Faculty of Media, Arts and Humanities
Research and Scholarship Internally Funded Leave Policy

1. PRINCIPLES

MAH views periods of leave as essential to the achievement of excellence in research and scholarship across the Faculty of Media, Arts and Humanities. Creative practice and the generation of new ideas demand immersion in scholarship, evidence, thought and collaboration; the generation of quality outputs necessitates concentrated periods of study and writing away from teaching; successful grant applications demand time and focus; intense programmes of impact activity may be incompatible with the teaching timetable.

Accordingly, MAH's Funded Leave Policy is designed to:

- Actively support the research strategies and scholarship needs of subject areas, including REF strategy and curriculum development.
- Be responsive to the needs of faculty on different tracks and at different career points.
- Support the creation of publications, practice, and scholarship outputs of the highest quality.
- Support work leading to external grant funding.
- Support work that engages in knowledge exchange and addresses social, economic, cultural, and environmental outcomes and impacts.
- Mitigate the impact on research/scholarship of career breaks.
- Create space for innovation, ideas, and creativity.
- Embed MAH's principles of equality and transparency.

2. POLICY

2.1 Academic staff on permanent contracts are eligible for the provision of **one term** of funded Leave after **the completion of three academic cycles of service** (normally expressed as six semesters or nine terms).

2.2 Periods of maternity/paternity leave and sick leave will contribute to this eligibility to ensure that MAH's leave policy reflects best EDI practice.

2.3 Externally funded leave and unpaid leave periods do not contribute to this eligibility.

2.4 Flexible working arrangements will also be considered, but eligibility must reflect an equivalent period of teaching/administration.

2.5 The three academic cycles of service are counted since the applicant's last period of internally-funded leave (or since their appointment start date if they have not had internally-funded leave before). Staff are not able to 'bank' or carry forward terms of service from before their last period of leave to count towards eligibility for a future period of leave.

2.6 Faculty on fixed-term contracts will be deemed eligible for leave only if their contract extends beyond the usual three-year leave cycle. Faculty moving from fixed term to permanent contracts should consider their start-date for leave purposes to be when their fixed term contract began.

2.7 Up to a maximum of 10% of FTE staff on internally-funded leave in any given term can

be supported across MAH. Faculty/Subject staffing and financial resources, including the leave of other members of faculty, may have a bearing on the quantity of leave awarded in each subject group.

2.8 In cases where more staff apply for leave than can be accommodated in a term in a given subject group, **applications will be prioritised according to the following criteria**:
1. Relevant EDI considerations (applicants with a disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010, those returning from periods of maternity, adoption or shared parental leave);
2. Career stage of the applicant, with priority given to early career academics;
3. Length of time since the applicant last had leave;
4. Relevant operational considerations for the subject group and or faculty of MAH.
Heads of Subject will be asked to rank leave applications based on the criteria outlined above and this will be noted by the MAH Leave Committee when awarding leave. *The MAH Leave Committee will also review applications on the basis of the planned outcomes of the leave and the relevance of these outcomes to MAH's strategic aims and, where relevant, the upcoming REF submission*. Final decisions on leave awards are made by the MAH Leave Committee, which is chaired by the Associate Deans for Research and Education.

2.9 Those undertaking **Senior Faculty Leadership roles** (Head of Subject and Associate Dean) are eligible to apply for one term's leave after three academic cycles in the usual way, and for appointments made *before August 2023* local agreements on *additional* periods of leave following a leadership role will be honoured.

2.10 **For Senior Faculty Leadership roles appointed after August 2023**, post-holders will *not* be automatically eligible for *extended* or *additional* periods of leave, *unless* they have extended their term in the leadership role, or they have been unable to take research leave for a period of 5 years (10 semesters or 15 terms) or more. For information on other mitigations for Leadership roles and their effect on research and scholarship time, please refer to the Reward and Recognition for Leadership Roles policy.

2.11 Holders of all administrative roles (including leadership roles) are normally expected to complete their term in the role before taking leave. In exceptional cases, this may be varied if requested, as long as the variation meets both the Faculty's and the University's needs (including business needs).

2.12 If a period of leave is disrupted by unanticipated events (for instance a period of severe illness) then the faculty member concerned should discuss with their Head of Subject a potential reduction in the following year's PAW to mitigate that disruption (subject to teaching commitments). Disrupted leave cannot normally be repeated.

2.13 A return from leave report will be required within a month of the leave period ending. Failure to supply a report, or a substantial and unexplained discrepancy between the work proposed and the work completed will impact the Committee's consideration of subsequent applications for leave.

3. PROCESS

3.1 Leave Applications are sent by the applicant to mah-research@sussex.ac.uk by the deadline advised by the Leave Committee, as circulated in the Faculty Update. **Late applications without mitigating circumstances will not be considered.** In the case of mitigating circumstances, these will need agreement from the Head of Subject or Executive Dean before an application can be considered.

3.2 The application will then be sent to the relevant Head of Subject for their recommendation, who will return it to the MAH Leave Committee. The full application, including aims for the leave period, will be evaluated by the MAH Leave Committee, after which the applicant will be informed of the result.

3.3 If the applicant wishes to share supplementary information in support of their leave application but this is of a confidential nature (e.g. information relating to EDI criteria) we recommend that the applicant writes or speaks in confidence to their Subject Head so that this can be taken in to account when considering leave applications.

3.4 Where applications cannot be supported by the Head of Subject due to resourcing issues/stipulated overall quotas (e.g. too many leave requests for a given academic year) the Leave Committee will review the Head of Subject's recommendations (see 2.8 above) and approve the final leave allocation for the subject group in question. When notified of the outcome of their application, unsuccessful applicants will receive a short explanation and a recommendation for next steps, which will normally involve them applying for leave in the next round of applications.

3.5 Appeals against Leave Committee decisions are only possible in the case of alleged procedural irregularity and should be taken up through the University's central complaints process.

3.6 Faculty whose applications are recommended by the Leave Committee will be formally contacted to confirm the period of leave awarded, with a copy sent to the Head of Subject and Human Resources.

Approved June 2022
Updated February 2024 *to include new information on Leadership roles and leave.*

Appendix: Other MAH policies which relate to internally funded leave

Assessment marking responsibilities while on leave
Reward and Recognition for Leadership Roles policy