

# Sabbatical Leave Policy and Procedure

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Sabbatical leave is fundamental to faculty development and to the pursuit of excellence in research and education (teaching and learning). The School therefore encourages eligible employees to apply. We have established the following policy and procedure to ensure that individuals' exercise of the right to sabbatical leave benefits not only their own career development but also the academic community of the LSE as a whole.
- 1.2 This policy and procedure aims to ensure that sabbatical leave is administered fairly and consistently and to outline the application process.
- 1.3 This document supersedes any previous sabbatical leave policy and procedure.

## 2. Eligible staff

- 2.1 This policy and procedure applies to the following academic (research and teaching) staff: those in the posts of Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Reader, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor. It does not apply to professionally qualified staff (Senior Lecturers and Professors of Practice), research staff, teaching-only staff or professional services staff.
- 2.2 An academic staff member who has formally indicated in writing an intention to leave the School or an intention to retire is not normally eligible for sabbatical leave.

## 3. Purpose of sabbatical leave

- 3.1 The purpose of sabbatical leave is to enable members of academic staff to pursue research, initiatives related to education and/or other career development activities in order to achieve objectives that have been agreed with the relevant Head(s) of Department in line with Departmental and School strategy. Sabbatical leave releases academic staff from day-to-day teaching and administrative duties for a specified period of time. Sabbatical leave may be used for travel in connection with the purposes for which it has been granted.

## 4. Remuneration

- 4.1 The grant of sabbatical leave normally will be without reduction of salary or supplements. Honoraria attached to office holding will only continue to be paid if the staff member continues to carry out the office during their sabbatical leave.
- 4.2 The purpose of sabbatical leave does not normally include enabling members of academic staff to accept a remunerated teaching engagement in term-time at another university, or to engage in other remunerative employment. While academic staff are not precluded from accepting a small commission to, for example, give one or two special lectures, they are required to obtain the permission of the Director before accepting any paid employment or undertaking any substantial amount of paid work during their sabbatical leave. Staff on sabbatical leave can continue to perform remunerated teaching at LSE (e.g., Summer school teaching, executive teaching).

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

- 5.1 Director of the School and Pro-Director Faculty Development
- By custom, authority to oversee, consider and determine sabbatical leave applications within the framework of the School's approved Policy and Procedures has been delegated by Council as the School's employing authority to the Director of the School.
  - The exercise of this authority has become impractical given the growth in the size of the School and the progressively increased entitlement to sabbatical leave. The authority to consider and determine sabbatical leave applications is now therefore further delegated by the Director to Heads of Department under the authority given to her or him by Council to delegate the authority delegated to her or him. Heads of Department may consult the Pro-Director Faculty Development for advice in determining sabbatical leave applications and must do so if they propose to decline a sabbatical leave request which is eligible within the terms of the applicable regulations.
  - The Director remains accountable to Council for the exercise of the authority to oversee the Sabbatical Leave Policy, but may delegate this authority to the Pro-Director Faculty Development.
- 5.2 Heads of Department
- The Head of Department is responsible for reviewing and determining requests for sabbatical leave.
  - Heads of Department should ensure that the number of staff absent on any type of academic leave does not exceed what is appropriate to the Department's size and needs. Adequate provisions should be put in place to cover any type of academic leave.
- 5.3 Academic staff

- Academic staff are responsible for submitting a request for sabbatical leave to the Head of Department.

## 6. Leave Periods

- 6.1 Sabbatical leave is given for one or more terms. Leave starts with the start date of term and ends with the start date of the following term as published by the School. In particular, those taking sabbatical leave during Summer term should be exempted from teaching and administrative duties (e.g. dissertation marking) until the start of Michaelmas term. However, staff going on sabbatical leave remain responsible for actions that follow on from the period before they go on sabbatical leave, e.g. the setting of an exam paper that takes place during their period of sabbatical leave.
- 6.2 The maximum amount of sabbatical leave that can be taken at one time is normally three terms, i.e. one year's leave.
- 6.3 Members of staff taking a year's leave usually commence their leave at the start of Michaelmas term.
- 6.4 Individuals can combine the Directorship of an Institute or Research Centre with a period of sabbatical leave if they wish. In this case, if a Director of a Research Centre/Institute applies for one term of sabbatical leave, they could take this as half-time over two terms to combine the leave with the Directorship of the Centre/Institute.

