

Warwick Academic Returners Fellowship Policy

Policy Name: Warwick Academic Returners Fellowship (WARF) Policy	
Owner and Key Contact(s)	Geraldine Mills, HR Director and Karen Terry-Weymouth, HR Strategy Director
Date issued	December 2022
Approving body/ bodies	Policy Oversight Group
Related Statutes, Ordinances, Regulations, Policies and Guidance	Academic Study Leave Academic Promotions Policy
Equality Screening Form submission date and outcome	Equality Impact Assessment screening undertaken on 24 October 2022.
Version Control	
Current Version Number	2.0
Date of Last review	December 2022
Date of Next review	January 2026
Expiry date	January 2026

1. Purpose and Eligibility

1.1. The University's framework for the progression and promotion of academic staff recognises three broad career pathways – Teaching-focused (T-F), Research-focused (R-F) and Teaching and Research (T+R). Recognition, progression, and promotion will be guided by the contributions and performance of individuals in relation to the responsibilities associated with their designated career pathway. Academic Promotion, in particular, requires a sustained high level of performance across a range of activity, but with particular focus on elements linked directly to the individual's career pathway. Further information about the University's Academic Promotions Process can be found [here](#).

1.2. The University is committed to addressing the recruitment and retention of excellent academic talent and recognises that absence due to maternity/ adoption/ extended paternity and long-term parental leave can have a detrimental impact on career progression.

1.3. The aim of this Policy is to provide a centrally funded scheme – a Warwick Academic Returners Fellowship (WARF) – that has the purpose and effect of providing additional study leave for those on all academic contracts, who are returning to work from long term leave, such as:

- Maternity/adoption leave
- Extended paternity leave
- Long-term parental leave

1.4. The period of the Fellowship will be for up to a maximum of twelve months. The precise duration may be equal to or less than the amount of leave taken, however, it may not be longer than the leave taken.

1.5. The award enables staff to concentrate on work that supports their career progression, enabling them to benefit from a sustained period of dedicated time. The work to be undertaken should be agreed with the Head of Department (or their nominated representative) in line with the practice for normal study leave and should focus on the individual's primary area(s) of responsibility. Recommendations for areas of focus for teaching focused academics can be found in Appendix 1.

1.6. The award allows the home department to relieve the member of staff of 60% of their normal annual workload in order to focus on activity which will support their career progression, in the context of Departmental and University strategy. Further information can be found in the University's [Academic Study Leave Policy](#).

1.7. In all cases, the staff member, and their Head of Department (or nominated representative) should jointly identify, clear expected outcomes arising from the Fellowship.

1.8. In some cases, the 60% may be consolidated to enable the individual to complete a specific project while ensuring that the Department can continue to deliver as needed. For example, if a member of staff is successfully awarded a 12 month Fellowship for 60% of their normal workload, they could focus on a piece of work on a full time basis for 7.2 months (0.6 x 12). Such requests should be detailed on the WARF Application Form (see Appendix 2).

2. Financial implications of the Fellowship

2.1. The award will provide central funding for up to 60% of replacement staff costs for the duration of the agreed Fellowship.

2.2. The additional funds must be used to ensure that the academic focuses on work that supports their career progression with a clear link to the current or developmental requirements of their role.

2.3. The money should be used to employ replacement staff or pay current staff to undertake the additional teaching or administrative duties. For the avoidance of doubt, it should not be used to cover for research time that is already allocated.

3. Training/education

- 3.1. Staff returning from long-term leave may require other support to help them with the transition back into their academic role, therefore consideration should be given to any training/ development that may be required.
- 3.2. Returning staff should be encouraged to consult with the [Leadership and Management team](#) and the [Academic Development Centre](#) team who offer a wide range of training programmes.

