**HUMANITIES DIVISION**

**GUIDANCE NOTES: Academic Leave - Humanities procedures**

This guidance note covers procedures for that should be followed by academics and faculties when making an application for academic leave. Academic leave includes: sabbatical leave, dispensation from lecturing, special paid leave (under which leave funded by external research grants is usually taken), special unpaid leave. General information on academic leave is available on the University website at [Guidelines for leave for academic staff | HR Support (ox.ac.uk)](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/guidelines-for-leave-for-academic-staff)

All academic leave is subject to approval by both the Faculty Board and the Humanities Divisional Board.

**(1) Sabbatical leave**

*Eligibility and entitlement*

i The following academic staff grades in Humanities are entitled to sabbatical leave: statutory professor, statutory reader, APTF-U, APTF-F, APNTF, Keepers and Assistant Keepers in the Ashmolean Museum.

Sabbatical leave is covered by the University’s Regulations, which can be found at [Council Regulations 4 of 2004 | Governance and Planning (ox.ac.uk)](https://governance.admin.ox.ac.uk/legislation/council-regulations-4-of-2004#collapse1432851)

ii. To summarise: one term of sabbatical leave is granted to Associate Professors (grades 30S, 36S and 38S) and statutory Professors for every six terms of qualifying service. More than 18 terms of qualifying service cannot be accrued, and when the maximum has been reached, no more qualifying service will be accrued until sabbatical leave is taken. Therefore, the maximum sabbatical leave that can be accrued is three terms.

*Procedure*

iii. Sabbatical leave application forms are available from the Divisional Office or the Humanities website: <https://www.humanities.ox.ac.uk/academic-appointments#collapse395266>

iv. Sabbatical leave applications should be sent to Akiko Frellesvig in the Divisional Office ([academic.appointments@humanities.ox.ac.uk](mailto:muriel.taylor@humanities.ox.ac.uk) ) for entitlement to be checked before consideration by or on behalf of the Faculty Board. This means that any queries over entitlement can be discussed with the applicant prior to approval. If entitlement is checked after Faculty Board recommendation, any queries will be directed back to the Faculty. Entitlement can normally be checked within a week and applications will then be forwarded to the Faculty.

There should be a reasonable description of the purpose for the sabbatical leave on the form or attached as a separate page. If there is no description, the leave will not be granted on behalf of the Divisional Board. Approval is not automatic.

v. The application should be considered by the Faculty Board or by the Faculty Board Chair in accordance with the faculty's internal procedures. Once the application is approved/recommended, the Faculty Board Chair should sign the form and return to the Divisional Office for approval on behalf of the Divisional Board. This approval is by Chair’s Action by the Head of the Division and is usually confirmed within ten days (may be longer outside term time due to staff leave).

vi. Once approved on behalf of the Divisional Board, a letter granting leave is sent to the applicant, cc’d to HAF and to the FGB file (FGB file is the Personnel File for academics and kept at Central Records).

vii. At the time of the leave, HRIS Data Team will make an entry into the applicant’s record.

viii. Sabbatical leave is granted conditional on a brief report being submitted following the leave, and the confirmation (by completing a form provided by the Divisional Office) that the academic did not gain financially from the paid sabbatical leave.

Reports on sabbatical leave are forwarded to the Faculty Board for information.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**(2) Dispensation from Lecturing Obligations:**

*Eligibility and entitlement*

i. Dispensation from Lecturing Obligations is the equivalent of sabbatical leave for Associate Professors with a majority college contract (APTF-C, grade 39S).

Regulations for Dispensation from Lecturing Obligations can be found in the University’s Regulations [Guidelines for leave for academic staff | HR Support (ox.ac.uk)](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/guidelines-for-leave-for-academic-staff)

ii. The rules of entitlement to Dispensation differ from those for sabbatical leave. To summarise: dispensation is granted for one or more courses of 8 lectures during an academic year. APTF-Cs are contracted to do 2 courses of 8 lectures or classes per academic year (totalling no fewer than 16), and can apply for partial dispensation (1 course of 8 lectures, or fewer) or full dispensation (2 courses of 8 lectures, i.e. one complete academic year). Dispensation from no more than 2 courses can be granted within a 3-year period (academic years), and dispensation from no more than 4 courses can be granted within a 14-year period (academic years). This is within ANY 3-year or 14-year period, and does not start at the time of appointment, but at the time when dispensation is first granted.

