Chapter 11

Strategic Planning, Appraisal and Staff Development
11. STRATEGIC PLANNING, APPRAISAL AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

11.1 Strategic Planning

The University of Wales: Trinity Saint David focuses on its role within the community and is committed to the range of strategies established by the Welsh Assembly Government. In practical terms, this means analysing and evaluating core business and aligning activity. It has also means focusing closely on reviewing existing provision and developing new provision to meet the needs of current and potential learners.

In recent years, a considerable emphasis has been placed on the need to integrate the strategic planning process with appraisal, staff development and planning at Faculty and Support Unit level. Important stages in this process were achieved when Trinity University College was awarded the Investors in People (IIP) status during 2005/06, and was successfully reassessed for IIP during 2008/09. The new university is now working to ensure that the University of Wales: Trinity Saint David also meets the requirements for IIP when it is next reassessed during the 2011/12 Academic Year.

In terms of strategic planning, there is a coherent and participative mechanism that integrates the planning processes associated with the development of various strategies and plans. The strategic planning process is continuous throughout the academic year, and is divided into the following phases:

- **Development** - understanding the role of the institution in a local and national context; researching and analysing institutional, Faculty and individual aspirations; generating ideas, choices and options.

- **Refinement** - costing the proposals, assessing the viability and achievability of proposals, prioritising actions.

- **Implementation** - documenting and articulating the plan, disaggregating the operational statements to provide working plans for individual operational areas, taking action to achieve goals, monitoring achievements against goals set.

- **Review and Evaluation** - identifying progress towards achievement of the objectives, adjusting the plan to accommodate changing context, needs and circumstances, and providing an informed basis for the next planning round.

The annual operating plan is now disaggregated into elements that provide the implementation plan for the year. The elements are allocated to groups or individuals and are time constrained.

The implementation plan also provides a basis for the appraisal process. Feedback from the appraisal process is used both to inform management and governors and to generate the subsequent plan.

11.2 Appraisal

The same appraisal process is used for all University staff, both academic and support. Outside the three Faculties and their Schools, support staff are members of various
departments. For the remainder of this Chapter, Schools and Departments will be referred to as ‘Units’.

The appraisal process is part of an integrated process of institutional planning. The process results in a set of coherent, institutional actions that are mutually supportive and contribute effectively to achievement of the University mission.

All University staff, with the exception of staff on temporary/fixed term contracts of less than a year, take part in the appraisal process. Unit objectives emanate from the institutional strategic plan and then form the basis for the establishment of individual objectives agreed during the staff appraisal process. As part of the process, achievements of staff are recognised, difficulties and challenges are identified, and an annual development plan is drawn up which allows staff to build on individual strengths, overcome problems, further the overall mission and aims of the University, and, where appropriate, develop individual potential. The objectives set during appraisal direct individual staff effort and also provide a feedback loop into the next round of Unit strategic planning, and ultimately the corporate strategic plan.

There is a close correlation between the appraisal process and the institutional staff development programme for the following year where identified training needs are addressed through in-house or external training events.

The University is committed to providing an environment in which high quality learning and teaching takes place, and in which staff are able to develop career opportunities.

11.2.1 Appraisal Objectives

The objectives of the appraisal process are to:

- continually improve the performance of individuals and the University, by enhancing skills, flexibility, motivation and working relationships;
- provide clear identification of the individual’s contribution to University goals based on agreed objectives;
- identify and review the individual’s development and training needs in order to meet those objectives;
- provide a framework and enthusiasm for self-development and on-going continuous improvement;
- identify organisational and/or operational changes which may be needed to facilitate enhanced performance;
- improve communication by reflecting on performance and providing constructive feedback;
- contribute towards the achievement of the University’s equal opportunities and diversity objectives.
11.2.2 Appraisal Process

The first step in the appraisal process is to ensure that each Unit has a set of documented objectives/goals. These objectives/goals are derived from the University's strategic plan.

Individuals (appraisees) are appraised either by their line managers, or an agreed alternative (appraisers). As part of the appraisal process, individuals are required on the Appraisal Form, SD1 (Appendix 25) to assess their own performance against set objectives, identifying outcomes or progress to date. They also have an opportunity to provide feedback on any training needs they identified during the last appraisal.

