

## School of Mathematics and Physics

# Academic Research Leave Implementation Guidelines

### 1. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

The School of Mathematics and Physics (SMP) is dedicated to developing cutting-edge solutions to challenging problems through world-class research and innovation and continuously strive to build an internationally recognized reputation in research. In line with this commitment, the University provides various types of Academic Research Leave to support staff in their research endeavors.

The *XJTLU Academic Research Leave Policy* must be followed. The purpose of these implementation guidelines is to specify the school-level practices based on the university policy, aimed at supporting the academic research activities of faculty members, promoting research development and ensuring transparency in the decision-making process within the school.

These guidelines apply to all academic staff of SMP. There are three types of research leave,

- 1) Short-Term Research Leave: up to 7 calendar days
- 2) Long-Term Research Leave: from 8 calendar days to 30 calendar days
- 3) Sabbatical Leave: one semester

### 2. APPLICATION PROCESS

It is important to strictly adhere to the application process and general principles outlined in the *XJTLU Academic Research Leave Policy* for three types of research leave. Please note that submission of a completed research leave application does not guarantee final approval from the school.

#### 2.1 SHORT RESEARCH LEAVE

For Short-Term Research Leave, staff should normally apply for the leave at least one week before the leave. Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply well before the leave. Applications must be submitted through the X-HR system. The following documents and details must be included in the submission:

- 1) Official Invitation Letter: This letter should outline the purpose and duration of the research visit. The invitation letter must be addressed to the applicant by name. If issued in China, it must include the issuing institution's official seal.
- 2) Detailed Schedule of Activities:
  - A comprehensive itinerary that includes all the specific activities and events planned during

the research visit. The expected date of departure from Suzhou must be included in the schedule. The expected date of arrival back in Suzhou must be included in the schedule.

- 3) Budget source: Indicate whether the budget will be covered by the school budget, the department, by internal research funds, by external research funds, or by the host organization.
- 4) Teaching Coverage (if needed): Short-Term Research Leave normally should not be taken during the teaching weeks. If necessary, staff should provide the relevant email record to demonstrate that another academic staff has agreed to cover the class for the applicant.

## 2.2 LONG RESEARCH LEAVE

To apply for Long-Term Research Leave, the first step for staff is to email the application together with statement and documents listed above to Line Manager at least one month prior to the leave. The applicant should also explicitly mention their three most recent PDR ratings in the application.

Applicants for long research leave must satisfy the following additional requirements:

- 1) At least one PDR rating of *Excellent* or *Outstanding* in the recent three years. Applications from staff that have onboarded less than three years ago are evaluated on an individual bases.
- 2) Within two weeks of returning from the long research leave, applicants must email the following to their HoD:
  - a. Application document (the PDF file submitted during the application process).
  - b. A final report, which addresses each of the expected outcomes that were mentioned in the application document.
- 3) For each research leave during the academic year, above-mentioned documents a) and b) must be added as attachments to the PDR document of that academic year.

Further details of the application procedure can be found in the *XJTLU Academic Research Leave Policy*.

## 2.3 SABBATICAL LEAVE

In addition to the eligibility and general principles required by the university in the *XJTLU Academic Research Leave Policy*, faculty members applying for Sabbatical Leave must meet the following criteria:

- 1) The school has sufficient faculty members to deliver all modules, such that module delivery will not be compromised.
- 2) At least 6 publications (JCR Q3 journals or above, C2 peer-reviewed conference proceedings or above) in the primary and secondary research areas within the last 6 years, and for at least one of these publications the applicant must be the first author or corresponding author.
- 3) At least 2 Excellent (or above) and no single below expectation in the past six Annual Professional Development Review (PDR) rounds.

Applicants are required to provide the following documents:

- 1) A detailed research proposal, including but not limited to research goals, research plan, expected research outcomes, justification, motivation, information on collaborating scholars and external support.
- 2) An updated Curriculum Vitae (CV) highlighting previous research achievements.
- 3) Arrangements for the supervision of PhD students, Final Year Project students and Dissertation students during the Sabbatical Leave.

### 3. MISCELLANEOUS

Specific provisions in these guidelines may be adjusted based on the school's actual circumstances.

#### APPROVAL AND REVISION LOG

Date	Approval	Description
Nov 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2024	SSMT	Approved
Dec 4 <sup>th</sup> , 2025	SSMT	Updates on requirements for application; language improvements.
Dec 30 <sup>th</sup> , 2025	SSMT	Clarifications on invitation letters; updated requirements for long research leave; language and presentation improvements.