4. Application process

- 4.1. The application process and relevant request form can be found in Appendices 2 and 3.
- 4.2. Acceptance on to the scheme is not automatic and the University reserves the right to refuse or defer a request if it does not fit the needs of the department or the wider Strategy of the University.
- 4.3. Upon completion of the Fellowship, recipients of the award will be required to write a report outlining the benefit of the fellowship, and in particular how the award will help to accelerate their career progression. This report must be submitted to the Head of Department and relevant HR Business Partner.
- 4.4. By accepting the award, the applicant agrees to the completion of the report mentioned in 4.3, at the end of their Fellowship.

**Appendix 1 - Recommendations for Academic (Study) Leave and Warwick Academic Returners Fellowships (WARF)
Applications: Teaching and Learning Focus**

Academic leave is intended for colleagues to work on substantial projects, sufficiently large that the work cannot be completed alongside usual work commitments. Applicants need to be able to demonstrate that the proposed work warrants academic leave rather than a temporary reallocation of some duties. All staff on level FP7 and above regardless of contract are eligible to apply for academic leave.¹ Colleagues may also apply to the Warwick Academic Returners Fellowship (WARF) scheme.

This document focuses on recommendations for colleagues applying for teaching and learning focused academic leave or the WARF scheme. Nevertheless, some advice may be relevant to academic leave and WARF applications more generally. Note that any academic colleague can apply for a teaching and learning focused academic leave, such periods of leave are not exclusively relevant for colleagues on teaching focused contracts.²

Below, a number of areas of potential focus for teaching focused applications are suggested. The individual suggestions for areas of work may not be sufficiently substantial to warrant academic leave unless put forward as part of a set of proposed works. Applicants are advised to consider how their proposed projects fit with the university strategic directions/themes/priorities such as those highlighted in the University of Warwick Education Strategy.³ There are currently four such themes in the education strategy and we organise suggestions according to these themes initially.

Note that proposed work should directly benefit the applicant’s department / faculty / the university as well as the applicant. Applicants should also consider potential benefits for applicants’ external, national, and international, networks. Applications may be comparative in nature.

Education Strategy Theme	Work Suggestions
Disciplinary Excellence	Programme substantial design/redesign Module substantial design/redesign Textbook writing Teaching resources creation Pedagogy research
Interdisciplinarity	Programme design/redesign Module design/redesign
Internationalisation	Programme design/redesign Development of resources to support recruitment
Student Research	Development of resources to foster research led teaching

¹ FP7 is associated with a Senior Teaching Fellow / Assistant Professor at the University of Warwick.

² Entitlement to academic leave is accrued at the rate of one term for every six terms taught. For teaching focused colleagues, the accrual date started in September 2018. This means that anyone on a teaching focused contract at STF and above who was employed in September 2018 will have accumulated 9 terms of service in September 2021 and is therefore eligible to apply for one term of academic leave.

³ <https://warwick.ac.uk/about/strategy/education/detail/strategicdirections/>

Further Key Themes	Work Suggestions
Student Engagement	Development of engagement strategies as cohorts change in size and nature Development of student engagement resources Development of resources to foster student wellbeing
Education for Sustainable Development	Creation of resources to support sustainability in the curriculum
Enterprise	Work with communities and regional organisations Work with employers and alumni on careers resources Work with cultural organisations
Innovation	Development of resources to support online; blended; hybrid and hyflex learning ⁴ Development of online; blended; hybrid and hyflex programmes
Equality; Diversity and Inclusivity	Decolonisation of the curriculum Attainment gap research and strategies Development of outreach resources Development of resources to support widening participation Development of resources to meet Athena SWAN challenges Development of accessible resources

The application forms for academic leave and WARF ask applicants to complete a short statement outlining the objectives of the academic leave and detailing publications or other outputs. At the end of the academic leave or WARF period applicants will need to complete a short report summarising whether the objectives claimed were met.

Note that the ability to apply for academic leave or WARF does not mean that it will be granted as there are limits on the numbers of colleagues who may be absent at any one time. However, applicants should expect to receive feedback on when they might expect to get academic leave or WARF and whether they need to modify any of their objectives.

⁴ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/guidance/building-a-taxonomy-for-digital-learning.pdf>

APPENDIX 2 – APPLICATION PROCESS FOR WARWICK RETURNERS FELLOWSHIP