## 7. Timing of Sabbatical Leave, Cover of Duties and Replacement Teaching Arrangements

- 7.1 The precise timing of sabbatical leave depends on the possibility of making satisfactory arrangements for the work of those on sabbatical leave to be carried out by other colleagues as part of their work in the School. It is generally expected that colleagues will cover the duties of staff on sabbatical leave but it is accepted that the expertise of those on leave will not necessarily be replicated within the Department. In these circumstances, replacement expertise may have to be bought in and the Head of Department may request the allocation of replacement teaching funds.
- 7.2 Courses should not normally be suspended as a consequence of a staff member taking sabbatical leave. Heads of Department must take into account the impact on compliance with the Consumer Protection Law before requesting the suspension of a course, in particular where notice periods are less than 12 months.
- 7.3 In cases where approval of a sabbatical leave application will necessitate a request for temporary teaching cover, Heads of Department should make a case in writing and send it to the Planning Unit, for referral to the Pro-Director Planning and Resources. Heads of Departments are advised to await the decision of the Pro-Director before giving Department endorsement to the leave application to ensure that funds will be available.
- 7.4 Where a member of academic staff applying for sabbatical leave is an academic office holder or member of a School Committee and the leave falls within the term of office/membership, the member of staff must indicate how these School duties will be covered during the leave. The application will not be processed by Human Resources until this question is addressed satisfactorily.

## 8. Application Process

- 8.1 Applications for sabbatical leave should be made on the Sabbatical Leave Application Form. To aid Heads of Department with planning ahead and to integrate requests for sabbatical leave and research buy-out or unpaid leave, members of academic staff should normally give notice to their Head of Department of their intention to apply for sabbatical leave **at least 12 months in advance of the beginning of the academic session** in which the leave will occur, not the date of commencement of the leave itself. Even earlier planning is strongly encouraged.
- 8.2 For sabbatical leave requests for two terms, the Head of Department has the right to require the staff member to take one of the two terms in Summer term.
- 8.3 Staff applying for sabbatical leave are required to state in the application the purpose(s) for which the leave will be used (1-2 pages will usually suffice) – see section 3. For pursuing research, this may be a specific programme of work (e.g. completion of a book or article). For pursuing innovative initiatives in education or for other career development activities, a detailed plan of 3 pages or more is required. Staff are encouraged to seek the advice of the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) if the purpose of which sabbatical leave is applied for is education or other career development.
- 8.4 Staff based in equal parts in two Departments should seek the informal approval of both Heads of Department and the formal approval by one Head of Department. Staff predominantly based in one Department should also seek the informal approval of both Heads of Department, but the formally approving Head of Department must be from the Department in which they are predominantly based.
- 8.5 The Departmental Manager checks whether sufficient leave entitlement is in place before the Head of Department reviews and potentially approves the formal sabbatical leave form. The approved application form must be sent electronically to [hr.adviser@lse.ac.uk](mailto:hr.adviser@lse.ac.uk).

## 9. Report of Sabbatical Leave Taken

- 9.1 All staff granted sabbatical leave are required to produce a brief (2-3 pages) report, using the School's template, on how a period of sabbatical leave has promoted the agreed purpose for which sabbatical leave was granted, indicating the benefits to their own career development and the School.
- 9.2 Failure to produce a satisfactory report on sabbatical leave taken from academic session 2017/18 onwards results in further sabbatical leave applications being automatically declined until such a report has been produced since the report is taken into account in the Head of Department's decision to approve the sabbatical leave request.
- 9.3 The report should be sent electronically to the Head of Department and [hr.adviser@lse.ac.uk](mailto:hr.adviser@lse.ac.uk) during the term following the return from sabbatical leave. This report will be forwarded to the Pro-Director Faculty Development and kept on the staff member's personal file in Human Resources for reference when considering future applications for sabbatical leave.