If the applicant for dispensation applies for a term when they are not lecturing, there is no need for a formal application and this will not be reflected on their leave record. However the applicant must liaise with the Faculty if they wish to request covering of duties other than lecturing during college leave.

*Procedure*

iii. Procedures for application and approval for Dispensation from Lecturing Obligations are the same as those for sabbatical leave. Applicants are advised to contact the Divisional Office at an early stage to ensure that they have the required entitlement.

iv. As for sabbatical leave, Dispensation is granted conditional on a brief report being submitted following the leave, and the confirmation (by completing a form provided by the Divisional Office) that the academic did not gain financially from the paid leave. Reports are forwarded to the Faculty Board for information.

**(3) Special Paid Leave/Research Leave:**

*Eligibility and entitlement*

i. The most usual circumstances in which Special Paid Leave is taken is for a period of research leave funded by an externally-funded grant. For more information research support and application processes see [Guidelines for leave for academic staff | HR Support (ox.ac.uk)](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/guidelines-for-leave-for-academic-staff)

ii. Full-time special paid (research) leave does not count towards qualifying service for sabbatical leave but does not use qualifying service already accrued (i.e. the clock stops). Part-time special paid (research) leave does count towards qualifying service for sabbatical leave.

*Procedures*

iii. Application forms for Special Paid (Research) Leave are available from the Divisional Office or the Humanities website: <https://www.humanities.ox.ac.uk/academic-appointments#collapse395266>

iv. Special Paid (Research) Leave applications are not reliant on entitlement and therefore do not need to come to the Divisional Office prior to consideration/recommendation by or on behalf of the Faculty Board.

v. Approved applications should be signed by the Faculty Board Chair and submitted to the Divisional Office together with a grant award letter or equivalent.

vi. Special Paid (Research) Leave applications are approved by Chair’s Action by the Head of the Division on behalf of the Divisional Board and will take no longer than approval for sabbatical leave or dispensation from lecturing obligations.

vii. Following approval on behalf of the Divisional Board, the applicant will receive a letter from the Divisional Registrar, cc’d to HAF, College and the FGB file.

viii. At the time of the leave, the HRIS Data Team will make an entry into the applicant’s record on behalf of the Divisional HR team.

ix. Reports are not required from those on Special Paid (Research) Leave

**(4) Special Unpaid Leave:**

*Eligibility and entitlement*

i. There is no general entitlement to special unpaid leave. Applications for special unpaid leave are exceptional and are considered on a case-by-case basis. Full details of situations in which special unpaid leave may be considered are available at [Guidelines for leave for academic staff | HR Support (ox.ac.uk)](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/guidelines-for-leave-for-academic-staff#collapse1531916)

*Procedures*

ii. Application forms for special unpaid leave are available from the Divisional Office or the Humanities website: <https://www.humanities.ox.ac.uk/academic-appointments#collapse395266> The applicant should submit the form to the Faculty Board to request the unpaid leave, and make a case for why the leave will benefit the University/Faculty as well as the individual.

iii. If the Faculty Board supports the unpaid leave request, the Faculty Board Chair should then write to the Head of Division (via the Divisional Personnel Office), enclosing the application form and stating why the Faculty Board supports the request, and including the applicant’s letter.

iv. Unpaid leave is approved by the Head of Division, by Chair’s Action on behalf of the Divisional Board.

v. If the Head of Division approves, the applicant will receive a letter granting the leave, and the Divisional Office will process via HRIS and Payroll.

vi. Unpaid leave does not count as qualifying service for sabbatical leave, and the University does not make employer's pension contributions or national insurance payments. Staff may choose to make arrangements to maintain their own employee's contributions to USS or NI during a period of unpaid leave.

vii. Special Unpaid Leave should not be applied for in lieu of personal leave (e.g. career break, sick leave, or family leave) where that is more appropriate.

AF/CM  
March 2022

1. As of January 2022, reports are requested to be submitted within four weeks of completion of the leave. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)