Academic Sabbatical



Policy

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# Purpose

#### This Policy defines the nature and purpose of Sabbatical, setting out the eligibility criteria, qualifying service, application and approval process, and financial support.

#### This Policy also outlines the requirement to enter into a Sabbatical Contract before proceeding on Sabbatical, which includes a return of service to the University equivalent to the length of the Sabbatical.

#### In this Policy —

[1 Purpose 1](#_Toc137043213)

[2 Scope 2](#_Toc137043214)

[2.1 Institutional Scope 2](#_Toc137043215)

[2.2 Individual Scope 2](#_Toc137043216)

[3 Policy Statement 3](#_Toc137043217)

[4 Authority 3](#_Toc137043218)

[5 General Conditions Governing Sabbaticals 4](#_Toc137043219)

[5.1 Eligibility to Apply 4](#_Toc137043220)

[5.2 Criteria 5](#_Toc137043221)

[6 Prospective Sabbatical leave 6](#_Toc137043222)

[6.1 Length of Sabbatical leave 6](#_Toc137043223)

[6.2 Other Leave 7](#_Toc137043224)

[6.3 Insurance 7](#_Toc137043225)

[7 Application and Approval 7](#_Toc137043226)

[7.1 The Application 7](#_Toc137043227)

[7.2 The Approval 8](#_Toc137043228)

[7.3 Appeal of Decisions 9](#_Toc137043229)

[7.4 Travel and Financial Support 9](#_Toc137043230)

[7.5 Travel Grants 9](#_Toc137043231)

[7.6 Partners and dependents 10](#_Toc137043232)

[7.7 Other Sources of Funding 11](#_Toc137043233)

[7.8 Variations to Proposed Sabbatical Program 12](#_Toc137043234)

[8 On Return 12](#_Toc137043235)

[8.1 Return of Service 12](#_Toc137043236)

[8.2 Sabbatical Report 13](#_Toc137043237)

[8.3 The Report 13](#_Toc137043238)

[8.4 The Presentation 13](#_Toc137043239)

#### This Policy is to be read in conjunction with the following —

##### [Propose a Sabbatical](https://uniwa.sharepoint.com/sites/sd-Human-Resources/SitePages/Propose-a-sabbatical.aspx) service directory entry

##### [Complete a Sabbatical Report](https://uniwa.sharepoint.com/sites/sd-Human-Resources/SitePages/Complete-a-sabbatical-report.aspx) service directory entry.

# Scope

## Institutional Scope

#### The scope of this Policy applies to the entire University.

## Individual Scope

#### The scope of this Policy applies to all academic employees except casual academic employees (**eligible employees**).

# Policy Statement

#### Sabbatical is a significant strategic investment by the University enabling release of eligible employees from regular duties to pursue key areas of academic activity that contribute to their professional development and the School strategy, and are aligned with the University strategic direction. It provides the opportunity —

##### to maintain and improve teaching skills and scholarship, undertake research, creative work or clinical innovation; and

##### for active collaboration with the best in the academic’s field globally while developing and expanding industry, research organisations, government and/or community linkages in Australia and internationally.

#### Sabbatical is a benefit that may be offered to eligible employees who meet the criteria when circumstances permit. Sabbatical is not to be regarded as an entitlement, but rather a privilege conveyed upon eligible academic employees. Approval is conditional upon a high quality proposal which is aligned with School and University strategy, the employee’s development goals and stage of career, and the operational needs and resourcing of the School.

#### Approval is not to be considered automatic even when the applicant satisfies the eligibility requirements and/or at the end of each qualifying period.

#### An approved Sabbatical will be taken at a time which causes the least disruption to the academic activities of the School.

#### Eligible employee applications are particularly encouraged where these facilitate the development of academic staff who (i) hold significant teaching responsibilities; (ii) are women; (iii) are Indigenous; (iv) under represented equity groups; and/or (v) early- or mid-career.