## 10. Sabbatical Leave Postponed or Declined

- 10.1 A member of staff normally will be granted the sabbatical leave to which they are entitled unless the Department and/or School has strong reasons for why it should not be granted for the period for which it is requested. Examples of such reasons are too many requests for leave, including buy-out, at any particular time. Sabbatical leave is an entitlement, but there is no entitlement to take sabbatical leave at a particular time. In such cases, sabbatical leave is postponed to a future date but not declined and the Head of Department should specify at what future date sabbatical leave is likely to be granted. Heads of Department must take into account equity considerations and postponement of sabbatical leave should not penalize those who are willing to perform important teaching or service tasks on the basis that these tasks cannot be easily taken on by others. In cases where the Head of Department postpones a sabbatical leave request that was made **at least 12 months in advance of the beginning of the academic session** in which the leave will occur, the member of staff can appeal to the Pro-Director Faculty Development. The member of staff and the Head of Department will be informed of the Pro-Director's decision on the appeal and the reasons for it. The Pro-Director's decision is final.
- 10.2 Heads of Department can decline to approve a sabbatical leave request if the purpose for which sabbatical leave is applied for is inconsistent with the purpose for which sabbatical leave can be taken, as specified in section 3. Likewise, reports of past sabbatical leave taken will be taken into account to establish whether the purpose for which sabbatical leave is applied for is likely to be accomplished. Inadequately explained failure to accomplish the purpose of past sabbatical leave may result in future sabbatical leave being declined. The Head of Department may also grant sabbatical leave for a shorter period than applied for (in case sabbatical leave of more than one term is applied for) in order to check that the first period of leave fulfilled its purpose before the second period of leave is granted.
- 10.3 A sabbatical leave request may also be postponed or declined where concerns have been raised with an individual, in writing, regarding their contributions to research, citizenship/service or teaching aspects of their contract. In such circumstances, a Head of Department may, after consultation with the Pro-Director Faculty Development, decide that certain specific improvements need to be demonstrated in these areas prior to granting a period of sabbatical leave.
- 10.4 The Head of Department must consult with the Pro-Director Faculty Development before declining a sabbatical leave request but the decision whether to approve or refuse a request lies with the Head of Department.
- 10.5 In cases where the Head of Department, after consulting with the Pro-Director Faculty Development, declines a sabbatical leave request, the member of staff will be informed of the reason(s) in writing and can appeal to the Director. The member of staff and the Head of Department will be informed of the Director's decision on the appeal and the reasons for it. The Director's decision is final.

## 11. Calculation of Sabbatical Leave Entitlement

- 11.1 Entitlement to a period of sabbatical leave is calculated on the basis of qualifying service. Members of academic staff wishing to apply for sabbatical leave should first ensure that they have accrued enough service credit for the intended leave. Human Resources provides an up-to-date calculation of sabbatical entitlement at the start of each term to

Departments. Departments should inform their staff at the start of each academic session about their sabbatical entitlement.

11.2 Since 30 September 1978, there have been three revisions of School Regulations for Sabbatical Leave. The current calculation of qualifying service came into effect 1 October 2001 and is not retrospective. **8 terms of qualifying service provide 1 term of sabbatical leave entitlement, 16 terms of qualifying service provide 2 terms of sabbatical leave entitlement, 21 terms of qualifying service provide 3 consecutive terms of sabbatical leave entitlement.**

### 11.3 Qualifying Service

- Time spent on sabbatical leave, full-time buy-out, secondment, and other forms of leave will not count towards sabbatical leave entitlement. Partial buy-out is disregarded pro rata. This includes buy-out paid for fully by a member of staff's personal financial rewards from research grant income. Certain types of buy-out (e.g. for the purpose of internal secondment to take up a School leadership role) can count toward sabbatical entitlement if approved by the Pro-Director Faculty Development in advance.
- Where Occupational Health Advice (OHA) confirms that a period of sickness absence of one month or longer is the result of a disability, this will count towards sabbatical entitlement. Other periods of sickness absence that are not related to an OHA confirmed disability of one month or longer normally will not count towards sabbatical leave entitlement although individual circumstances may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Time spent on maternity, paternity, adoption or shared parental leave will count towards sabbatical entitlement.
- Time spent on additional research leave following maternity/paternity/adoption leave for a total period of eighteen weeks or greater or following long-term sickness absence as determined on a case-by-case basis will count towards sabbatical entitlement.
- A period of continuous service at LSE as a Temporary Assistant Professor, Associate Professor or Professor immediately prior to a career-track/open-ended appointment at LSE counts as normal School service for sabbatical purposes. In this case, the service accrued during the temporary appointment is added to the current service. Previous service at LSE as a member of professionally qualified staff, research staff, teaching-only staff or LSE Fellow does not count towards sabbatical entitlement.
- Service at other institutions can count for computing sabbatical leave to some extent if this has been approved at the appointment stage and must be stated in the appointment letter of the member of academic staff – see section 12.

