



Practitioner Leave for Academics

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When was the last time you actively engaged in your professional field? Have you recently tackled a breaking news story or developed a cutting-edge advertising campaign?

This discussion will focus on the concept of "practitioner leave"—a dedicated period for academics to immerse themselves back into their professional industries. Such a leave would facilitate the practical application of their expertise, bridging the gap between academic theory and industry practice. In many other departments, such as law and midwifery, academics often maintain dual roles as leading practitioners and educators.

What's in place right now?

Academic Study Leave Policy

Academic study leave is a valuable benefit and demonstrates the University's support for, and commitment to, ongoing innovative and meaningful academic work aligned to BU2025 actions. The University recognises that study leave represents a very significant investment in our academic staff which should be focussed on producing clear value-for-money strategic benefits.

Paid academic study leave may be granted to academic staff, normally for up to one semester for the purpose of developing, progressing and enhancing research performance in line with BU2025.

Academic Study Leave is distinct from other leave including the right to request time off for development. Details of unpaid leave and career breaks, can be found on the staff intranet; [Staff Intranet](#).

Including professional and support staff who are undertaking doctorates

What's in place at the moment...

While BU allows for study leave for a semester, there is currently no equivalent for practitioner leave.

This lack of flexibility can result in a disconnect from the latest industry trends and practices, particularly in dynamic fields like communications and journalism. We propose a session to explore the feasibility and benefits of professional practice leave. This discussion will delve into its potential to enhance education and knowledge exchange, ensuring that academic instruction remains current and relevant.

Though the primary focus will be on communications and journalism, the principles discussed could be applicable across various disciplines. Join us to share insights, discuss pragmatic applications, and consider how practitioner leave could enrich our academic and professional landscapes.

What can we do to help inform new policy?

01

This session will explore the feasibility and benefits of professional practice leave.

02

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03

Let's discuss and inform a new policy



Paula Callus in NCCA as they have successfully set up a system for practitioner leave and industry secondments but I'm not sure how this works. Do we have any academics who have taken up practitioner leave or had a secondment?
In my discipline marketing and advertising practices changes constantly, difficult to keep up with the change in practices, I would benefit from a spell back in industry. I wonder if anyone else feels the same about their discipline?
Can anyone share any secondments or paid leave they have had for practitioner development ?



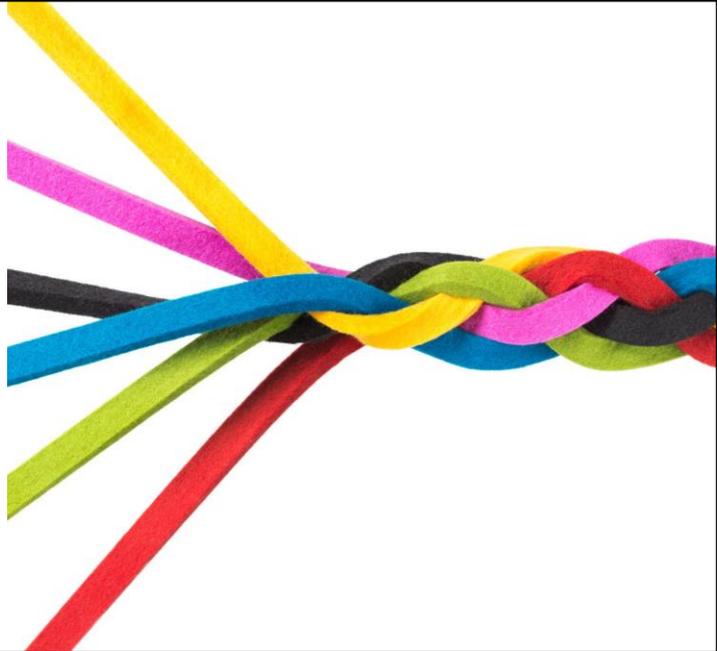
I'd like you all to be thinking within the context of a 3 month paid leave to practice your subject. What benefits this would bring to you as an academic, benefits this might bring to students after the leave and also benefits to BU?



Individual activity:
list personal and
professional goals
for leave

Training with a media agency. Working on a press launch. Helping with new channel. Training with a gaming company. Developing new skills as a journalist, brush up on whats happening on the ground. Develop contacts with industry to foster further research and collaborations.

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Group activity:
Practical
Considerations,
Planning and
Proven value



•**Practical considerations:** what would you do in that time? How would you plan your leave? Would you work with an organisation or two? Would you pitch yourself to businesses so they can borrow your expertise (at no cost to them!)

•**How can you demonstrate proven value to BU? Value to Students? Value to industry or the business organisation?**

•**Time Management:** Techniques for managing time effectively during leave.

•Creating a realistic timeline and milestones.

•Collaborations with industry?

•How would you demonstrate the value to BU?

Group activity:
How can we
inform policy at
faculty level



Ideas on policy at faculty level. How could we make this fair to everyone? Would there be a ballot? What would be the criteria? 5 years as an academic? Would there be weighting towards academics who have spent too long in classroom? Academics who are demonstrators – academics who don't do research but prefer practitioner route?

Thanks everyone.
I'll share with the
powers that be!