# Authority

#### The final authority to approve applications and financial support rests with the SDVC or their nominee.

#### In exceptional circumstances, the SDVC or nominee may approve a variation from the criteria and conditions for Sabbatical set out in this Policy, provided the exception is in the interests of the School and University.

# General Conditions Governing Sabbaticals

## Eligibility to Apply

#### Eligible employees appointed on teaching and research (T&R) or teaching intensive (T) contracts on either continuing or fixed-term appointments, including those with fractional appointments of at least 50%, are eligible to apply for a period of Sabbatical, subject to meeting the conditions of this Policy. The fractional level of employment will remain the same during the period of Sabbatical as it was during the qualifying period.

#### Fixed-term contracts of employment must extend beyond the period of Sabbatical by at least an equivalent period to ensure sufficient time for the required return of service (see clause 8.1) to the University.

#### Employees with fractional appointments of less than 50% may be considered eligible at the recommendation of a Head of School and at the SDVC or nominee’s discretion.

#### Employees may incorporate postgraduate study to complete a higher degree with the approval of the Head of School and endorsement of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), with the SDVC as the final decision maker.

#### Normally employees who are appointed on research-intensive contracts will not be eligible for Sabbatical. Research-intensive staff should discuss with their line manager other professional development opportunities / needs. However, if special circumstances exist for the possibility of Sabbatical, a case can be made by the research-intensive staff member and if supported by Head of School should be presented to SDVC or nominee for decision.

#### Employees whose employment category changes from research-intensive to teaching and research or to teaching-intensive will begin Sabbatical qualifying service from the date of commencement in, or resumption to, a teaching and research or teaching-intensive role.

#### Academics who have moved to a fixed-term appointment as Head of School cannot take Sabbatical during the period of that role. The SDVC or nominee, can approve a period of Sabbatical at the completion of the fixed-term contract; indeed, such cases can be prioritised.

#### Employees will not be eligible if, at the time of applying for Sabbatical, they have an excess annual leave balance (i.e. have a projected annual leave accrual in excess of 225 hours at the proposed date of commencing Sabbatical).

#### Employees who have an accrued long service leave balance, at the proposed date of commencing Sabbatical, must have a [leave plan](https://uniwa.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/sd-Human-Resources/SiteAssets/Documents/Staff_Leave_Plan.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=F7fKN2) in place to reduce their accrued long service leave entitlement to 250 hours or less within a 12 month period. Should an Employee’s long service leave accrue within 6 months of the proposed date of commencing Sabbatical, then a leave plan to reduce the accrued long service leave to 250 hours or less can be undertaken within a 24 month period from the commencement date of Sabbatical.

#### Sabbatical qualifying period accumulates at a rate of 26 weeks after three years of Continuous Service.

#### In exceptional circumstances, approval by the SDVC or nominee for a 52 week Sabbatical (accumulation after six years of Continuous Service) may be sought (see clause 6.1 of this Policy).

#### Qualifying service will commence from the date of —

##### Appointment; or

##### Return from previous Sabbatical (when the Sabbatical Report has been submitted and accepted within three months of return) to the start date of the next proposed Sabbatical; or

##### Receipt of a Sabbatical Report (if submitted and accepted more than three months after return from previous Sabbatical) to the start date of the next proposed Sabbatical.

#### Sabbatical will in no circumstances be approved prior to completion of three years Continuous Service at the University.

#### When Sabbatical is approved by the Head of School and SDVC or nominee for two or three separate periods (see clause 6.1), any further application will be considered no earlier than three years after return from the last of those separate periods.

#### Long service leave, annual leave, personal leave and paid parental leave count as qualifying service for Sabbatical, and Sabbatical counts as qualifying service for those leave categories.

#### Sabbatical eligibility does not accumulate during any period of leave without pay exceeding two weeks, or any period of absence on Sabbatical.

#### Prior service at another university (gained in an appointment which specified eligibility for Sabbatical) may be recognised for the first period of Sabbatical at the University. Recognition will be at the discretion of the Head of School and should be agreed at the time of appointment. A period of service at the previous university will not be recognised again for the purposes of any future Sabbaticals.

