

Faculty of Education and Health Sciences
Sabbatical Leave Procedures
&
Special Research Leave Procedures

1. Conditions of Leave

The University of Limerick Sabbatical Leave and Special Research Leave policy (November, 2013 <http://www2.ul.ie/pdf/686793965.pdf>) states the following conditions of Leave:

- 1.1. "Sabbatical proposals generally emphasise enhancement of research skills and knowledge. However, a sabbatical may also be taken to enhance the quality of teaching and promote innovation by investing in pedagogical or curricular knowledge when these are judged to be mutually beneficial to the faculty member and his/her department."
- 1.2. In addition to eligibility to apply for sabbatical leave or Special Research Leave, certain other conditions apply in relation to the (i) purpose, (ii) benefits, and (iii) outcomes of the sabbatical and (iv) the implications of these for subsequent sabbaticals (UL policy 2.3).
- 1.3. The sabbatical or special research leave must provide benefits to the faculty member, the Department, the Faculty and the University (UL policy 2.3, point 2). This requires that the benefits of the leave are consistent with the strategic goals of the University and the Faculty.

2. Sabbatical and Special Research Leave (SRL) Committee

In the context of the above the Faculty of Education and Health Sciences established a committee to consider all applications from EHS staff members and to monitor the reported outcomes of each person's Sabbatical or SRL in relation to the UL policy.

2.1. Membership of the EHS Sabbatical and SRL committee will include:

- Chair (Deans Nominee)
- 2 Professorial members of EHS with strong research and / or teaching profiles
- 1 faculty member external to EHS (i.e. ADR or ADAA or other faculty)

2.2. The Committee will meet twice a year. One meeting will take place in early January to consider, and make recommendations on, applications received. Another meeting will take place in early December to consider, evaluate and report on, submitted reports arising from completion of leave.

3. Process of applying for Sabbatical or Special Research Leave:

Notwithstanding the processes described in the University of Limerick SL and SRL policy document (November, 2013), EHS applicants should:

3.1. Seek verbal approval to apply from their Head of Department (HoD) (UL Policy 2.4)

In providing support, the HoD should consider the viability of the proposal and be confident that necessary conditions can be met. In addition to those conditions, the applicant's research record (incl. publications), teaching and administrative record, particularly over the previous three years, will be

assessed. Evidence of the applicant's ability to achieve designated outputs should be provided by the applicant to the HoD at this stage of the process. This should be demonstrated by, for example, their active research record and/or conference presentations, work with a research team, etc. In addition, application focussed on research should be clearly aligned with EHS research priorities. Applications focussed on the enhancement of teaching quality and innovation should be aligned to the strategic goals of the University.

3.2. Following agreement in principle with the HoD

The Sabbatical Leave or SRL application form must be completed by the staff member (UL Policy 2.6) and submitted electronically, along with their CV, to the EHS Sabbatical Leave Committee via the EHS Faculty Manager by January (January 16th for the AY 17/18) of the academic year preceding the academic year in which the Sabbatical Leave will be taken. Previous Sabbatical or SRL reports should be appended to the application if prior Sabbatical or SRL has been undertaken.

In order for the application to receive a favourable recommendation, the Committee must have evidence that the conditions of the leave will be met. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the completed application form includes sufficient information for the committee to make this judgement. Applicants are advised to include clearly described outcomes or results which can be used to document the attainment of objectives.

4. Process of approving Sabbatical Leave

- 4.1. Members of the Committee will consider applications independently and then decisions will be reached at a Committee meeting. After evaluating an application against the conditions laid out by the University SL and SRL policy, the Committee will collectively assign one of the following three ratings to the application: "highly recommended," "recommended," or "not recommended."
- 4.2. Recommendations will be passed to the Dean of the Faculty. The Dean will make the final decision in consultation with the relevant Heads of Department. Approval of applications must be received by HR by 31st January for leave due to start in the forthcoming academic year.
- 4.3. All applicants will be informed of EHS decisions in writing.

5. Evaluating outcomes

- 5.1. Within 30 days of returning to campus, the staff member must complete and submit a written report detailing how the objectives of the original application have been met (UL Policy 2.7), comment on any difficulties or opportunities encountered, indicate outcomes such as publications and grant applications, together with any new research possibilities; and provide a development plan that will show how the work completed can be built upon.
This report is to be submitted to the EHS Faculty Office, who will ensure copies are provided to the HoD, the Dean and the EHS Sabbatical & SRL committee..
- 5.2. During their returning semester, the staff member must present a seminar or session about their leave experiences to colleagues in their department (UL Policy 2.8, part 8).

- 5.3. The EHS Sabbatical and SRL committee will convene to evaluate all submitted reports in relation to the leave objectives. The Committee members will evaluate each report independently and an aggregate of these evaluations will be agreed at the Committee meeting. Reports will be evaluated as "Good," "Satisfactory" or "Not satisfactory." That evaluation will be provided to the staff member in writing.
- 5.4. In all situations in which reports are evaluated as "Not satisfactory," no further application for professional development leave may be made until a demonstrable improvement in research and/or teaching output has been achieved. The Committee may also request a more detailed report in these circumstances (UL Policy 2.7).