



Academic Sabbatical Leave Policy

Introduction and Purpose

Recognizing the importance of supporting the ongoing professional growth of our academic staff, Dublin City University (referred to as 'DCU' or the 'university') embraces the idea of the Academic Sabbatical as a crucial way to help with this pursuit. An Academic Sabbatical serves as a dedicated period for eligible academic employees to fully engage in continuous scholarly work, thereby strengthening their expertise and skills as educators and researchers.

Beyond the personal benefits gained, it's important to highlight that employees on sabbatical act as consistent ambassadors for the university, representing its academic principles both within the country and globally. This policy is designed not only to support and make possible these transformative academic experiences but also to explain the expectations and processes governing the Academic Sabbatical at DCU.


As a forward-looking institution committed to excellence, DCU firmly believes that investing in the professional growth of its academic community is an investment in the university's overall reputation and standing. By giving our faculty dedicated time for scholarly pursuits, we not only improve their effectiveness in the classroom and in research but also contribute significantly to the intellectual vitality of the university as a whole.

Importantly, this policy aims not only to outline the procedures for requesting and approving an Academic Sabbatical but also to emphasize the give-and-take nature of the arrangement. While academic employees benefit from the chance to deepen their expertise, the university expects and values the reciprocal impact on our institution's reputation, research output, and overall academic standing. We believe that through this shared commitment, the Academic Sabbatical directly contributes to our goal of keeping and attracting highly talented and motivated academics. In doing so, we further solidify DCU's position as a leader in national and international academia.

In essence, this document serves as a guide and framework, aligning the pursuits of individual academic growth with the collective advancement of Dublin City University. Through this shared commitment to excellence, we reinforce our dedication to maintaining a vibrant, dynamic, and globally recognized academic community.

Scope

This policy applies to all academic employees of the university, encompassing individuals engaged in research, teaching, and academic administration or scholarly



activities. This includes those currently in academic leadership roles, as well as individuals transitioning into or out of such leadership positions.

Policy Statement


Eligibility Criteria

Academic employees of the university who have completed a minimum of 3 years continuous service at the university are eligible to apply for a sabbatical.

Conditions of a Sabbatical

In addition to the eligibility criteria, the following conditions shall apply to a sabbatical:

- a) A sabbatical may normally be granted for six months or a maximum block of one year.
- b) A sabbatical of one year duration normally must be taken outside of Ireland as it provides an opportunity for the employee to create, maintain and develop international links and networks to the benefit of their research and teaching and to enhance the international profile of their research and teaching to the benefit of their students, the university, Faculty and School. Applications must include details on how the proposed location of the leave will contribute to those ends.
- c) A sabbatical normally spanning no more than six months is available to the employee who wishes to remain in Ireland to focus exclusively on their research/scholarly objectives.
- d) Financial consideration regarding the payment during the sabbatical will depend on the purpose of the Sabbatical, the form it takes, and the financial viability of the application.
- e) There shall be no appreciable additional financial cost to the university through the operation of the Academic Sabbatical policy.
- f) A sabbatical will not be granted in cases whereby the School/Faculty requires a full-time backfill arrangement to cover the arrangement.
- g) All financial arrangements must be agreed in advance between the applicant, Head of School, Executive Dean and the Finance Office. This includes details of how the sabbatical is to be covered by the School.

- 
- h) The purpose and timing of the sabbatical must be acceptable to the Head of School and Executive Dean of Faculty.
 - i) Arrangements for coverage of teaching programs and administrative duties must be collaboratively determined by the applicant in consultation with the Head of School. For sabbaticals lasting no more than six months, which may necessitate the engagement of substitutes to cover teaching responsibilities, the Executive Dean and Head of School must ensure that such expenses are appropriately accounted for in the established and approved budget for the School.
 - j) An employee who does not serve in the university, on their return from sabbatical, for a period equivalent to the period of the sabbatical, will normally not have the period of sabbatical considered for the purposes of calculating pensionable service.
 - k) Upon conclusion of the sabbatical, the employee is required to convene with their Head of School to comprehensively outline and discuss the accomplishments derived from the sabbatical. This debriefing session is vital to assess the mutually agreed-upon objectives and ascertain the tangible benefits accrued to the individual and the university community. Failure to demonstrate meaningful and mutually beneficial achievements may lead to a review of future sabbatical requests in alignment with the university's commitment to optimizing the impact of such opportunities.

Application Submission Dates

The Sabbatical application must be submitted to Human Resources (HR) no later than:

- a) 31st March prior to the start of the academic year during which leave is sought.
- b) 30th June prior to the start of the next calendar year during which the leave is sought.

Duration

The duration of a Sabbatical shall not exceed one academic year in any given instance.

An application for a subsequent period of a Sabbatical may be made according to the following:

- An employee who has availed of a maximum of one year's Sabbatical may apply for another sabbatical seven years following the commencement of the last sabbatical.