## Criteria

#### Applications must specify clear scholarly objectives consistent with the purpose of Sabbaticals as outlined in clause 3(A) of this Policy. Objectives for the Sabbatical must be measurable, and set and agreed with the Head of School. Objectives will be specific and tailored to the individual.

#### To demonstrate that an eligible employee meets the University’s high expectations, the employee must achieve a rating of ‘met expectations’ (or above) in the most recent Appraisal. The Appraisal must have been undertaken no more than twelve months before applying. A completed copy of the most recent Appraisal should be attached to the eligible employee’s application for Sabbatical.

#### Before proceeding on Sabbatical, the employee will sign and submit an undertaking to return to service at the University immediately following the Sabbatical, equivalent to the proposed period of Sabbatical and at the same employment fraction.

#### The employee must have completed, and the Head of School must have approved, a detailed report in respect of any previous period of Sabbatical, confirming objectives were achieved. The report must have been approved by the SDVC and be on record on the employee’s personnel file in Human Resources.

# Prospective Sabbatical leave

## Length of Sabbatical leave

#### Approved eligible employees may proceed on a maximum of 26 weeks Sabbatical after three years of Continuous Service.

#### Sabbatical periods of 39 weeks may be approved (after 4.5 years of Continuous Service) if the Sabbatical is combined with long service leave. That is, the total period of absence is twelve months comprising nine months (39 weeks) Sabbatical, together with three months long service leave.

#### Approval of 52 weeks may be considered (after six years of Continuous Service) by the Head of School and SDVC or nominee when —

##### The intrinsic nature of the project necessitates more than six months Sabbatical; and/or

##### The employee has held a senior leadership position (e.g. Head of School) and needs to redevelop research and scholarship and/or teaching.

#### Sabbatical will be approved as a single absence to release an employee from regular duties. The program will not usually extend beyond one semester (together with associated University vacations) and will not impinge on two teaching semesters unless agreed by the Head of School or when the Sabbatical is for 9 or 12 months.

#### Any periods of Sabbatical which differ from the standards described above will require approval of the Head of School and SDVC or nominee.

## Other Leave

### Annual Leave

#### Annual leave forms part of the Sabbatical period. Eligible employees are required to indicate in the Sabbatical Proposal the period of annual leave to be taken. Minimum periods of annual leave to be taken during Sabbatical are 10 days for a 26 week Sabbatical, and 20 days for a 52 week Sabbatical.

### Long Service Leave

#### Other than the nine month Sabbatical option (referred to in clause 6.1(B) above), applications for LSL to be taken in conjunction with six months Sabbatical will take into consideration the School’s capacity to cover workloads and be subject to the Head of School confirming that the required combined absence will not cause undue inconvenience for the School. Eligible employees are required to indicate in the Sabbatical Proposal the period of LSL to be taken in association with Sabbatical.

#### Note that there may be FBT implications if the Sabbatical and the LSL are taken overseas. It is the responsibility of the employee to seek advice on this issue.

### Personal Leave

#### Where an employee is ill for a period of at least 20 consecutive working days while on Sabbatical, the employee may, with the approval of the Head of School and SDVC or nominee, be granted additional Sabbatical equivalent to the period of illness, to be taken at a time convenient to the School. The period of illness must be supported by medical evidence that the employee was confined to their place of residence or a hospital.

## Insurance

#### Staff members are covered by workers’ compensation insurance and the University’s corporate travel insurance while on Sabbatical. For further information, and arrangement of any additional insurance, please refer to the Staff corporate travel insurance [website](https://www.spp.uwa.edu.au/riskandlegal/insurance/travel).

### 6.3.1 Audit Requirements

#### All Sabbatical arrangements are subject to normal internal audit procedures.

# Application and Approval

## The Application

#### The application for Sabbatical should be a substantive written case for Sabbatical, providing sufficient detail to enable an assessment of its quality alongside the contribution of the proposed activities for professional development of the individual and against the School and University strategic priorities.

