



## **GENERAL PRINCIPLES & CONDITIONS RELATING TO ACADEMIC STUDY LEAVE AND UNPAID LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR ACADEMIC (TEACHING) STAFF**

### **ACADEMIC STUDY LEAVE**

‘Study Leave’ is defined as absence from normal teaching, research and other duties within the University for a significant period of time, which provides an opportunity for individual members of staff to advance the pursuit of research and scholarship. A period of study leave enables members of staff to enhance their skills and experience and to establish links with other researchers in their discipline.

The University recognises that a period of study leave, allowing time for reflection, renewal and concentrated activity, can be extremely beneficial to the person concerned, and that a scheme whereby this is promoted and encouraged makes an important contribution to the aims and objectives of the University.

The general principles and conditions of Aston’s scheme for study leave are set out below. Any request for academic study leave, or unpaid leave, which falls outside the principles and conditions set out below, will be agreed, in the case of professors, by the Vice-Chancellor, and in the case of other academic staff, by the Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

### **1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

- a) This policy on academic study leave applies to staff in the grades of professor, reader, senior lecturer and lecturer.
- b) It is implicit that, since resources may not be available within the School to permit the appointment of additional staff, any scheme whereby significant numbers of staff are granted study leave, relies upon the agreement of other appropriately qualified staff to accept a temporary increase in work-load.
- c) The maximum cumulative period of study leave is one year in each seven years of service (see [Explanatory Notes](#)).
- d) Eligibility for consideration for the maximum period of one year’s study leave will normally follow seven years’ service as a member of the academic staff of the University. Exceptionally, during the first seven years, and subject to a minimum qualifying period of two years service, staff may be considered for study leave on a pro-rata basis (e.g. six months after three years’ service).
- e) No application for a further period of one year’s study leave will be considered until a member of staff has completed a further seven years’ service, although applications for shorter periods will be considered in accordance with the provisions set out in c) and d) above.

- f) members of the academic staff on paid study leave may continue to engage in consultancy activities under the provisions of the University's "Consulting Policy", but shall not accept or undertake any other form of salaried employment elsewhere.

## 2. CONDITIONS

- a) All members of staff wishing to apply for academic study leave should complete an [Application for Study Leave form](#).
- b) Initially, members of staff should have a preliminary discussion of the Study Leave proposal and the benefits which they and the University expect to derive from it. The procedure for this will be as follows:
- Pro-Vice-Chancellors and Executive Deans: preliminary discussion with the Vice-Chancellor;
  - All other academic staff: preliminary discussion with the Executive Dean (or his/her nominee).
- c) Formal approval of applications for study leave will be given as follows:
- Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Executive Deans and Professors: approval will be given by the Vice-Chancellor, who will take into account, in the case of professorial staff, the views of the Executive Dean;
  - All other academic staff: formal approval will be given by the Executive Dean.
- d) Approved applications for Study Leave will be reported to the School Management Team by the Executive Dean.
- e) Executive Deans will notify the Director of Human Resources of all approved applications for study leave, in order that the University, as the employer, is aware of all members of staff on Study Leave at any given time.
- f) It will be the responsibility of Executive Deans to establish the necessary internal procedures which will ensure that all applications for study leave are considered in accordance with these principles and guidelines, having regard to:
- the specific needs of particular disciplines within the school;
  - the special circumstances of individual members of academic staff;
  - the over-riding requirement to maintain the activities of the school.
- g) Members of staff who have taken study leave will be required to submit a report to the School Management Team on the programme of activity which has been undertaken.

## UNPAID LEAVE

Unpaid leave of absence will normally be limited to a period of one year. Unpaid leave may be used, for example, to enable members of staff to accept a secondment, or other short-term appointment, in another institution, or to undertake research, or exceptionally, for personal reasons.

Consideration may be given, exceptionally, to extending a period of unpaid leave by one further year.

Written applications for unpaid leave should outline the purpose of the proposed period of unpaid leave and the benefits which the University, the School, and the individual is likely to derive from it. Initially, members of staff should have a preliminary discussion of the proposal as follows:

- Pro-Vice-Chancellors and Executive Deans:  
preliminary discussion with the Vice-Chancellor;
- All other academic staff:  
preliminary discussion with the Head of School (or his/her nominee).

Formal approval will be given as follows:

- Pro-Vice-Chancellors, Executive Deans and Professors:  
by the Vice-Chancellor, who will take into account, in the case of professorial staff, the views of the Executive Dean;
- All other academic staff:  
by the Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor, who will take into account the views of the Executive Dean.

Where another participating institution is involved, a "secondment agreement" between Aston University and the other participating institution should be drawn up in consultation with the Director of Human Resources. This should confirm:

- the contractual position of the member of staff, in relation to the term of the secondment, payment of remuneration (including PAYE and national insurance contributions);
- the rights of Aston University (and the participating institution), to terminate the arrangement during the period of secondment;
- the employment position of the employee throughout the period of secondment;
- the employment position of the employee when the secondment ends;
- that agreement has been reached with Aston University in relation to the ownership of any intellectual property generated during the period of secondment/unpaid leave in accordance with the University's Intellectual Property Rights Policy.

It is University policy to maintain the employer's share of contributions to the Universities' Superannuation Scheme (USS), provided that the individual member of staff maintains the employee's share of contributions. In any event, members of staff taking a period of unpaid leave should discuss pension arrangements, in advance, with the Pensions Officer.

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

In determining the qualifying for eligibility for study leave the following explanatory notes may be helpful:

- i) eligibility for consideration for the maximum period of one year's **continuous study leave** will normally follow seven years' service as a member of the academic staff of the University.
- ii) eligibility for a further period of one year's **continuous** study leave will follow a further completed seven years' service.
- iii) eligibility for shorter, pro-rata, periods of study leave will follow two years' service as a member of the academic staff of the University.
- iv) the total of shorter pro-rata periods of study leave must not exceed one year in the first seven years of service.
- v) thereafter, eligibility for further shorter, pro-rata, periods of study leave will be considered, subject to the over-riding principle that cumulative periods of study leave must not exceed a total of one year in each seven years' service.
- vi) periods spent on study leave will count when calculating length of service.

PS/KT/MF  
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