The second part of the appraisal interview focuses on the appraisee’s objectives for the forthcoming academic year. These should be developed from the appropriate Unit strategic plan. The appraisee is also provided with an opportunity to note any additional training needs that he/she may have for the forthcoming year.

The Activity Profile (see 11.3) will be used to inform the appraisal process for academic staff.

During the appraisal interview, the appraiser discusses these issues with the appraisee, and prepares a report summarising the overall conclusions reached. The outcomes of the appraisal, including the agreed development and training needs, are then addressed through:

- ensuring that the strategic implications are incorporated into the University’s strategic and financial planning process for the following year;
- the individual in conjunction with his/her line manager implementing what is specific to his/her Unit;
- the Human Resources Department taking forward more general initiatives under the guidance of the Staff Development Committee.

All staff are required to undertake an appraisal training programme, which is provided through the Staff Development Programme.

11.3 Activity Profiles

It can be difficult to quantify the work of staff in a way that enables fair and equitable distribution of workload. Activity Profiles have been introduced as a means of quantifying the overall workload of a member of staff by summarising qualitatively and quantitatively the workload resulting from a wide range of activities. The Activity Profile template can be found in Appendix 35.

The Activity Profiles will be prepared on an annual basis and will be used to inform the appraisal process, and as a management tool for Heads of Unit to ensure fair and equitable workload distribution.

11.4 Staff Development Policy

The University recognises that an effective process of staff development is critical in ensuring that the University successfully meets the goals and objectives of its strategic plan,
and that individuals are empowered to develop their skills in relation to the requirements of their roles.

The University strives to provide a supportive working environment, sustained by appropriately skilled, innovative and motivated staff. The University’s Staff Development Policy applies to all academic and support staff, whether they are employed on a full-time or part-time basis. The University has a tHE (teaching in Higher Education) Certificate Programme, which is designed to enable staff to formally gain credits in relation to their academic and/or support roles in delivering the priorities identified within the Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Strategy under the following headings:

1. Enhancing the Student Experience
2. Staff Development and Training
3. Recognising and rewarding teaching excellence
4. Innovation in Learning and Teaching
5. Enhancing Graduate Skills and Employability
6. Engagement with WAG, HEFCW and HEA priorities

11.4.1 Responsibilities of the Senior Management Team:

1. To ensure the provision, ongoing review and enhancement of the knowledge, skills and behaviours that managers need to lead, manage and develop people effectively;

2. To create and sustain an environment where everyone is aware of University/Unit goals;

3. To secure and maintain an environment where everyone has equal access to learning and development opportunities and is encouraged to develop themselves, to improve their own performance and to support the development and the performance of others;

4. To create and sustain a management system that incorporates targets, defines development activities to support the achievement of these objectives, and which provides feedback and recognition concerning the development and performance achievements of individuals and teams;

5. To create and approve an appropriately funded, University-wide, staff development plan;

6. To evaluate the effectiveness of the staff development provision in meeting the goals of the University/Unit;

7. To provide career development opportunities for University staff;

8. To provide a University-wide forum comprising of Managers and representatives of employees to discuss the University-wide strategic plan and its associated learning and staff development needs;

9. To ensure the definition of devolved learning and development plans for each Unit within the University;
(10) To provide for the effective induction of employees who are new to the University, new to their post in the University or where their role is likely to or has significantly changed;

(11) To celebrate the achievement of enhanced knowledge and skills of individuals and the overall contribution of learning to the achievement of Unit and University goals.

11.4.2 Responsibilities of Heads of Unit:

(1) To include a request for Staff Development funding as part of their budget proposal, using the appraisal forms, Unit and University strategic plans as a basis for the request;

(2) To define and prioritise the staff development requirements of their Unit within the constraints of the allocated funding;

(3) To ensure that all full time and part-time members of staff within the Unit have equal access to learning opportunities for staff development based on University needs, although the funds allocated for individual staff development will not necessarily be equal;

(4) To provide, on an annual basis, details of the forward plan of proposed staff development activity in relation to University/Unit needs to the Staff Development Committee, including a breakdown of the allocation of the Unit’s staff development funding;

(5) To develop and implement an appropriate induction process for new members of staff within the Unit;

(6) To authorise staff development for members of staff within their Unit, provided the cost of the staff development does not significantly exceed a defined sum (see 11.5);

(7) To submit requests for financial support for staff development and training for consideration by the Staff Development Committee;

(8) To ensure that, where appropriate, all members of staff for whom a staff development session is appropriate, attends the same staff development event in order to maximise the use of resources;

(9) To evaluate the effectiveness of the staff development provision in meeting the goals of the Unit.

