The issue in question is the balance between teaching and research activity. Attending conferences is of course part and parcel of ongoing research, but with any conferences scheduled during teaching term, a potential conflict arises. To resolve this, I suggest that we need to be guided by the very terms ‘teaching and learning’ and ‘summer research’ as used to denote the respective periods in https://www.tcd.ie/calendar/. While research activity should never of itself be limited to the summer period, this still means that during teaching term, teaching takes priority at all times. Exceptions are possible, in that a colleague is absent from her/his teaching duties for a legitimate reason such as attending a conference. However, any such exceptions must be organised in advance in order to eliminate any loss of teaching delivered to our students and also to avoid undue pressure being placed on colleagues in having to cover for absences.

Please be reminded, therefore, of taking the following steps in good time before any planned research-related absence during the teaching period:

- All planned absences have to be agreed with the Head of Department or Programme Director, as appropriate in each case, and approved by the Head of School.
- As part of the required arrangements, contingency measures need to be put in place. These can take various forms as best suited to any given situation, such as postponing missed teaching hours to subsequent additional time-slots, or arranging with a colleague to swap teaching times.
- All arrangements need to be communicated, again in good time, to the students involved.