



Academic leave is an inherent part of the work of the university, justified by its value in building the scholarly reputation and productivity of the institution. It is a secondment or an assignment to focus on work related to specific intellectual outcomes, that are innately on the strategic path of the individual AND the institution. It should not be confused with any category of personal leave.

Academic leave may be granted to a staff member at the discretion of the Council, subject to the exigencies of the work of the University. Academic leave may be withdrawn by the University at any time if in its opinion the interests of the University so require. Paid employment may not be undertaken during any period of academic leave, except with the consent of the University. Academic Leave will not normally be granted for a total continuous period exceeding one year. Conditions of academic leave to be noted are:

1. Academic leave may be granted only to a staff member on an academic contract who proposes to use his/her leave for research or study purposes, and, in exceptional cases where there is a clearly motivated institutional imperative, for teaching or professional practice. The work undertaken should be relevant to the staff member's duties and be of benefit to the University and scholarship generally.
  - a. For staff members already in possession of a doctoral qualification, the academic leave proposal may cover the full range of scholarly opportunities appropriate to their discipline. The onus is on the applicant to make a case for the benefit to the university, their department, and their own scholarly career, of the proposed academic leave programme.
  - b. For staff members who have not yet attained a doctoral level qualification, academic leave will normally be granted only for the purpose of taking a significant step towards achieving this level of qualification. This typically includes completion of a doctoral thesis, or field work/study and substantial progress towards completion of a thesis. In the case of a staff member who has not yet completed a Masters' degree, it could include completion of such, and preparation of publications from the thesis.
  - c. In cases where a staff member who does not yet hold a doctorate proposes any academic leave programme other than completing or taking a large step towards completing such a doctorate, overwhelming evidence is needed, supported strongly by the relevant HOD and Dean, that the benefits to the university proposed by the alternate academic leave programme outweigh the benefits of an additional staff member with a doctoral level qualification.
2. When an application for academic leave is considered, the potential benefits which will flow therefrom to the staff member and to the University are relevant factors; the University also takes into account the staff member's past academic performance and the results achieved, by way of research and study, during any previous period of academic leave and in the intervening period. For staff applying to use a period of academic leave to further or complete a degree by thesis, a proposal should have been completed, and accepted by a higher degrees committee (or whatever alternate mechanism might be appropriate to the Faculty concerned), before the period of academic leave commences. Where leave is granted for work towards a Masters degree, the candidate will normally be required to have progressed sufficiently before the start of the academic leave period to place them in a position to complete the degree during the period of leave.
3. An application for academic leave, together with a detailed programme, shall be submitted annually on the date prescribed using the online academic leave system. A prior discussion with the Head of Department about dovetailing the period of academic leave with the operational needs of the department should have taken place well ahead of this date. The online system refers the application to the Head of Department for his/her recommendation, and onward transmission to the Dean of the Faculty and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research & Development for their recommendations. Applications for academic leave from deans shall be submitted directly to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research & Development.
4. Before academic leave is granted to a staff member, the Council needs to be satisfied that arrangements for carrying on his/her work during his/her absence are adequate and have been approved by the appropriate structures of the University. It is usual for teaching and administrative duties to be re-assigned during an

individual's period of academic leave, but research leadership and supervision duties for thesis based students in the individual's postgraduate pipeline are normally required to be fulfilled during periods of academic leave.

5. Academic leave shall not normally be granted to a new staff member until he/she has completed three years continuous full-time service and he/she has been appointed to the permanent staff on the expiry of his/her probationary period of service. In exceptional circumstances academic leave may be granted to a member of staff prior to confirmation.
6. Academic leave credit shall accrue at the rate of two months leave on full pay for every completed year of full-time service up to a maximum of twelve months.
7. Academic leave shall not normally be granted for periods of less than two months or more than twelve months on any one occasion.
8. Any academic leave credit to a staff member on his/her return from a period of academic leave shall remain to his/her credit.
9. Academic leave may be granted to a staff member on a pro-rata basis e.g. a staff member who upon return to duty has no academic leave to his/her credit may be granted two months academic leave after one year's service, four months after two years' service etc.
10. A period of academic leave shall not count as service earning academic leave credit.
11. Academic leave may be granted for periods of six, nine or twelve calendar months, within the limits of the current entitlement of the staff member.

Leave for a period of twelve months may be taken from the first day of any calendar month.

Leave for periods of six months shall normally be taken from either 1 January or 1 July and leave for nine months and for any period between nine and twelve calendar months shall normally be taken from 1 January, 1 April, 1 July or 1 October.

Applications for leave to be taken from other dates must state why a departure from the normal dates is necessary.

Academic leave for periods of less than six calendar months may also be granted to a staff member. Such leave may be taken subject to the exigencies of the work of the University.

12. Up to one half of any period of continuous full-time service of the staff of another University, University College, Technical College or other teaching or research Institute, approved for the purpose by the Council, may be recognised for the purpose of academic leave. However, in respect of such service there must be entitlement to academic leave of a similar kind and the staff member must not have been granted such leave or pay in lieu thereof, and provided further that he/she has been a staff member of Rhodes University for at least three years.
13. When a temporary member of the full-time lecturing staff is appointed to a permanent post, his/her continuous service in the University in a temporary capacity immediately prior to his/her appointment to the permanent staff may be included when calculating his/her entitlement to academic leave, up to a maximum of three years.
14. A staff member shall not normally be granted academic leave in the final year of service prior to his/her retirement. There needs to be compelling operational or research productivity reasons for exceptions in this regard. Academic leave shall not accrue in the final year of service prior to retirement.
15. Within three months after resuming duty following a period of academic leave the staff member must submit, using the online academic leave system, a report on the work he/she has done during his/her leave.

16. Academic leave may not be taken during the notice period of a staff member who has resigned from the university.
17. A staff member who is granted academic leave must undertake to return to his/her post after the end of the leave and to serve the University for a further period of not less than six months following a period of academic leave of six months or less, or twelve months following a period of academic leave of twelve months, with a pro-rata number of months in between the two. Academic leave will not accrue during the notice period required when a staff member resigns. If a staff member gives notice immediately after a period of academic leave and is permitted to reduce the prescribed period of six months notice, he/she shall, unless the Council determines otherwise, be required to refund the salary and any travel grant or other allowance he/she received in respect of the period of academic leave.
18. All periods of leave for research or study purposes, whether funded through the academic leave credit system, or granted through external fellowships, shall be applied for through the online academic leave system, if they exceed two months.
19. No monetary grant will be made in lieu of academic leave credit accrued by a staff member at any time, whether during service or when he/she leaves the service of the University by resignation or retirement, and no obligation to make allowance for payment in lieu of academic leave shall rest upon the Council.

**Adapted from the Academic Staff Conditions of Service document: 24 January 2009  
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