11.4.3 Responsibilities of the Staff Development Committee:

Full details of the Staff Development Committee’s responsibilities in relation to the Staff Development Policy are defined in its terms of reference, Section 11.6.

11.4.4 Responsibilities of the Human Resources Department:

(1) To develop and implement a central induction process for new members of staff;

(2) To ensure that each Unit has its own induction process in relation to its the work, and to provide support and guidance for Heads of Unit in creating such a process;
(3) To identify the staff development and training that the University must provide in order to meet its statutory obligations in areas such as human resource legislation and to advise the Staff Development Committee accordingly;

(4) To report to the Staff Development Committee on the staff development and training that the University must provide in order to meet its statutory obligations in relation to Health and Safety, based on information provided by the officer with responsibility for Health and Safety;

(5) To collate staff development requirements from staff appraisals;

(6) To identify, where possible, external sources of generic staff development (e.g. on-line training and staff development provision at other HE institutions), in areas such as customer care and human resource legislation;

(7) To identify, where possible, external sources of generic staff development in relation to Health and Safety, subject to the approval of the officer with responsibility for Health and Safety;

(8) To prioritise and arrange in-house staff development and training to meet the University’s statutory obligations (such sessions should normally not exceed one hour in length);

(9) To keep a copy of the completed appraisal form for each member of staff, together with a record of the staff development requirements of each member of staff;

(10) To inform members of staff of external sources of staff development that meet the needs identified during the appraisal;

(11) To prepare a summary of the staff development requirements of all members of staff each academic year for consideration by the Staff Development Committee;

(12) To keep and maintain a staff development record for each member of staff;

(13) To keep a record of the funding allocated for staff development for each member of staff and for each Unit.

11.4.5 Responsibilities of Members of Staff:

(1) To ensure that they attend staff development and training that has been identified by the Human Resources Department as necessary in order to ensure that the University meets its statutory obligations;

(2) To ensure that, in advance of the training/development event, they complete the Training/Development Proposal Form, SD2 (Appendix 25A) and return it to the Human Resources Department;

(3) To ensure that, after the training/development event, they complete the Training/Development Evaluation Form, SD3 (Appendix 25B) and return it to the Human Resources Department;

(4) To ensure that they follow any guidelines, policies and procedures that have been identified during staff development and training relating to the University’s statutory obligations;
(5) To contribute to the identification of their training needs as part of the appraisal process in relation to the Unit and University strategic plans;

(6) To attend external sources of staff development that have been identified by the Human Resources Department as appropriate to meet the needs identified during the appraisal;

(7) To evaluate the staff development activities that they have attended;

(8) To inform the Human Resources Department of any staff development activities that they have undertaken, including details of any training in the form of being mentored or shadowing another member of staff;

(9) To provide feedback to other members of staff in relation to staff development activities attended;

(10) To make use of the knowledge and skills acquired from the staff development to meet the goals identified as part of the appraisal process.

11.5 **Financial Support for Staff Development**

(1) The University will make available a certain limited annual budget to provide financial support for staff development in addition to the staff development support available within the budget of each Unit. This budget will be allocated by the Staff Development Committee.

(2) The central fund should be used to support applications that it would prove difficult for Units to support alone. A proportion of the Staff Development Committee’s budget will be used to support academic and support staff following the University’s tHE Certificate Programme.

(3) A proportion of the Staff Development Committee’s budget may also be used to contribute towards the costs of training required by support units to deliver the service required by the University.

(4) In cases where the total costs of the staff development/training is not significantly more than a defined sum, currently £400 for full-time staff and pro rata for part-time staff, the Unit would normally be expected to carry the entire costs.