### 11.4 Accrual of Service: Part-Time Staff

- Part time members of staff wishing to apply for sabbatical leave need to accrue the same amount of service as full time members of staff. For example, an individual employed on a 0.5 FTE contract would need 8 terms of 0.5 FTE service in order to apply for 1 term of sabbatical leave. The sabbatical leave would apply to the 0.5 FTE appointment with the School.

## 12. Carry Forward of Service from another Institution to LSE

12.1 The School appreciates that sabbatical leave can be an important factor in determining whether an individual accepts an offer of appointment at the School.

- 12.2 Service at another university immediately preceding service with the School can be taken into account in computing the period of service required as qualification for sabbatical leave.
- 12.3 The carry forward of service from another institution to LSE must be agreed at the appointment stage by the Pro-Director Faculty Development and must form part of the staff member's appointment letter to take effect. The Head of Department must be consulted before any agreement regarding carry forward of service is confirmed.
- 12.4 The Pro-Director Faculty Development, by delegated authority from the Director, has decision making authority and may agree one of the following:
- Qualifying service from another university will be honoured. Normally, service in another university may be used as a top-up device and should not count on a like for like basis;
  - Entitlement to a sabbatical term(s) from the previous institution will be honoured;
  - A sabbatical leave may be taken sooner than the LSE policy regarding qualifying service prescribes (mortgaging).

## 13. Anticipated Service (Mortgaging)

- 13.1 It is possible to anticipate School service although the School does not favour this in case the individual leaves the School before the "mortgage" is paid off.
- 13.2 A "mortgage" of up to three terms of qualifying service can be approved by the Head of Department. A "mortgage" in excess of three terms of qualifying service, with the recommendation of the Head of Department, requires the approval by the Pro-Director Faculty Development.

## 14. Enhancement of Sabbatical Leave Entitlement

- 14.1 Various School roles and offices carry enhanced sabbatical entitlement, as determined by the Director on the advice of the Office Holders Group. This additional service credit is added to the normal service accrued by the member of staff. For example, double (triple) entitlement means that three years of service will count as six (nine) years for the purposes of calculating sabbatical entitlement, i.e. three years normal service plus an additional three (six) years as enhanced entitlement.
- 14.2 The following list provides an overview of current arrangements but these can be changed by the Director on the advice of the Office Holders Group at any point in time.

School Role or Office	Enhanced
Pro-Directors	Triple
Vice-Chair of Academic Board	Triple
Vice-Chair of Appointments Committee	Triple
Heads of Department	Triple
Deputy Heads of Department (from 2016/17 on)	Double




- 14.3 No member of academic staff can benefit from more than triple enhanced sabbatical entitlement.
- 14.4 Where a member of academic staff applying for sabbatical leave is an academic office holder or member of a School Committee and the leave falls within the term of office/membership, the member of staff must indicate how these School duties will be covered during the leave. The application will not be processed by Human Resources until this question is addressed satisfactorily.

## 15. Commutation of Enhanced Sabbatical Leave Entitlement into Cash or Personal Research Account

- 15.1 It is possible for enhanced sabbatical entitlement to be commuted into a cash payment or a payment into a personal research account. The value of the payment will be £7,000 for each term of sabbatical leave otherwise taken. Only sabbatical leave earned via enhanced sabbatical leave entitlement can be commuted. The maximum commutation is normally £42,000 though commuting up to this limit does not exclude the possibility of further commutation at a future point in time.



