-Principal (Research, Collections and Innovation) may specify conditions on the granting of Research Impact Leave e.g. the completion of outputs from prior research and the planning and submission of research grants.

## **7. Procedure for Applications**

- 7.1 Heads of School should invite applications for Research Impact Leave from all eligible staff who have completed the appropriate length of service, using the [Research Impact Leave Application Form](#).
- 7.2 Applicants should specify the purpose for which the leave is sought, the anticipated outputs and their timescales against which the effectiveness of the period of Research Impact Leave can be evaluated. With the exception of individuals applying for the first time, applicants should show publications, research grants, new research programmes, impact or other achievements which have arisen from their last period of leave. Applicants are encouraged to discuss their case with collaborators, Director of Research, Director of Impact and Innovation, mentor and/or other colleagues, setting it within the School's research strategy.
- 7.3 Applicants must specify any time that will be spent outside of the UK in order that an overseas tax liability assessment can be undertaken.
- 7.4 Applicants travelling as part of the leave, whether in the UK or outside, should register such travel on the [Travel registration and fieldwork risk assessment tool](#).
- 7.5 The Head of School will be asked to comment on the application, and its appropriateness, and confirm that the proposed teaching cover is adequate and within current teaching and learning guidelines.
- 7.6 The Head of School must also consider School research priorities when considering and prioritising leave requests.
- 7.7 In making any recommendation, the Head of School has discretion to seek advice from the School's Research Committee or Senior Management.
- 7.8 Signed applications with the approval of the Head of School, Director of Research and Director of Impact and Innovation, must be submitted to the Vice-Principal (Research, Collections and Innovation), via Research and Innovation Services ([ris@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:ris@st-andrews.ac.uk)) by the annual deadline for the semester of leave being sought.
- 7.9 Successful applicants and their respective Heads of School will be informed in writing by the Vice-Principal (Research, Collections and Innovation). Research and Innovation Services will aim to inform the Head of School of the decision within 4 weeks of the application being received.
- 7.10 If the member of staff is dissatisfied with the decision of the Vice Principal (Research, Collections and Innovation), they can make an appeal to the Master.
- 7.11 A copy of the approved form must be sent by the Vice-Principal (Research, Collections and Innovation) to Human Resources, who will record the leave against the staff record.

## **8. During the Research Impact Leave period**

- 8.1 It is the responsibility of the individual to notify their Head of School, as soon as possible, of any changes in circumstances which may affect their ability to meet the conditions of their leave.
- 8.2 The Vice-Principal (Research, Collections and Innovation) reserves the right to recall an individual from Research Impact Leave if they have been found to breach the conditions of their leave.
- 8.3 In the event of a force majeure (e.g. fire, storm, flood, war, infrastructure failure, pandemic), all Research Impact Leave may be suspended at the discretion of the Vice-Principal (Research, Collections and Innovation).

## **9. After the Period of Research Impact Leave**

- 9.1 Staff who are granted leave are required to complete the report form after the period of leave. The form contains a reminder to indicate likely publications and/or other outcomes of the leave.
- 9.2 The completed report form should be returned to the Head of School **within two months** following the end of the period of leave, for comment. The form should be signed by both parties before being submitted to the Vice-Principal (Research, Collections and Innovation) via Research and Innovation Services ([ris@st-andrews.ac.uk](mailto:ris@st-andrews.ac.uk)).
- 9.3 Failure to submit a completed report form may affect future leave requests from the School with non-submission issues escalated where appropriate.
- 9.4 Progression of research and/or impact as a result of the leave will then be followed up in the annual Academic Review and Development meeting with the Head of School.
- 9.5 Should the Vice-Principal (Research, Collections and Innovation) have any concerns with the report, this will be followed up with the Head of School and the individual member of staff.

## **10. Conditions of Research Impact Leave**

- 10.1 As approval for a period of Research Impact Leave will carry with it entitlement to full salary for the period of the leave, a member of staff on Research Impact Leave will be subject to the University policy on external work in operation at the time.
- 10.2 A member of staff will be free to spend the period of Research Impact Leave anywhere, but the University encourages staff to spend their Research Impact Leave in other institutions or in library or field work out with St Andrews. The Head of School and Vice-Principal (Research, Collections and Innovation) will have to be satisfied that the place(s) in which the period of leave is/are to be spent is/are appropriate for the programme outlined. Should the locations change from the original application, the individual should notify their Head of School.
- 10.3 The member of staff will normally be relieved of all university duties, administrative, departmental, committee or otherwise during the period of Research Impact Leave. In the

case of Heads of School an Acting Head will normally be appointed. The individual going on Research Impact Leave is responsible for ensuring an appropriate handover is undertaken, where relevant, to the satisfaction of the Head of School.

- 10.4 Colleagues will be expected to continue to undertake PhD Supervision throughout Research Impact Leave periods.
- 10.5 A member of staff who requires family leave or suffers from a period of long-term ill health while on Research Impact Leave should inform the University in the usual way. Where the absence is likely to affect their research, the term of leave may be paused and re-started at a time mutually agreed after discussion with the Head of School and the Vice-Principal (Research, Collections and Innovation). suffers from a period of long-term ill health while on Research Impact Leave should inform the University in the usual way. Where the absence is likely to affect their research, advice should be sought from the Head of School and the Vice-Principal (Research, Collections and Innovation).
- 10.6 The following are rules governing the relationship between members of staff and their Schools during Research Impact Leave:
- i. Staff should not engage in any formal contact hours of teaching during their Research Impact Leave;
  - ii. Staff are required to engage in research student supervision during their Research Impact Leave particularly where such supervision directly contributes to their own or their group's research output;
  - iii. Staff should not be assigned any specific administrative functions during their Research Impact Leave;
  - iv. Licence to act outside these rules must be sought by the Vice-Principal (Research, Collections and Innovation) by the Head of School with the agreement of the member of staff; and
  - v. Heads of School should plan a colleague's Research Impact Leave so that it neither inherits previous workload nor is encumbered by immediate heavy responsibilities at its end.
- 10.6.1 Should there be any breach of these rules, members of staff are asked to notify the Vice-Principal (Research, Collections and Innovation).

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.0	Migration of policies to the Governance Zone	Published	Jen Pritchard, Head of Research Information and Policy, Research and Innovation Services	01/07/2019

2.0	Clarification of staff eligibility added to section 2.1	Published	Jen Pritchard, Head of Research Information and Policy, Research and Innovation Services	11/10/2022
3.0	<p>Renamed to Research Impact Leave – removal of Paid Research</p> <p>Section 6 - Submission at fixed timeline to allow better management of process. New submission dates will be – 30 April for Semester 2; 31 December for Semester 1</p> <p>Section 8.3 – Introduction of the ability to suspend leave due to a force majeure.</p> <p>Section 7.11 - Leave to be recorded centrally against the employee record for reporting.</p>	Published	<p>Jen Pritchard, Head of Research Information and Policy, Research and Innovation Services</p> <p>and</p> <p>Mairi Stewart, Director of Human Resources, Human Resources</p>	01/08/2023
3.1	Section 4.2 Change to wording “Full and part-time members of staff” to “Employees” and brackets added to “as a member of academic staff”		Mairi Stewart, Director of Human Resources, Human Resources	14/11/2023
3.2	Section 7.1 - Addition of hyperlink to Research Impact Leave Application Form	Published	Fiona Paterson, Research Officer, Research and Innovation Services	07/12/2023