(5) Units will normally be expected to make an increased contribution towards supporting the costs of staff development or training costing more than the defined sum.

(6) Requests for funding to support staff development and training will be made by staff, with the support of their Head of Unit, to the Staff Development Committee. These proposals should be sent to the Human Resources Department in the first instance where they will be scrutinised to ensure that they contain full details and adhere to University regulations. Such requests should normally be submitted by the end of October for Semester 1 and by the end of February for Semester 2. All requests should clearly identify the manner in which the proposed staff development supports the strategic plan of the University.

(7) The Line Manager should normally be in attendance when the application for financial support is considered by the Staff Development Committee.
It may not be possible to finance all the requests for financial support for staff development in a Unit within a particular academic year, and the Head of Unit will be responsible for prioritising requests.

In deciding whether to provide financial support for staff development and training from the central budget, the Staff Development Committee will consider the importance of the request:

- in relation to meeting the objectives of the strategic plan of the University;
- in enabling support Units to deliver the service required by the University;
- with reference to priorities identified in the staff appraisal process.

In the event that a gap remains between the funding provided by the Staff Development Committee and the funding provided by the Unit in relation to the required funding, the Unit may consider making a further contribution to the costs. Any remaining difference would have to be funded by the individual member of staff.

In the event that a member of staff that has registered on a programme delivered by the University ceases to be an employee of the University before completing the programme, the member of staff will be required to pay for any remaining modules that have yet to be delivered.

In the event that the University provides significant financial staff development support for a member of staff, the University may require that a proportion of this support is refunded to the University if the member of staff ceases to be an employee of the University less than three years after the completion of the staff development. The repayment shall be at a level of 80% in year 1, 40% in year 2 and 20% in year 3.

The University will provide financial support for individual members of staff to register on activities including conferences and programmes leading to academic or professional qualifications, provided the activity reflects the needs of the Unit in relation to meeting the strategic objectives of the University.

For full-time staff, a maximum of two hours per week can be spent on staff development, and pro rata for part-time staff.

Subject to the approval of the Line Manager and the module co-ordinator, staff will normally be allowed to register on a module delivered by the University free of charge, provided the module is likely to support the member of staff in achieving the strategic objectives of the University.

Subject to the approval of the Line Manager and the Programme Co-ordinator, staff will be allowed to register on programmes delivered by the University free of charge, provided such a programme is likely to support the member of staff in achieving the strategic objectives of the University.

11.6 Staff Development Committee

The Staff Development Committee is responsible for developing and co-ordinating the University’s staff development plan. It is chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor (Innovation, Skills and Community), meets at least once every academic term, and reports to the Senate.
Terms of Reference

(1) To ensure that the University’s staff development provision is appropriately linked to the strategic plan, and to prioritise the staff development provision in relation to the objectives of the strategic plan and the funds available;

(2) To make decisions in relation to the distribution of a central sum allocated in the budget for Staff Development and Training, that is separate from the budget allocated for staff development within the units;

(3) To consider all requests for financial support submitted to the Staff Development Committee, and to decide upon what proportion of the request should be funded by (i) the Unit (ii) the Staff Development Committee (iii) the individual. This will include requests for funding for academic or professional qualifications;

(4) To identify and subsequently apply a set of criteria as a basis for deciding whether or not to support a request for staff development or training;

(5) To identify general staff development requirements and to develop an appropriate centrally funded staff development programme for approval by the Senate that:
   • addresses generic academic requirements (e.g. the QAA Code of Practice);
   • addresses the generic needs of the support staff;
   • supports management and supervisory development;
   • accommodates the induction of new starters and those whose roles have changed;
   • includes sessions identified by the Human Resources Department to ensure that the University meets statutory obligations (e.g. Human Resource legislation, Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity);

(6) To prepare and distribute a Programme of Staff Development and Training courses for each academic term which will be advertised and distributed in advance of each academic term;

(7) To identify additional staff development requirements based upon the information gathered during the appraisal process, and to develop an appropriate centrally funded staff development programme for approval by the Senate;

(8) To advise the Senate on the appropriateness of policies and structures relating to the annual appraisal process;

