

Study Leave for Teaching-Focused Staff: Reflections on Experiences

- Preparing an Application
 - Was noted that some departments interpret [study leave guidance](#) as that, due to the nature of Teaching-Focused contracts, applications for study leave should emphasize pedagogical activities.
 - Suggestion for taking a strategic approach to an application – i.e., as well as considering what activities you would like to undertake and/or developing ‘promotable activities’, could consider what your department’s priorities are and what they might look favourably on in applications.
 - Importance of flexibility – in other words, don't expect to do everything you put on the application, as some of it is out of your control! (e.g., colleagues suddenly being unavailable for a planned project, etc.)
 - Potential activities included teaching-adjacent publications (SoTL, pedagogical research projects, etc.), discipline research, refreshing teaching, involvement with national groups/activities, external engagement, partnership/impact work, professional recognition and career development (HEA Fellowships, Teaching awards, etc.)
 - *Might think about using time for other activities (e.g., preparing promotion application), but this might not be something to put on an application as it is likely to be considered not covered by the study leave policy!*
- Study Leave
 - All speakers reflected on initial challenges of coming to terms with a significant change of pace from a high workload to a sudden lack of routine and feelings of not knowing what you’re doing. A suggested approach was to set realistic expectations in terms of what the experience will be.
 - Some experienced feelings of isolation, so actively engaged with things to maintain contact and/or usually unable to have time for – research seminars, events, etc.
 - Speakers characterised the privilege but also pressure of study leave – i.e., of potentially having the time/space to develop other activities (somewhat unique in working environments), but then the pressures of ‘making the most’ of this time.

- Significance of ‘getting away from things’, providing head space to think about activities/future plans – i.e., importance of thinking, not just producing outputs.
- Return after Study Leave
 - Could consider study leave as marking the end of one chapter of career, and the beginning of another – e.g., might discuss with department what academic admin roles you would like to return to (and which to leave behind!)?
 - Possibility of additional study leave for those returning to work from long term leave, such as: Maternity/adoption leave; Extended paternity leave; Long-term parental leave. Guidance on the [Warwick Academic Returners Fellowship \(WARF\)](#).
- Other/Miscellaneous Responses to Q&As
 - Was noted that, due to the change in Teaching-Focused staff accruing study leave entitlement from the 2018/19 academic year, potential issues of many T-F colleagues wishing to apply for leave at the same time.
 - Q. about departmental overall workload requirements and ‘buffers’ for study leave allocations – [HoDs are required to ensure that the number of staff on leave for any given term does not exceed 20% of the total number of Academic staff available to the Department in that term.](#)
 - Q. regarding contract split across multiple departments – suggested speak with [People Team](#) to confirm policy, but likely that both HoDs would need to agree.