

Email correspondence re sabbatical leave, March 2024

(1) Email from division head's secretary to Carsten Holz, after I submitted my sabbatical leave application for the academic year 2025/26

Sabbatical leave application | teaching make-up plan

[Secretary to the division head, Division of Social Science] Thu, Mar 14, 2024 at 5:24 PM

To: Carsten Holz <carstenholz@gmail.com>, Carsten Andreas HOLZ <socholz@ust.hk>

Cc: [Head, Division of Social Science]

Dear Prof Holz,

May we know your plan for the teaching make-up during your sabbatical leave?

Refer to the attached memo, those taking sabbatical leave longer than 6 months, teaching make-up arrangement shall continue.

Best,

 **Memo_Updates to the Sabbatical Guidelines_V6_signed.pdf**
106K

(2) Carsten's response

Carsten Holz <carstenholz@gmail.com>

Thu, Mar 14, 2024 at 5:40 PM

To: [Secretary]

Cc: [Division head]

Dear [Secretary and division head]

I am applying for sabbatical leave and not for a re-arrangement of teaching duties.

I am using English language and have no interest in engaging in some private language with private re-definitions of English terms, created by some HKUST manager.

Otherwise, every single "rule" at HKUST becomes meaningless as English terms used by HKUST managers can have any range of arbitrary meanings ascribed to them by HKUST managers, with varying meanings at different times. There is then no room for communication in English language any more, either. HKUST becomes a gibberish loony bin.

Best,
Carsten

(3) Division head

[Division head] Thu, Mar 14, 2024 at 5:50 PM
To: Carsten Holz <carstenholz@gmail.com>, [Secretary]

Dear Carsten,

As you know, the sabbatical policy is not made by the division, but by the University. How long will your sabbatical be? If it is less than 6 months, things will be straightforward and easy.

Best

(4) Carsten

Carsten Holz <carstenholz@gmail.com> Thu, Mar 14, 2024 at 6:15 PM
To: [Division head, Secretary]

Dear [Division head],

I know. That doesn't mean that I accept it. The provost violates English language, logic, and professional practice. To me, that is unacceptable, and I therefore proceed and will collect my 'no' to one academic year's sabbatical leave. Knowing how HKUST is managed, I don't expect otherwise. I am aware lower management's hands are tied, another interesting feature of this place. Sorry if this is a hassle for you.

Yet another interesting feature is that the edict does not rule out taking sabbatical leave for 6 months, resuming duty at HKUST for 1 day, then taking sabbatical leave for 6 months, resuming duty at HKUST for 1 day, then taking sabbatical leave for 6 months -- given that I'll have 9 years of teaching at HKUST under my belt as "deposit" for sabbatical leave (= 3 x 6 months). I could point out further absurdities, but, really, there is no need to waste time and it's easiest to just get my 'no' without much further ado.

Best,
Carsten

(5) Division head

[Division head] Fri, Mar 15, 2024 at 10:24 AM
To: Carsten Holz <carstenholz@gmail.com>, [Secretary]
Cc: [Senior Officer]

Dear Carsten,

Would you consider taking a six-month sabbatical? A one-year sabbatical leave without make-up teaching is unlikely to be approved. You do not have to finish the make-up teaching within one year, and they can be spread to different semesters, including summer semesters, in subsequent years.

(6) Carsten

Carsten Holz <carstenholz@gmail.com>

Fri, Mar 15, 2024 at 1:19 PM

To: [Division head]

Cc: [Secretary, Senior Officer]

Dear [Division head],

I wish to proceed with my application for one year's sabbatical leave. If it's denied, so be it.

As to making up teaching, I suspect I will never agree to what I consider an academic crime: the destruction of the very basis on which all science rests, a common language with clearly defined terms. The HKUST provost creates his own definition of sabbatical by perverting the term to "make-up-teaching;" he is emptying our common English language of its meaning. I will no be complicit in crime.

Sabbatical leave is sabbatical leave. "Make up teaching" to create a teaching-free period is not sabbatical leave. I am applying for sabbatical leave.

-- As a social scientist, I observe that there may be cultural differences. What is utterly inadmissible to me (and illogical given the common language) may not be for others. It's quite fascinating.

Please feel free to add our exchange to my sabbatical leave application.

Best,
Carsten

(7) The division head and I meet and I agree to proceed with a 6-month sabbatical leave application. The division head is (or feels) prohibited by provost orders from approving a 12-month sabbatical leave. I can wait many months for a formal, written denial of my 12-month sabbatical leave application (if I ever get a response) and then start a 6-month sabbatical leave application, or put in a 6-month sabbatical leave application now and hope that it's approved within HKUST's several-month time frame so I can plan ahead.