(9) To plan and arrange one or more periods each year for intensive staff development;

(10) To develop an induction policy for approval by the Senate;

(11) To develop policies for providing financial support for staff in relation to training and development for approval by the Senate;

(12) To develop policies for the recovery of financial support from staff that leave shortly after receiving the training and/or development;

(13) To identify individual staff development requirements based on information gathered during the appraisal process in relation to specific requirements of Schools and Departments to be arranged and funded by the Schools and Departments;

(14) To develop policies for maximising the effectiveness of the University’s investment in staff development and training by ensuring that there is an effective feedback process within Units;

(15) To consider for approval requests for sabbatical leave (see 11.9) and project leave (see 11.10);

(16) To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the staff development provision;
(17) To establish and monitor an institutional staff development strategy in collaboration with the Human Resources Department;

(18) To monitor the institution’s annual overall spending on staff development and training events.

(19) To make recommendations to the Senate on any matters relating to Staff Development.

**Membership**
Pro Vice Chancellor (Innovation, Skills and Community) or nominee (Chair)
Director of Human Resources
Deans of Faculty
One Head of School from each Faculty
One academic staff governor
Support staff governor
Staff Development Officer
Secretary: Central appointment

With the power to co-opt up to two additional members as appropriate.

11.7 **Staff Induction**

Induction is classified as an important part of staff development and follows confirmation of the acceptance of a post. It is a training programme designed to help new members of staff to settle into their new role as swiftly and as easily as possible.

The induction programme comprises three distinct sections: (i) General induction, delivered by the Human Resources Department; (ii) a Corporate programme, delivered by various University managers and officers, and (iii) Local induction, delivered at Unit level and streamlined to become pertinent to the individual role holder. As recruitment is invariably by single appointments, and in the interests of cost effectiveness and the benefit of group interaction, the main part of the general induction process is sometimes deferred so that a group of individuals form the cohort of attendees.

Depending on their previous experience, new members of academic staff will normally be expected to register on the University’s tHE Certificate Programme.

11.8 **Quality Enhancement**

Quality Enhancement is about systematically and proactively developing the student learning experience to ensure better outcomes. It is different from Quality Assurance and the work of the QAA which audits the Quality Assurance processes and systems in each institution, and which provides the necessary element of externality in judging whether institutions are meeting the standards they have set themselves.

Quality Enhancement involves an element of the unexpected as individuals develop and test new approaches to teaching, learning and assessment. Quality Assurance can nevertheless contribute valuably to Quality Enhancement by imposing a process of review and reflection, by establishing benchmarks and celebrating and reflecting good practice.

The needs for quality enhancement are changing, partly as a result of widening participation and the change in the student population; partly as disciplines change and students and employers place greater emphasis on new modes including work-based and practice learning; partly as new technology and more flexible modes of teaching (including e-learning) change the nature of the student experience; and partly in response to pressures on University resources and academic staff time.
A meaningful engagement in this area covers:

- enthusing students and capturing and retaining their commitment to learning;
- dealing with a diverse (and broadening) range of student needs;
- responding to new technologies and modes of delivery which are of growing importance in higher education;
- responding to a changing mix of staff and other resources and the need to innovate and adapt traditional practices;
- responding to the continuing pressures to demonstrate efficiency and to maximise the return on investments, and the use of resources;
- developing, managing and assessing the more diverse modes of delivery, such as the growing segment of work-based and practice learning;
- ensuring that staff development and rewards and recognition of staff are visibly as responsive to excellence in teaching as they have been to the demands of research;
- working in partnership with a wide range of other educational partners.

Quality Enhancement is about learning and development at a personal, group, or organisational level, and it involves innovation and risk. It would be taking too narrow a view of Quality Enhancement to assume that it is just about the needs of academic staff, or about developing an intellectually rewarding process. Quality Enhancement is primarily an academic issue, but is not one solely for academics. Quality Enhancement has a wide remit which embraces the whole student experience. Support staff make important contributions to learning, teaching and assessment, and if Quality Enhancement is extended to include the whole student experience, it potentially involves all other staff groups in higher education.