#### Applications must be submitted to the Head of School for assessment, ranking within the School, and approval to be recommended to the SDVC.

#### Applications for Sabbatical are to be submitted in the year preceding the proposed period of Sabbatical. Application dates will be communicated each year.

#### Applications for Sabbatical which do not include a travel component must demonstrate that proposed activities cannot be undertaken at the University as part of normal duties.

#### Applications for Sabbatical which include a travel component must demonstrate that the Sabbatical cannot be carried out as effectively in Perth.

#### Employees are encouraged to disclose relevant personal circumstances, including constraints on time or options available, working arrangements and career histories that may have reduced their opportunities to achieve measurable outputs. Circumstances that are not disclosed by the employee will not be included in the assessment of Achievement Relative to Opportunity.

## The Approval

#### Each Head of School will, each year, consider all applications received for the following year and make recommendations to the SDVC.

#### Any applications which include a departure from the provisions of this Policy must demonstrate why departure from the Policy is in the best interests of the School and University as part of the Head of School’s recommendation to the SDVC.

#### Priority may be given to applications from the previous round which could not be granted because of School requirements, and from employees who have provided a statement for evaluation of Achievement Relative to Opportunity.

#### The process of evaluating proposals and considering Achievement Relative to Opportunity should be transparent and applied fairly in relation to each eligible employee. Information about the evaluation process should be available to eligible employees.

#### Employees are not compelled to disclose the details of personal circumstances. However, should an employee choose to disclose personal circumstances and request confidentiality, that information should be managed by the person receiving that information in accordance with the University’s records management practices and policies. This information should not be disclosed without the consent of the employee.

#### The rate of pay applicable during the approved period of Sabbatical will be maintained at the salary rate pertaining to the FTE of the relevant employee at the time of commencing Sabbatical.

## Appeal of Decisions

#### An unsuccessful applicant may appeal to the SDVC or nominee on the grounds that the decision of the School was based on an improper assessment process. An appeal against a decision of the SDVC will be to the VC or nominee. The decision of the VC or nominee will be final.

## Travel and Financial Support

#### Any member of academic staff undertaking an approved Sabbatical that involves travel outside the Perth metropolitan area may be eligible for a travel grant to assist with travel, accommodation and meal expenses in relation to the Sabbatical. Applicants will need to establish that the proposed location(s) is associated with the success of the Sabbatical and is well suited to the academic activities to be undertaken.

#### The grant may be non-taxed or taxed (see clauses 7.5.1 and 7.5.2).

#### The grant will not normally be provided more than once every three years.

#### Financial support for travel during Sabbatical is subject to annual review.

#### In accordance with the University Travel Policy, all travel associated with a Sabbatical should be arranged through the University Travel Providers. The following information must be recorded on the Travel Requisitioning System —

##### the travel forms part of a Sabbatical; and

##### the travel is self-funded. Self-funded for the purposes of this clause means the employee will be paying for the travel themselves (having received a Sabbatical Grant which contributes to the costs of travel). Schools will not fund air travel or accommodation, irrespective of the source of the funding.

#### A Travel Diary is to be maintained by the employee in accordance with the University Travel Policy.

#### Where an external organisation is booking and paying for air travel and/or accommodation, details are to be included in the application, and in the case of air travel the traveller is required to submit a travel requisition within the Travel Requisitioning System for approval. For any changes to itineraries or emergency travel, the itinerary or e-ticket must be emailed to plans@concur.com from the traveller's verified UWA email address to be captured for risk management and tracking purposes.

## Travel Grants

#### Employees must elect for the grant to be taxed or non-taxed prior to payment being made, depending on whether the employee intends accessing additional funding as outlined in clause 7.5.2 below. Once the grant has been paid, there will be no retrospective adjustment or repayment of the grant. If doubt exists about access to additional funding at the time of grant payment, staff should consider electing a taxed payment to ensure ability to use additional funding whilst on sabbatical.

