This Research Leave Scheme is governed by the institutional Research Leave Policy.

The purpose of the institutional Research Leave Scheme is to enable REF eligible staff time away from teaching and administrative duties to undertake or complete work of world-leading (4*) quality that will add significantly to our next submission to the Research Excellence Framework.

Applications are invited by 16th June 2023; selection decisions will be made by the end of July; it is anticipated that successful candidates will be notified 31st July 2023. Research leave under this round of the scheme will normally fall into the second half session of the academic year 2023/24 and commence on 15 January 2024 (however, if necessary, applications can be made for the first half session of the 24/25 academic year).

All candidates will require support from their Head of School and, where appropriate, will need to comply with any additional School requirements around approval.

Who can apply?

The scheme is open to all REF eligible staff. Staff are eligible if they hold a contract that includes a significant responsibility to undertake independent research. All staff holding an academic teaching & research contract are eligible.

Staff holding research only contracts are eligible if they:

- Were eligible for REF2021 or
- Are Senior Research Fellows (Grade 8) who are contractually required to undertake and publish independent research. Senior Research Fellows employed on commercially sensitive work who are restricted by the terms of the contractual funding arrangements with third parties from publishing papers or reports are not REF eligible.
- Research Fellows/Research Assistants are only eligible if they are (i) leading or acting as PI on a significant grant or discrete work package of a grant or research programme (at least £50k for STEM subjects and £15k for HASS subjects); (ii) leading on a significant project or line of enquiry that is not externally funded, equivalent to leading or acting as PI as above; or (iii) are in receipt of an independently won, competitively awarded fellowship, requiring the awardee to undertake independent research.

What can staff apply for?

The awards can include (to a maximum of £20k)

- Cost of replacement teaching for up to a semester (costed at teaching fellow)
Selection panels

Applications will be invited twice a year, and selection panels will meet thereafter to consider application and make selections. Applicants can request feedback on their applications; however, appeals can only be made on the grounds of process.

Selection panels will be chaired by the Vice-Principal (Research) and draw on a pool of panelists that includes the Research Deans, Interdisciplinary Directors and School Directors of Research (disciplinary expertise will be co-opted as required). Each panel will consist of 3 panelists. Administrative support will be provided by the Directorate of Research & Innovation.

The decision of the panel is final. The panel reserves the right not to award research leave if, in their view, applications fail to achieve the scheme's objectives or the scheme is over-subscribed.

What information will the selection panel require?

The application should set out how the proposed activities during the research leave period enable the researchers to complete or enhance research to world leading level (ie 4*) for REF2028.

This could include work at all stages of the research life cycle but its primary focus is on activities that will deliver 4* outputs or 4* impact case studies for REF (eg undertaking additional work to further enhance the quality of ongoing work, engagement with stakeholders/ industry/ government/ third sector partners, facilitating impact etc).

The application should set out clearly how research leave at this point will deliver or enhance/accelerate the completion of one or more 4* REF outputs and/or impact case studies within the timetable for the next REF.

Any previous external or internal funding, and further funding that may be required should be clearly listed, even if the proposed spend does not fall under allowable costs within this scheme. Applicants may ask for funding for research leave of up to a maximum of up to six months. Any research leave granted under this scheme may be supplemented by externally funded research leave, or research leave granted under a School scheme.

Applicants are required to report any outcomes of the research leave, within once month of completion, with all outputs to meet open access eligibility and be recorded in PURE.

What are the selection criteria?

Selection panels will consider:

- whether the proposed activity or activities are capable of achieving world leading (4*) quality in terms of originality, significance and rigour (for research outputs) and in term of reach and significance (for impacts)
April 2023

- Whether the timeframe for delivery is realistic and achievable for REF2028

**Equality & Diversity**

We will be undertaking equality impact assessments to monitor the representation of researchers with characteristics protected by the Equalities Act 2010, full time/part time status and career stage among applicants and awardees. While the selection criteria will apply equally to all applications, **we particularly invite applications from underrepresented groups and researchers with protected characteristics.**

In considering applications, allowance will be made for researchers who have taken a career break or family related leave or are returning from long term sick leave.

**Further information**

Further information is available from grantsacademy@abdn.ac.uk

April 2023