11.8.1 Agenda for Quality Enhancement

The key strategic drivers for Quality Enhancement include the following factors:

- the continuing growth and diversification of the student population with consequent new emphases in learning and teaching, such as study skills;
- the associated development of new methods of learning and teaching – problem based learning, online, simulations, group working etc;
- requirements for more flexible delivery, including part-time and distance learning, work based and practice learning, the 24/7 campus etc;
- development and availability of technology to support this: e-learning and use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by tutors and learners;
- pressures on staff, difficulties of recruitment, under-investment in staff and infrastructure;
- pressures for efficiency and collaboration.

It is a characteristic of learning and teaching at University level that there may be many different pedagogic approaches, both within and between disciplines, and there is no standard model which is acknowledged to be most appropriate or effective in particular circumstances. This leads to a diversity of practice which is rightly regarded as a strength, and requires a sophisticated approach to external support of Quality Enhancement which consequently has to recognise a wide range of approaches and starting points.
11.8.2 Priorities

The key priorities for Quality Enhancement at Trinity Saint David include the following:

- maintaining and improving standards of learning and teaching;
- developing effective pedagogical and curricular approaches that will improve student retention, enhance employability and demonstrate explicit standards of achievement;
- enabling more coherent, accredited and continuing provision for staff development;
- encouraging and supporting staff to undertake HEA accreditation thus gaining practitioner status;
- addressing the needs of lifelong learning and work based learning;
- assisting staff to develop materials and practice for, and evaluation of, e-learning, in a variety of formats and modes;
- aiding the adoption of different approaches to learning and their adaptation to specific settings, both disciplinary and institutional;
- sharing experiences of involving students in curriculum design and of making effective use of the views of students in quality enhancement;
- raising the profile of learning and teaching;
- helping Schools and individuals to understand and respond to the quality enhancement implications of widening participation;
- promoting innovation.

11.8.3 Implementation

The University has a formal strategy to ensure that all opportunities for Quality Enhancement are fully exploited and shared across Schools and Departments. Within this strategy, the Faculties have ownership of Quality Enhancement issues, and are required to develop and drive forward appropriate implementation plans. Quality Enhancement considerations are incorporated within staff development plans.

Academic Schools are required to identify examples of good practice across a wide range of identified areas. The School reports are collated into Faculty Plans for approval by the Senate.

Details of current initiatives can be found in the Quality Enhancement Initiatives document which will be made available on the University website.

Innovations and developments in Quality Enhancement are currently tracked via Annual Reviews/Boards of Study. The re-structuring of the Faculty Board agendas has allowed staff to have the opportunity of sharing good practice and of disseminating information across Schools and Faculties. (Programme design, approval, monitoring and review, I).

11.9 Sabbatical Leave

The University encourages academic staff to take advantage of sabbatical leave as part of personal development.
11.9.1 Purpose of Sabbatical Leave

Sabbaticals are undertaken by academic staff members in order to extend their knowledge, research and/or teaching skills, so as to improve their contribution to the University's Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Strategy and to further academic enhancement. The value of a sabbatical is measured by its usefulness in supporting academic staff as they further their own professional development.

Sabbaticals are not an automatic entitlement but may be granted by the University primarily in order that members of staff may undertake study and research of a kind or to an extent that cannot be pursued during the course of normal employment. A sabbatical is often viewed as an opportunity to develop and maintain staff members' contacts with the international academic community.

To ensure that the University's needs are met with respect to a sabbatical programme, the staff member taking a sabbatical is accountable to the Dean of Faculty and to his/her Line Manager, through the Staff Development Committee. For this reason, a sabbatical must be justified by means of a written application, which must set out an acceptable plan for the sabbatical.

The University is of the view that there are three different avenues for staff to seek a sabbatical period. In seeking additional research, Academic Schools are encouraged to use any income gained for the School towards supporting Sabbaticals. As part of its Staff Development programme, the University will also identify a nominated sum every financial year towards supporting sabbatical leave.

In addition to these two options, the University will consider approving further sabbaticals if it is possible for Academic Schools to cover teaching and administrative duties amongst the staffing compliment of the academic unit at a minimal cost to the institution.