### Non-taxed Grant

#### While on Sabbatical, having received a non-taxed grant, the following payment methods are excluded —

##### Per Diems;

##### Corporate Credit Card; and/or

##### Reimbursement and cash advances.

#### Any additional work-related expenses cannot be reimbursed.

#### Note that these exclusions do not apply in regard to other special purpose grants (e.g. Research Collaboration Awards; Network Seed Funds) which are funds restricted for a special activity or project, where activities while on Sabbatical directly link to the activity or project funding.

### Taxed Grant

#### Where the employee elects to receive a taxed grant, the University will withhold tax on the grant according to PAYG withholding rules.

#### While on Sabbatical, having received a taxed grant, the following is permissible:

#### (1.) Additional funding from appropriate Local Generated Funds or from Research funds, where allowed under the grant conditions or contract, by way of reimbursement through submission of receipts through Financial Services. These funds may only be used for legitimate and reasonable work-related expenses such as conference fees, local travel costs and publications.

#### (2.) An Expense Benefit Declaration Form needs to be completed and forwarded to the Tax team in Financial Services.

#### Employees may elect not to apply for a Sabbatical grant. If no grant is paid the employee may seek School approval to use Local Generated Funds for reimbursement of legitimate and reasonable work-related travel costs and expenses (such as conference fees, local travel costs, publications) while on Sabbatical.

## Partners and dependents

#### If the employee is accompanied by a partner and/or Dependent Children, an additional allowance may be paid if —

##### The partner and/or Dependent Children accompanying the employee are not entitled to another grant for Sabbatical from the University or another institution; or

##### The partner and/or Dependent Children accompanying the employee are with the employee for at least fifty (50) per cent of each overseas absence of the employee.

#### The following additional allowances will apply —

##### For a partner, 25% of the total travel grant applicable to the employee, pro-rated per day away with a cap, and/or;

##### For each Dependent Child, 12.5% of the total travel grant applicable to the employee, pro-rated per day away with a cap.

#### A travelling allowance for adult dependents with a disability will be considered favourably on application.

## Other Sources of Funding

### Internal Funding

#### Other than the exceptions at 7.5.1 and 7.5.2 above, Schools are not permitted to top up Sabbatical payments with General Purpose Funds including, but not limited to, allowances or reimbursements of Sabbatical expenditure.

### External Funding

#### External funding is funding from sources outside the University, ie payments from national or international universities or other relevant companies, who may choose to fund the employee whilst on Sabbatical. Funding may include payments for living expenses while working at a location away from home whilst on Sabbatical.

#### Academics are encouraged to seek additional sources of funding to enhance the Sabbatical. When other sources of funding are received, a statement of earnings is required to be submitted as part of the Sabbatical Report. The expenditure of all such funds must satisfy the requirements of the *Financial Management Act 2007* (FMA) and be in accordance with the University finance policies and procedures manual and the University Policy for Professional and Consultative Work.

#### If an employee receives, prior to or while on Sabbatical, grants from sources other than the University, the SDVC or nominee has the discretion to require that a proportion of those funds be used to offset any financial assistance paid to them by the University. This proportion would normally be whatever funds were in excess of the cost of the additional activities for which they were intended.

#### All additional income other than salary and financial assistance paid by the University must be declared when making the declaration required under clause 7.4

#### If external funds are received by the University, these funds are to be disbursed through the Human Resources payroll system in the same manner as the payment of the Sabbatical travel grant.

## Variations to Proposed Sabbatical Program

#### No major changes to the Sabbatical program can be made while on Sabbatical without the approval of the Head of School.

#### A significant variation to the approved Sabbatical will be forwarded through the Head of School, with recommendations, to the SDVC or nominee for consideration and approval.

