



POLICY & PROCEDURE DOCUMENT

NUMBER: 1.1306

DIVISION: Academic Affairs

TITLE: Sabbatical Leave

DATE: March 21, 2011

REVISED: January 2, 2012, October 23, 2012, January 23, 2017, April 27, 2020, October 20, 2021, December 8, 2025

Authorized by: Robert Fischer, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

I. Purpose and Scope

University policy provides for the granting of sabbatical leaves for the purpose of professional improvement of the faculty.

II. Policy

1. Sabbaticals are typically granted only to a faculty member who is qualified in terms of consistently high job performance, has demonstrated success in previous research, and who submits a well-planned proposal for leave. In general, any activity related to a faculty appointment that will enhance the professional and scholarly growth of the applicant meets the basic criteria for a sabbatical leave request.
2. Sabbaticals are not granted automatically and are constrained by budgetary, legal and other considerations.
3. To be eligible for a sabbatical leave, a faculty member shall have tenure and shall have completed six continuous full academic years of service at the University. Untenured faculty may apply for a sabbatical during the sixth year of service, but the sabbatical will be withdrawn if tenure is not awarded. Normally, sabbatical leaves are granted for either one semester at full pay (fall or spring) or for two semesters (one academic year consisting of the fall semester, winter session and

spring semester) at one-half pay. Summer sabbaticals may be granted only with special approval in exceptional cases.

4. The approval for sabbatical leaves is based on professional accomplishments, not the passage of time. Notwithstanding this, however, sabbatical leaves will not be granted to an individual more than once every seven years with year one being the academic year (fall semester through summer session) following the completion of the sabbatical. Faculty may apply for the sabbatical as early as year 6, and the sabbatical would be awarded for year 7.
5. In cases where a faculty administrator is granted an administrative leave of absence to aide in their transition from administrative duties/responsibilities to faculty duties/responsibilities, they shall not be eligible to apply for a sabbatical leave for seven years following the conclusion of their administrative leave of absence.

III. Procedure

A. Application

Applications for sabbatical leaves must be submitted, to the department chair/director, by October 1 of the academic year preceding the date the leave would begin. The application should state the dates of the last sabbatical (if any) taken by the applicant, the timeframe proposed for the requested sabbatical, a brief description of the activities planned during the sabbatical including how travel and other expenses related to the sabbatical leave will be covered, and a current curriculum vitae (CV). In addition, the proposal should include how the sabbatical activities will contribute to the faculty member's professional development, academic department/school, college and the university.

B. Review

1. The department chair/director transmits a recommendation to the College Sabbatical Review Committee by October 15. Beyond the evaluation of the quality of the application, the department chair/director must indicate if any course offering adjustments, additional staff, or other expenditures will be necessary if the sabbatical is approved. If the department chair/director is submitting an application for sabbatical leave, they shall not provide a recommendation/endorsement concerning his/her application.
2. The composition of the College Sabbatical Review Committee includes one representative elected from among the tenured faculty members of each department/division in the College. Each such committee will evaluate the proposals submitted within that college and transmit their recommendations, together with an assessment of the relative merits of the proposals to the respective college dean by November 5.
3. The dean will review the recommendations of the Sabbatical Review Committee and make their own recommendation to the Provost by November 15. Beyond the evaluation of the quality of the application, the dean must indicate if any additional staff or other expenditures will be necessary if the sabbatical is approved.

4. Faculty members holding administrative positions are also eligible for sabbatical leaves. A faculty member who currently holds teaching or other faculty related responsibilities within a specific college shall submit their application via the process indicated above. An administrator with faculty rank who does not currently hold teaching and/or other faculty related responsibilities within a specific college shall submit their application directly to the Provost (or designee). The Council of Academic Deans shall serve as the Sabbatical Review Committee for administrator applications and make their recommendation(s) to the Provost.
5. After consultation with the respective dean(s), the Provost shall make recommendations to the President by November 30. The President will make recommendations to the Board of Regents for consideration and approval at its January meeting.

C. Obligations

1. The precise terms of approved sabbatical leaves shall be provided to the faculty member by the Dean.
2. Within thirty (30) days after completion of a sabbatical leave, a report is to be submitted to the department chair/director, dean and provost, outlining the benefits of the sabbatical in terms of scholarly growth of the faculty member.
3. Faculty and administrators on a sabbatical leave are expected to return to the University for at least one academic year following the conclusion of the year in which the sabbatical leave is taken. Those on a summer sabbatical must return for the academic year following the summer in which the leave is taken. Failure to comply with this provision obligates the individual to repay the University for the compensation received during the term of the sabbatical.

D. Changes

Any major modification of plans by a leave recipient must be approved by the College Sabbatical Review Committee. Faculty members with approved academic-year sabbaticals may not change to one-semester sabbaticals.

E. Benefits during Sabbatical Periods

Faculty members who participate in the Teachers' Retirement System of Kentucky (TRS) and who are granted sabbatical leave for one semester would continue to earn retirement service credit; however, faculty granted sabbatical leave for two semesters do not earn retirement service credit nor do they, or the university, make retirement contributions to TRS during the period of the sabbatical leave.

Upon returning to active employment, employees not eligible to earn retirement service credit shall then become eligible to purchase credit associated with the sabbatical period, under guidelines established by the TRS. Please review Human Resources Policy 4.605V for additional information.

Faculty who participate in the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) and who are granted sabbatical leave (either at full pay or one-half pay) do continue to participate in the ORP;

they and the university make the same contributions as in regular employment status. For details, see Policy 4.6053.

IV. Related Policies

4.6053 Sabbatical Assignments & Retirement Participation

V. Reasons for Revision

January 2012

Section III.C (Obligations) added for conformity with Faculty Handbook

Certain deadline dates in III.B changed to facilitate review process

October 2012

Section III.E amended to reflect KTRS ruling, effective July 1, 2012, on individuals compensated at less than 70% level during sabbatical leave.

January 2017

Add requirement for current curriculum vitae to be included in application packet.

April 2020

Section II amended to clarify when faculty may first apply for sabbatical and to establish a period of time between when an administrator granted administrative leave to aide in transitioning from administrative duties/responsibilities to faculty duties/responsibilities is eligible to be considered for sabbatical leave.

Section III amended to clarify which sabbatical review process faculty administrators shall use, and to clarify the option for TRS participants to purchase service credit following a year-long sabbatical.

October 2021

Non-substantive changes as part of the fifth-year review in accordance with Policy 0.0004. Changed all gender identifiers to neutral identifiers (i.e. she/he to they or his/her to their).

October 2025

Updated to clarify when faculty are eligible to apply for and receive a sabbatical.