11.9.2 Eligibility

Only members of academic staff that are employed on University funds (as opposed, for example, to staff funded by external contracts) and are not on temporary contracts are normally eligible to apply for a sabbatical for research purposes.

Such a member of staff normally becomes eligible for a one semester sabbatical after the completion of a minimum of three continuous years of service in a teaching post in the University. The precise meaning of a one semester sabbatical is explained below. After being granted a sabbatical, the member of staff once more becomes eligible after completion of a further three-year period of normal academic service.

11.9.3 Timing and Period of a Sabbatical

There are two designated periods for a sabbatical: Semester 1 and Semester 2. A sabbatical in a particular semester means that:

- there would be no teaching commitments during the designated semester;
- there would normally be no undergraduate or postgraduate dissertation supervision during the semester;
• as far as possible, administration duties will be shared amongst the staff of the designated school.

Sabbatical-takers could be expected to attend examination boards in exceptional circumstances. They would also be required to attend meetings relating to the teaching requirements of the semester following the sabbatical.

The University will normally allow a fixed maximum number of sabbaticals each academic year. The final decision regarding the year and semester in which a sabbatical can be taken will be made by the Staff Development Committee in consultation with the Head of School.

11.9.4 Applying for a Sabbatical

Applications for a sabbatical must be submitted to the Chair of the Staff Development Committee, normally by 1 November of the academic year preceding the academic year in which the sabbatical is requested. The time schedule is to provide sufficient time for Schools to organise alternative arrangements for teaching and administration. Applicants for sabbaticals are required to provide full details of the information noted in the Sabbatical Application Form, SD4 (Appendix 25C), also available from within the personnel section of the University intranet.

Applicants are required to consult with the relevant Dean of Faculty before applying for a sabbatical.

Applicants should propose arrangements which would ensure a nil teaching load and a nil administrative load during the academic year in which the sabbatical takes place, as well as arrangements for other responsibilities, e.g. supervision of dissertation students.

Staff who are awarded sabbatical leave will be expected to take part of their annual leave entitlement during the sabbatical leave period. The arrangements for such leave will need to be approved by the Head of School in advance of the sabbatical leave period.

The Head of School will be responsible for:
• ensuring that there would be no teaching requirements for the successful applicant during the designated semester;
• ensuring that there would be no dissertation supervision requirements for the successful applicant during the designated semester;
• distributing the administration duties amongst other staff from the designated School;
• approving the arrangements for the applicant to take part of their annual leave during the sabbatical leave period.

In the event that the application for a sabbatical is made by a Head of School, these responsibilities will transfer to the Dean of Faculty. In each case, the Dean of Faculty will make a recommendation to the Staff Development Committee in consultation with the Head of School (unless the applicant is a Head of School) in relation to sabbatical applications.

The Staff Development Committee will be responsible for:
• considering each application for a sabbatical;
• deciding whether reports on any previous sabbaticals were satisfactory;
• deciding whether the proposed plan for a sabbatical is acceptable;
• prioritising requests for sabbaticals;
• final approval of applications for sabbaticals, including the specific semester in which the sabbatical is to be taken.

11.9.5 Financial Assistance

Staff members may apply to the Staff Development Committee (SDC) for a contribution towards reimbursement of travel costs incurred in connection with a sabbatical. However, as staff would still be receiving full salary, any additional expenses will normally be their own responsibility.

It is recognised that minor financial or other assistance from sources external to the University may facilitate and enhance the sabbatical. Where that is reasonable and practicable, the applicants are encouraged to seek external assistance.

When applying for a sabbatical, applicants are required to indicate any expected financial or other assistance from outside the University relating to the period of the sabbatical.

11.9.6 Accountability

Following a sabbatical period, staff members are required to provide the School through the SDC with a written report on the sabbatical within three months of their return to normal duties. The report should permit the School to determine that the sabbatical period has been used conscientiously and in good faith for the agreed purposes. Where no satisfactory report of a sabbatical has been received within four months of the end of that sabbatical period, the University reserves the right to be reimbursed by the staff member for the full financial cost of the sabbatical. No further application for a sabbatical would be approved until all the applicant's previous sabbatical reports have been received and approved by the SDC. Academic Staff will also be expected to prepare a presentation/lecture in relation to the work completed during the sabbatical in order to cascade good practice and further enhance academic enhancement across the Faculties.