## Appendix 1: Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

- 1. How long can I go on Sabbatical Leave for?**  
Refer to section 6.1 and 6.2 of the Sabbatical Leave Policy and Procedure.
- 2. Who is eligible?**  
Refer to section 2 of the Sabbatical Leave Policy and Procedure.
- 3. Will I receive my normal pay while on sabbatical?**  
Refer to section 4.1 of the Sabbatical Leave Policy and Procedure.
- 4. What do I do if I do not wish to return to work after my sabbatical leave?**  
You should initially have a conversation with your Head of Department. Should you wish to resign from your post, you should submit a written resignation to the Director of the School in accordance with your [terms and conditions of employment](#).
- 5. What should I do if I want to extend or return early from my sabbatical?**  
You should liaise with your Head of Department, who will consider whether this is feasible.
- 6. Can I take on alternative employment?**  
Refer to section 4.2 of the Sabbatical Leave Policy and Procedure.
- 7. Can I take annual leave while I am on sabbatical?**  
Yes, you can take annual leave whilst on sabbatical leave. You should follow your local annual leave approval procedure.
- 8. What happens if I fall pregnant while on sabbatical leave?**  
The same processes apply as per usual. Please refer to the [maternity policy and procedure](#) and contact your [HR Adviser](#) to arrange a meeting to discuss your entitlements.
- 9. What happens if I fall sick while on sabbatical leave?**  
Being on sabbatical leave does not change the usual local sickness reporting procedure.
- 10. Can I access the LSE system while I am on sabbatical leave?**  
Yes, you should still be able to access the LSE system while you are on sabbatical leave.
- 11. Will I lose my continuous service while I am on sabbatical leave?**  
No, being on sabbatical leave will not affect your continuous service.
- 12. How will taking sabbatical leave affect my pension?**  
Taking sabbatical leave will not affect your pension contributions if there is no reduction of salary or supplements. For complex salary supplements or honoraria payments, you should contact [hr.pensions@lse.ac.uk](mailto:hr.pensions@lse.ac.uk) to clarify whether your sabbatical leave will affect your pension.
- 13. Will I still receive benefits from LSE during my sabbatical leave?**  
Being on sabbatical leave should not affect your benefits from LSE.
- 14. I am in pre-Major Review, can I request sabbatical leave?**  
Yes, you can still request sabbatical leave if you are pre-Major Review.

**15. Can I take sabbatical leave in blocks?**

Yes, sabbatical leave could be taken in blocks of one term. Separate sabbatical leave application requests, in accordance with section 8, should be made for each block.

**16. How many times can I request sabbatical leave?**

There is no limit on how many times you can request sabbatical leave, as long as you have accrued enough service credit for the intended leave (unless your service is 'mortgaged').

**17. Am I entitled to an enhancement to my sabbatical leave entitlement?**

Refer to section 14 of the Sabbatical Leave Policy and Procedure.

**18. I was an LSE Fellow; would this time count toward my sabbatical leave entitlement?**

No, your time as an LSE Fellow does not count towards sabbatical entitlement.

**19. What constitutes as a break in service when calculating sabbatical leave entitlement?**

A break in service, for the purposes of sabbatical leave entitlement, is when there is no eligible contract in place (as per section 2.1) for a period of one year or more.

**20. What happens if I request sabbatical leave in my final year (retirement) of service?**

Refer to section 2.2 of the Sabbatical Leave Policy and Procedure.

**21. What are the effects on my terms and conditions of employment while on sabbatical leave?**

With the exception of changes to teaching duties, there are no changes to your terms and conditions of employment while you are on sabbatical leave.

**22. I have had a period of short leave, will this count towards my sabbatical entitlement?**

Short leave will not count towards sabbatical leave entitlement.

## Review schedule

Review interval	Next review due by	Next review start
123	00/00/00	00/00/00

## Version history

Version	Date	Approved by	Notes
123	00/00/00	abc	abc
123	00/00/00	abc	abc

## Links

Reference	Link
123	abc
123	abc

## Contacts

Position	Name	Email	Notes
abc	abc	abc@lse.ac.uk	abc

## Communications and Training

Will this document be publicised through Internal Communications?	Yes/ No
Will training needs arise from this policy	Yes/ No
If Yes, please give details	