#### Any variation outside the scope of this Policy must be approved by the SDVC or nominee prior to departure.

#### Minor variations include —

##### Change of start and end dates of Sabbatical;

##### Change of location to similar type location within the same country;

##### Inclusion of visits to additional institutions and countries.

#### Significant variations include —

##### Substitution of approved principal activity for a different activity;

##### Substitution of location to another country;

##### Substitution of a different type of institution (e.g. Industrial rather than Tertiary);

##### Cancellation of a proportion of the program.

# On Return

## Return of Service

#### Staff are required to provide a return of service to the University equivalent to the length of the Sabbatical and at the same FTE fraction. Sabbatical will not be granted to a member of academic staff who is unable to meet this condition.

#### Except in the case of death or incapacity, a staff member who has been granted and taken Sabbatical and who fails to comply with clause 7.8 of this Policy or the return of service requirement, shall be required to reimburse the University the amount of —

##### the Sabbatical grant; and

##### the salary equivalent to the return to service shortfall – i.e. the difference between the length of the return to work and the total period of the Sabbatical taken.

#### The SDVC or nominee may waive or vary this requirement, in exceptional cases.

## Sabbatical Report

#### Individuals returning from a Sabbatical are required to —

##### Prepare a comprehensive Sabbatical Report within three months of the end of the Sabbatical period, to be submitted to the Head of School; and

##### Deliver a presentation on the Sabbatical achievements to colleagues and/or students.

## The Report

#### The Sabbatical Report should provide sufficient detail to enable judgement of the success of the Sabbatical and an evaluation of whether it has led to a development, maintenance or improvement of work-related skills, knowledge and competencies.

#### The Head of School will provide written comments on the extent to which the stated objectives have been achieved and confirm that a presentation on the sabbatical achievements has been made in a seminar to the School. The Sabbatical Report will be forwarded to the SDVC. Employees may be asked to resubmit if their Sabbatical Report is considered unsatisfactory.

#### Reported outcomes will impact upon approval for subsequent Sabbaticals. Upon acceptance of the Sabbatical Report by the Head of School and SDVC, the Sabbatical Report will be forwarded to Human Resources for placement on the employee’s personnel file. The Employee will ensure a copy of the report is made available via the University’s eLibrary.

#### Qualifying service for future Sabbaticals will commence from the date of return from Sabbatical, subject to clause 5.1(L) of this Policy.

#### The Sabbatical Report must incorporate a statement of external grants and earnings (see clause 7.7 of this Policy). The SDVC or nominee may require that a proportion of those funds be used to offset the amount of financial assistance paid by the University. Any paid work undertaken during the course of the Sabbatical must meet the same conditions for approval as provided for under the existing University Policy for Professional and Consultative Work.

## The Presentation

#### The employee will provide a seminar on their sabbatical achievements, including an implementation plan, in a presentation (seminar) to colleagues and/or students, as appropriate for their teaching and research program, within three months of return from Sabbatical. The presentation should be advertised widely within the University. The Head of School would ordinarily attend the presentation.

#### A statement confirming that such a presentation was delivered must be included in the Sabbatical Report.

Definitions

**Continuous Service** means any period of full time or fractional service given in accordance with the contract of employment without a break or with a break not exceeding a period of two weeks, and does not include any period of unauthorised absence.

**Dependent Child/ren** means either a child under 16 years of age who has no separate net taxable income and who is normally dependent on the employee, or a child 16 to 18 years who is undergoing full time education and is normally dependent on the employee. The age is taken as the age at the time of departure.

**Eligible employee,** for the purposes of this policy, means all academic employees except casual academic employees.

**Fractional** means part time employment which is less than full time with salary being paid as a percentage of a full time salary.

**Other sources of funding** means the monetary value of all income, earnings or assistance (including salaries, stipends, consulting fees, grants, travel awards and other emoluments) received in respect of the approved Sabbatical and travel from sources inside and outside the University.

**Policy** means this Academic Sabbatical Policy.

**University** is defined in the Policy Framework Policy.

**University Community** means all individuals who engage in University Activity and/or use University Property.

End