11.10 Project Leave

The University will sometimes allow staff to be excused from their normal duties in order to focus on a specific project. Such leave is defined as project leave, and its value is measured by its usefulness in enabling the University to achieve the objectives of its strategic plan. Project leave is not an automatic entitlement, but may be granted by the University in order to enable members of staff to focus on a specific area of development.

To ensure that the University's needs are met with respect to project leave, the staff member taking project leave is accountable to his/her Line Manager through the Staff Development Committee. For this reason, project leave must be justified by means of a written application, which must set out an acceptable plan for the project leave.

As part of its Staff Development programme, the University will identify a nominated sum every financial year towards supporting project leave.
11.10.1 Eligibility

Only University employees (as opposed, for example, to staff funded by external contracts) that are not on temporary contracts are eligible to apply for project leave. A member of staff can become eligible for project leave whenever the University identifies a project that can only be completed if such leave is granted, or when it is considered that such leave is the most effective and efficient mechanism for ensuring the effective completion of a project.

11.10.2 Timing and Period of Project Leave

No specific periods have been designated for project leave. As far as possible, the timing of any project leave should be such that it creates minimum disruption to the normal work of the Unit. As far as possible, the duties of the member of staff on project leave will be shared amongst the staff of the Unit.

Staff on project leave may be required to return to attend meetings or, in exceptional circumstances, to return to their normal duties. The final decision regarding the timing in which project leave can be taken will be made by the Staff Development Committee after negotiation with the Line Manager.

11.10.3 Applying for Project Leave

Applications for project leave should be submitted for consideration by the Staff Development Committee. Applicants for project leave are required to provide full details of the information noted in the Project Leave Application Form, SD5 (Appendix 25D), and also available from the within the personnel section of the University intranet.

Applicants for project leave should propose arrangements which would ensure minimum disruption during the period in which the project leave takes place, as well as arrangements for other responsibilities.

Staff who are awarded project leave may, depending on the length of the project leave period, be expected to take part of their annual leave entitlement during the project leave period. The arrangements for such leave will need to be approved by their Line Manager in advance of the project leave period.

The Line Manager will be responsible for:

- distributing duties amongst other staff from the Unit, as far as possible;
- making suitable arrangements to cover the work during the project leave period;
- approving the arrangements for the applicant to take part of their annual leave during the project leave period.

In the event that the application for project leave is made by a Head of Unit, these responsibilities will transfer to the Line Manager of the Head of Unit. In each case, the Head of Unit will make a recommendation to the Staff Development Committee (or his/her Line Manager in the case of a Head of Unit) in relation to project leave applications.

The Staff Development Committee will be responsible for:

- considering each application for project leave;
- deciding whether reports on any previous project leave were satisfactory;
• deciding whether the proposed plan for project leave is acceptable;
• prioritising requests for project leave;
• final approval of applications for project leave, including the specific period during which the project leave is to be taken.

11.10.4 Financial Assistance

Staff members may apply to the Staff Development Committee for a contribution towards reimbursement of travel costs incurred in connection with project leave. However, as staff would still be receiving full salary, any additional expenses will normally be their own responsibility.

It is recognised that minor financial or other assistance from sources external to the University may facilitate and enhance the project leave. Where that is reasonable and practicable, the applicants are encouraged to seek external assistance.

When applying for project leave, applicants are required to indicate any expected financial or other assistance from outside the University relating to the period of the project leave.

11.10.5 Accountability

Following project leave, staff members are required to provide the Unit through the Staff Development Committee with a written report on the project leave within three months of their return to normal duties. The report should permit the Unit to determine that the project leave period has been used conscientiously and in good faith for the agreed purposes. Where no satisfactory report of project leave has been received within four months of the end of that project leave period, the University reserves the right to be reimbursed by the staff member for the full financial cost of the project leave. No further application for project leave would be approved until all previous project leave reports have been received from the applicant and approved by the Staff Development Committee. Staff will also be expected to prepare a presentation in relation to the work completed during the project leave in order to cascade good practice.