- An employee who has availed of one semester sabbatical may apply for a further sabbatical three and half years following the commencement of the last sabbatical.

Budgetary and Financial Considerations

Each application will be examined on its own financial merits. There shall be no appreciable additional financial cost to the university through the operation of the Academic Sabbatical Policy.

6 Month Application

For applications of no more than 6 months, no adjustment to the salary of the academic employee is necessary.

Travel, subsistence, and other expenses incurred by the applicant in the single semester sabbatical period that are chargeable to, and for the purposes of, a research or self-funded project, must adhere to the terms and conditions attaching to the research or self-funded project. Such expenses, where they arise, may be claimed through the Core Expenses System, and must comply with DCU's [Travel, Subsistence and Other Expenses Policy](#).

One-year Application

There is likely to be additional costs (backfill costs) to the School relating to teaching and other requirements that should be covered by the applicant. Therefore, an adjustment to the employee's salary will be required; and this will be confirmed by the Finance Office as part of the sabbatical application process. As this period is reckonable for pension purposes, the normal full 12 months employee pension contributions are deducted.

Travel subsistence will be paid in addition to the reduced salary to cover approved travel arrangements required as part of the sabbatical abroad, up to a maximum level, which is determined by the financial sabbatical calculation. No further sabbatical subsistence should be claimed through the Core Expenses System. Travel expenses (e.g. flights incurred by the applicant during the one-year sabbatical period), that are chargeable to, and for the purposes of, a research or self-funded project, must adhere to the terms and conditions attaching to the particular research or self-funded project. Such flight bookings should be made through DCU's procured travel agency (currently Club Travel Ltd), with further details available under the DCU [Finance Procurement webpages](#). Travel expenses claimed during the one-year sabbatical period must comply with the DCU Travel, Subsistence and Other Expenses Policy, available in the university policies section on the DCU website.

Application Procedure

The application procedure for Academic Sabbatical Leave can be [found here](#).

Roles and Responsibilities

The Employee

- Read this policy and be aware of their entitlements as well as their obligations.
- Applications for sabbatical must be made using the Academic Sabbatical Form available from the HR website.
- Adhere to the submission deadlines outlined in this policy.
- Discuss and submit their application to their Head of School.
- Attend a meeting if required with Finance and their Head of School to discuss financial considerations.
- Keep a record of the documentation and paperwork issued in relation to their sabbatical.
- Meet with their Head of School, within one month of returning to work, to outline and discuss the achievements obtained during the period of sabbatical.

The Line Manager

- Read this policy and be aware of employees' entitlements.
- Review the sabbatical application and discuss with the employee.
- Consult with the Executive Dean regarding the application.
- Complete and return the Sabbatical Finance Proposal Form to the Finance Office.
- Meet with Finance, if required, to discuss financial considerations that impact the school's budget.
- Sign the LOA application form to indicate their support or otherwise of the application.
- Forward the signed application to the HR Director for final decision.
- Meet with the employee on their return to work to discuss the outcomes of the sabbatical.

Executive Deans

- Assess the sabbatical application considering the merits of the proposals, impact on the School/Faculty, the availability of resources, and alignment with the university's strategy and policies.
- Sign the Sabbatical application form to indicate their support or otherwise of the application.

Human Resources (HR)

- Help ensure that employees are aware of the content of this policy.
- Oversee the implementation of the policy and provide advice to employees on the application process.
- Maintain a record of all employees granted sabbaticals to include details on the duration and the financial arrangements made with the university.
- The HR Director will have final approval or otherwise of the application having regard to all information relating to the application.
- Provide written confirmation to the employee outlining the conditions under which the Sabbatical has been granted.

Finance Office

- Advise on the financial considerations regarding the payment or otherwise during the sabbatical.
- Determine the financial viability of the application. Equally, based on the information provided by the applicant, the Finance Office will organise the necessary updates to the university's insurers, where the sabbatical application is approved.

Related Documentation

This policy should be read in conjunction with other university policies and procedures, including:

- [Procedure for Academic Sabbatical Leave](#)
- [Academic Sabbatical Leave Finance Proposal Form](#)
- [DCU Travel, Subsistence and Other Expenses Policy](#)
- [Overpayments Policy](#)


Contact

All queries relating to the operation of this policy should be directed to a HR Business Partner a list of which may be found on the HR webpage.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or as soon as practicable after there has been a substantial change in any matter to which this policy refers.

Version Control

Document Name	Academic Sabbatical Policy		 Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath Dublin City University
Unit Owner	DCU People		
Version Reference	Original Version 2.0	Reviewed Version 2.1	
Approved by	Executive	Director of DCU People	
Effective Date	January 23 rd 2024	23 rd July 2025	

End.